

Gov't Working on COVID-19 Response Technology Plan

THE GOVERNMENT is working on a COVID-19 response technology plan, which will provide Jamaicans with internet connectivity while a national broadband plan is being developed.

Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Daryl Vaz, made the disclosure on October 22, while addressing a ceremony for the handing over of tablets to students at the Port Antonio Primary School in Portland.

He noted that the plan, which is in the final stage of development, is a back-up measure while the Government continues to work on a national broadband programme.

He said it is in response to the needs expressed by parents, especially those living in rural Jamaica, who have limited or no access to internet service for their children's online schooling.

"My job is to get national broadband throughout the entire Jamaica in the shortest



Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, the Hon. Daryl Vaz (right) assists Buff Bay Primary School student, Brandon Parkes (2nd right), as Brandon interfaces with the new tablet, which he received during a handing over ceremony at the school on October 22. Looking on are: Minister of Education, Youth and Information, the Hon. Fayval Williams and student, Tiona Watson.

possible time. That simply means that every nook and cranny of Jamaica must have access to the internet so that people can do their work, their business and whatever else they want to do," he said.

Minister Vaz said that the

national broadband programme "will take time, but we are going to work with Minister (of Education, Youth and Information) Fayval Williams, with other Government Ministries, the National Works Agency and, most importantly,

our multi-national partners, who are very, very interested to assist us, both in terms of consultancy and actual roll-out".

"It's going to be done. It's a matter of how fast it is going to be done," he noted.

Schools Upgraded With Satellites for Online Learning

SIXTEEN SCHOOLS at the infant, primary and junior high levels have been fitted with internet service equipment allowing them better access to educational broadcasts coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information.

According to a release from the Ministry, the current installation schedule is targeting 100 of the neediest schools for priority.

Among the schools that have received internet installations are Moores Primary and Freetown Primary in Clarendon; Alva Primary & Infant, Chalky Hill All-Age, Aboukir Primary in St. Ann; Hamwalk Primary in St. Catherine; Success Primary and Glendevon Primary and Junior High in St. James; Donnington Primary in St. Mary; Aeolus Valley All-Age and Bull Bay All-Age in St. Thomas;

Little Bay All-Age in Westmoreland; Cockburn Gardens, China Goodwill Infant and Iris Golley Primary in St. Andrew and Denham Town Primary in Kingston.

The project to install equipment in 100 schools should be completed in another two to three weeks.

The release noted that the installation is part of the Ministry's Distance/Remote Learning Approach to help students receive their education through the provision of a diverse blend of learning opportunities.

These include television programmes using the Ministry's eHomeSchool Network and PBCJ, as well as free-to-air time on TVJ, CVM, in addition to lessons aired on various radio stations and the learning kit comprising textbooks and worksheets.

Positive Jamaica Foundation Assists UWI Student



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right) presents a cheque in the sum of \$250,000 to student at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona Campus, Shana-Gail Young, to assist with financing her tuition. The cheque, which was facilitated through Mr. Holness' Positive Jamaica Foundation, was presented during a courtesy call at the Office of the Prime Minister on October 22.

Broiler Units in Operation at Tamarind Farm Adult Correctional Centre

TWO BROILER units, which will see the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) becoming more self-sufficient in food production and result in major cost savings, were officially commissioned into service on October 22.

This was done at the Tamarind Farm Adult Correctional Centre, in Spanish Town, St. Catherine. Constructed as part of a public-private partnership (PPP) with Newport Mills Limited, the units are expected to produce 98 tonnes of broiler meat, representing approximately 40 per cent of the total inmate consumption per annum.

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of National Security, Senator the Hon. Matthew Samuda, who was on hand for the unveiling of the units, said he is pleased that this small, yet impactful project is expected to save the DCS up to \$13 million a year.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of National Security, Senator the Hon. Matthew Samuda (left), peruses a programme with Superintendent, Tamarind Farm Adult Correctional Centre, Leslie Campbell. Occasion was a ceremony held on October 22, to officially commission into service two broiler units housed at the Centre in St. Catherine.

"It is a small project in the grand scheme of things, but it is one of those projects that will have huge and immediate impact. We are becoming more self-sufficient in our food production [and] we are bringing down the cost of operations in very tight economic times. It is clear that

this is not chicken feed," he said. He noted that the savings that will accrue from the project is significant, as the money saved can go towards improving the nutrition of the inmates, enhancing their education efforts, and investing more in their healthcare.

\$34 Million Barracks River Bridge Opens

THE NEW Barracks River bridge in St. Mary, constructed at a cost of more than \$34 million, was officially opened on October 21 by Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Everal Warmington.

The new structure, which accommodates single-lane traffic, replaces a footbridge, which was destroyed during major flood rains. It will benefit hundreds of residents of surrounding communities.

Minister Warmington, in his remarks at the opening, underscored the Government's

commitment to transforming the country's road infrastructure in order to improve the lives of Jamaicans.

He said that many roads and bridges across the island have been constructed and improved over the last several years.

State Minister for Industry, Investment and Commerce and Member of Parliament for South East St. Mary, Dr. the Hon. Norman Dunn, commended the residents for their patience and understanding during the construction phase.

For his part, Mayor of Port Maria, Richard Creary, who

is also Councillor for the Richmond Division, said he is pleased that the residents can now move about with ease.

Works were implemented by the National Works Agency (NWA) under the Government of Jamaica's Recurrent Bridge Development Programme.

The new structure can accommodate small and medium-sized vehicles. The bridge installation works included construction of abutments and the paving of approach roads.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Everal Warmington (second right); Mayor of Port Maria, Councillor Richard Creary (third right); and State Minister for Industry, Investment and Commerce and Member of Parliament for South East St. Mary, Dr. the Hon. Norman Dunn (right), applaud as a motorist crosses the Barracks River bridge in St. Mary, at the official opening of the new structure on October 21. Also sharing the moment is Senior Director at the National Works Agency (NWA), Varden Downer (left).



Minister of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change, Hon. Parnell Charles Jr. (third left), observes as Chairman, Recycling Partners of Jamaica Limited (RPJ), Damien King (left), accepts keys for a box truck from Acting Executive Director, Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo), Stephen Edwards, during the handover ceremony, on October 21, at the recycling company's Lake's Pen address in St. Catherine. At right is Chief Financial Officer, RPJ, Wincella Cummings.

Recycling Partners of Jamaica Gets Truck from TPDCo

THE TOURISM Product Development Company (TPDCo) has handed over a box truck, valued at approximately \$7 million, to Recycling Partners of Jamaica Limited (RPJ) as part of the Government's commitment to environmental protection.

Funding for the procurement of the unit was provided under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between TPDCo and the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF). The truck will serve communities in the western section of the island in Negril, collecting bottles from established collection points and depots for recycling.

Minister of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change, Hon. Parnell Charles Jr., who spoke at the ceremony on October 21 at the recycling company's Lake's Pen address in St. Catherine, said the Government continues to seek to find sustainable pathways to productivity, while preserving the environment.

"I look forward to what is going to be a challenging and exciting opportunity to change the trajectory of how Jamaica sees environment protection. The Government remains committed to the environmental protection agenda and climate change

agenda, and moving from agenda to action," he said.

In a message from Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett, read by Acting Executive Director, TPDCo, Stephen Edwards, he said the Ministry and its agencies continue to implement various strategies geared at preserving the country's tourism product.

RPJ is a registered charity and the designated national recycling entity mandated to remove plastic bottles from the environment and to divert these from landfills through engagement with various stakeholders.

