

Jamaica's First STEAM Academy to be Built in St. Catherine

THE GOVERNMENT of Jamaica will construct Jamaica's first Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) Academy in Dunbeholden, St. Catherine.

A Jamaica 60 Legacy Project, the institution will be part of the Greater Bernard Lodge Development and will be erected on the 22 acres of land reserved for social services.

Addressing a ceremony on October 25, Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness noted that the property, which was once a sugar plantation, will be used to prepare Jamaicans for "the new world".

"To stand on the grounds of a former sugar plantation and say we are going to build a technology school to produce the people of Jamaica who will not just be consumers of technology but will become producers of technology... that



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (second right) unveils a billboard marking the future home of Jamaica's first Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) Academy at Dunbeholden in Bernard Lodge, St. Catherine, on October 25. Joining him are Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams (right) and (from left) Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Maureen Dwyer; Member of Parliament for St. Catherine Southern, Fitz Jackson; and Chairman, National Education Trust, Ryan Reid.

is the true liberation of our people," Mr. Holness said.

He argued that, as technology develops, "it is the nations that own technology that own the future".

A total of six Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

schools will be built by the Government at an overall cost of US\$133 million. An institution for the Arts will also be constructed.

Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams, said that the occasion was a significant

step forward in the Government's efforts to engage and develop students' interest in STEAM.

"When this Academy is completed, we expect to enrol some 2,400 students, and that is significant," Mrs. Williams said.

New Fire Station Opened In Yallahs, St. Thomas

YALLAHS AND surrounding districts in St. Thomas now have the benefit of a new fire station, which was built in the community at the cost of approximately \$162.6 million.

The facility was officially opened by Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, on October 26.

The two-storey building comprises office space, a small conference room, male and female dormitories, restrooms, an emer-

gency medical services (EMS) room, a small gym, and an engine bay.

It will serve approximately 95,000 residents and accommodate 40 staff members, including administrators and firefighters.

The station is expected to significantly bolster service delivery of the Jamaica Fire Brigade (JFB), by improving the response time to calls.

Prime Minister Holness, who delivered the keynote

address, said the development of St. Thomas is pivotal to the creation of a modern Jamaica.

Describing St. Thomas as having "incredible potential", he said the Government is undertaking "massive redevelopment" of the parish, which will significantly improve the lives of citizens.

"This fire station, [therefore], is a representation of the Government's strategic intent of focusing on the

development of this parish," the Prime Minister stated.

Local Government and Rural Development Minister, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, who has portfolio responsibility for the JFB, welcomed construction of the facility, noting that since 2016, the Government has spent close to \$900 million on building and improving JFB facilities islandwide.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (third left) and Minister of Local Government and Rural Development (third right), Hon. Desmond McKenzie, officially open the new Yallahs Fire Station in St. Thomas on October 26. Joining them (from left) are Managing Director, Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), Omar Sweeney; Member of Parliament, St. Thomas Western, James Robertson; Jamaica Fire Brigade Commissioner, Stewart Beckford; and Mayor of Morant Bay, Councillor Michael Hue.

Social Housing Units Presented to Residents in St. Thomas

THREE SOCIAL housing units were handed over to deserving residents in St. Thomas Eastern under the New Social Housing Programme (NSHP) on October 26.

The beneficiaries, Keith James of Duckenfield; Nimroy Henry, Harbour Head in Port Morant; and Dawn Cargill of Curtis Bottom, also in Port Morant, all received keys to their new homes from Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness.

Speaking at the handover ceremony in Curtis Bottom at the residence of Ms. Cargill, Mr. Holness pointed out that the NSHP is "a more coordinated approach to providing housing for the most needy and the most vulnerable Jamaicans".

The \$5.2-million two-bedroom unit presented to Ms. Cargill, is the 106th housing solution to be delivered under the programme.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (second right) cuts the ribbon at the handover ceremony for a social housing unit which was presented to Dawn Cargill (second left), in the St. Thomas Eastern constituency on October 26. Observing (from left) are Member of Parliament, Dr. Michelle Charles, and Mayor of Morant Bay, Councillor Michael Hue.

"When we started off, we were at almost \$8 million for some of the homes we were building. Now, we have gotten the prices all the way down... and we are now delivering these units on an average three months," the Prime Minister said.

He pointed out that in November, 20 more units will

be available for handing over to more Jamaicans, noting that there are an estimated 6,000 citizens living in conditions that qualify for the programme.

"If we are able to do 20 each month, you can see that the programme will eventually get to all the people in need," Mr. Holness said.

\$100M DBJ Patent Grant Facility now Available

INVENTORS AND entrepreneurs can now access funding support under the Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ) \$100-million patent grant facility.

Manager for DBJ's Boosting Innovation, Growth and Entrepreneurship Ecosystems (BIGEE) Programme, Christopher Brown, made the announcement during a Jamaica Information Service (JIS) Think Tank at the agency's head office in Kingston on October 27.

The BIGEE Programme, under which the patent grant falls, aids entrepreneurial development in Jamaica.

Mr. Brown said a maximum of \$4 million will be provided to each successful inventor, researcher, and entrepreneur to file patent applications locally and internationally for their products or inventions. The funds will cover up to 80 per cent of the project cost.

"The intent is to get [these individuals] to be able to create commercial value out of their ideas and inventions, and one of the steps in doing this is to protect ideas. We really want [them] to protect their ideas, so that they will be able to operate in specific jurisdictions without anyone else being able to use their ideas," he said.

The period of protection will span two decades from the filing date.

Mr. Brown invited interested persons with novel ideas to apply for grant support at www.thinkbigee.com.

However, they must first submit a patent application with the Jamaica Intellectual Property Office (JIPO), which is one of the technical support partners.

The application period will close on November 25 and businesses must be registered in Jamaica to be considered.



Manager for the Boosting Innovation, Growth and Entrepreneurship Ecosystems (BIGEE) Programme, Christopher Brown

\$1 Billion for Code Care Programme to Clear Backlog of Elective Surgeries

JUST OVER \$1 billion has been budgeted for the Code Care programme, which is aimed at clearing the backlog of elective surgeries in hospitals.

Of the total, \$80 million is to be spent on rehabilitating operating theatres in the public health system; \$200 million for the private-public partnership; \$223 million for equipment; \$279 million for nursing missions, and \$153 million for additional staff hours; \$23 million for project management and \$59 million for communications.

Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, provided the breakdown of the figures, while responding to

questions in the House of Representatives on October 25.

Dr. Tufton said the programme is designed to reduce wait time for elective surgeries to less than 180 days and to increase the number of surgeries conducted over the same period by at least 80 per cent, targeting about 2,000 surgeries over a 12-month period.

"It has five components. It has an operating theatre rehabilitation component, private-public partnership for use of private operating theatres, procurement of surgical equipment and supplies, staffing for increased surgeries, and a project management component as

a special programme designed to reduce wait time," he said.

The programme was announced during the Minister's Sectoral Debate presentation in May.

"...the programme is designed to reduce wait time for elective surgeries to less than 180 days and to increase the number of surgeries conducted over the same period by at least 80 per cent..."

New HIV Care Facility Opens at KPH



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (second right), looks on while United States (US) Ambassador to Jamaica, His Excellency Nick Perry (second left), cuts the ribbon for the official handover of a new care facility at the Kingston Public Hospital on October 25, for the treatment of patients with HIV/AIDS. The facility, valued at more than \$9 million, was donated by the United States (US) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Others participating (from left) are Country Director at the CDC Caribbean Office, Dr. Emily Kainne Dokubo, and Acting Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Karen Webster-Kerr.

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