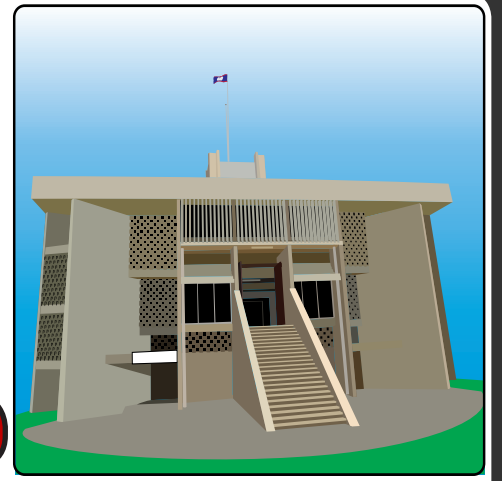




Capital Weekly

From the Heart of the Nation to the Soul of the People



No. 018

Thursday, January 5, 2012

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The Millionaires versus The Masses *PUP Blasts SSB Housing Mortgage Write Offs*



Glenn Godfrey



Eamon Courtenay



Lisa Shoman



Lord Michael Ashcroft

The announcement by Prime Minister Dean Barrow in his 2012 New Year's address that the government is about to purchase and write off \$17 Million worth of SSB House Mortgages is certainly welcoming news, especially to the 870 or so families that will benefit directly from the generous relief package.

It's as they say—a penny saved is a penny earned. Naturally, then, once the write-off occurs, those 780 families would, in effect,

have some additional earnings to spend, thereby helping to generate economic activity, as PM Barrow reasoned in his New Year's Address.

But not everyone is entirely happy about the good tidings as announced by the PM on the heels of the Christmas Season. In fact, some are literally outraged by it. Operatives of the opposition People's United Party, on the first working day of the New Year, launched an all out assault on government's much proclaimed act of benevolence, calling it elec-

tioning and charging that it is an abuse of public resources and an unfair expense to taxpayers.

Now, we would like to be as fair and objective as possible, but we must confess that such is very difficult, if not impossible, when the ones making the charges are the very same people who, when they were the government, wrote off millions of dollars for a few at the expense of the masses. Now they are up in arms over the fact that this government is doing it, not for the millionaires but for the masses.

We'll get back to that in a few; but first some quick facts and clarifications about the write off in question. As PM Barrow noted in his interview with the local media Tuesday evening, "The total value of the mortgages is \$17 million dollars, but of course there is an element of non-performance in the portfolio. As a matter of fact, something like 60% of those seven hundred and fifty odd are non-performing. So government purchasing the portfo-

(Continued on Page 2)

Belizean Wins KREM New Year's Race



Geovanni Choto, the new KREM New Year's Cycling Champion

Special Report by
Raynord Garbutt

Sixty eight riders made up the peloton for the 22nd Annual KREM New Year's Cycling Classic that got started at 9AM Sharp from the Northern Border. Of the 68 riders, ten were foreigners in the peloton, including last year's champion, Marco Salas of Costa Rica. Also in the peloton was two-time winner and record-holder for this particular event Marlon Castillo, who in 2008 set a time of 3 hours, 17 Minutes, the record that still stands today. Shane Vasquez, 2004 winner (and

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Mayor Lopez Honoured by The Queen

Story on Page 4



Simeon Lopez
Belmopan Mayor

From the Desk of the Chairman

Different Perspectives- One People



Delroy Cuthkelvin
Chairman, Editorial Board

On Sunday, New Year's Day, while driving on the Burrell Boom - Hattieville Road, I tuned in to KREM Radio and heard a Belizean song that was inspiring, patriotic and educational, all in one. I realized the DJ on duty was J.C Arzu, who I had gotten to know very well during my short stint back in the early 1990's at the fledging radio station at that time, and its well-established sister-organization, Amandala Newspaper.

I called in to inquire about the tune, specifically who was the artist. The person on the other end of the phone who, at that time, I thought was JC Arzu, gave me a quick and thorough schooling on the song, the artist and his background in a pleasant and enthused manner. It wasn't until I had hung up the phone and turned up the volume, that I realized the voice was not that of J.C. Arzu, but the big KREMANDALA boss himself, Evan X Hyde.

Now, I rarely offer commentary on personalities, as it is easier, much easier to be effective when one sticks objectively to the issues without calling names. But, as I listened to him conversing about the KREM New Year's Cycling Classic that was about to begin, in his usual, down-to-earth, nonetheless insightful style, it struck me, as it often has before, that Evan X Hyde, though not the most liked figure (whether fairly or not) is certainly one of our own Belizean gems. He is a man with a style and a perspective that is certainly unique, and sincere, I dare say, even if not always entirely accurate. Then again, is there any such thing as an accurate perspective? Doesn't the word itself suggest that we see the same thing from different angles, and therefore have a different view and interpretation of it?

Rene Villanueva, my old Radio Belize boss, was recently awarded an honorary doctorate by a local university. Much deserved, as Rene has made and continues to make his mark in his own way on Belizean society. I believe that such an award would be just as fitting for an Evan X Hyde. Now, if you see it differently from where you sit, no hard feelings. That's just your perspective, and this is mine.

In 2012, let us learn to respect each other and appreciate what and whom we have. Our problems at this juncture are too big, much too big, to bicker over minor matters. Respect!

The Millionaires versus The Masses

(Continued from Page 1)

lio from SSB is a purchase that is being done at a discount because the SSB, the portfolio, 60% is impaired, so what government is actually paying to SSB is \$6.9 million dollars for the mortgages that nominally value \$17 million dollars, and government also is not paying this money by way of any extraction from government cash flow.

There was an arrangement made by the PUP under which government had pre-paid some of securitization monies that were due from SSB to RBTT to whom SSB sold mortgages. And SSB therefore had this continuing obligation to re-pay those pre-payments made by government to government now and the amount currently owed by SSB to GOB is around \$9 million dollars, and by the end of the fiscal year, it will be up to around 11 to 12 million dollars."

The \$6.9 million dollars that government now has to pay to SSB in order to buy these mortgages so as to write them off and give the lease to people; that \$6.9 million will merely then be deducted from the \$9 million, soon to be \$12 million, that SBB in turn owes GOB. So while it is without a doubt a loss to the government and a financial outlay, what happens is that financial outlay is kept out of the monies owed to GOB by SSB."

Another quick fact is that the process is being conducted with the full knowledge of those directly concerned, the home owners, and the general Belizean public, unlike what the last PUP Government did when those mortgages were secretly transferred from the Ministry of Housing to SSB and then to RBTT.

Now, back to the issues of the write off, per se. As we noted, the PM explained that though the total value of the mortgages is \$7 Million, it would only be costing the Government \$6.9 Million.

But, what if it was indeed costing Government the full \$17 Million? Why should the PUP's have a problem with that figure? Wasn't that the exact amount that they, when they were the Government wrote off in taxes owed by Lord Ashcroft and the Belize Bank, causing the trade unions to take to the streets back in 2005?

Or is it that they have a problem with write offs having to do with the Social Security Board. Couldn't be! After all, it was they who wrote off \$3.34 Million

which the late Harry Courtenay, father of paid Ashcroft attorney Eamon Courtenay, had taken from SSB and which the courts ordered him to pay back. It was PUP lawyer and Senator Lisa Shoman, currently one of the most vocal opposition talking-heads, who went to court as attorney for SSB and declared to the Judge that SSB had no desire to enforce the judgment.

Or could it be that they only have a problem with SSB matters having to do with write offs and mortgages. Again, far from it, as it was yet another Shoman, Yasin Shoman, who as Chairman of the said SSB back in 2004, was forced to confess that he and his government had wilfully placed SSB in a position where SSB had to find over \$6 Million to pay off Glenn Godfrey's mortgages with DFC which had been securitized with a foreign bank and guaranteed by the SSB. That, again, was in effect, a write off at the expense of Belizean taxpayers.

So, you see, we have no choice but to conclude that what the strident voices in the PUP have a problem with is not so much government write-offs, but government write-offs that assist the masses as opposed to the millionaires.

That is a fact you can take to the bank. It's as good as any 17 Million Dollar cheque, or write-off!

Capital Weekly

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Reflections and Projections

PM Barrow Recounts the Achievements in 2011 And Outlines the Continuing Vision for 2012



Hon. Dean Barrow, Prime Minister of Belize

recorded in 2010. It was the highest growth rate since the economic recession hit home, and signals that we have in fact weathered the storm relatively well, something even the IMF has conceded.

The Productive Sector

The Prime Minister noted that the situation is even more encouraging when one examines the pillars holding up the structure, so to speak; our words, not his. Those pillars are the various areas of the productive sector. The Free Zone had recorded a 23% hike in year on year sales; Wholesale and Retail Trade was up by 7.7%; Hotel and Restaurants grew by 2.1 per-

quality and prices improved so that the industry is now poised, the PM said, for an outstanding season. In the cases of both the Corozal Free Zone and the Sugar Industry, both affecting the livelihood of thousand of Belizeans in the North, these successes have come after the Government intervened in various ways to avert impending crises and point the way towards necessary reforms in the respective sectors.

Job Creation & Poverty Alleviation

A strong economy is the foundation upon which a government and a nation builds a strong social struc-

One would have to be exceedingly biased and negative to not concede that Prime Minister Barrow's New Year's address last week was a

ments and deepen the successes.

The Economy

The main fact about Belize's Economic performance in 2012 is that



BSI Tower Hill Sugar Factory in Orange Walk

cent as a consequence of a 3.3% increase in overnight tourists; Transport and Communications went up by 2.5 percent; Construction by 7.4 percent; Fishing by as much as 14.5%; and while overall Sugar production fell, rations,

ture, a point driven home by PM Barrow when he remarked, "The economic success of 2011 meant that increases in export earnings, including in particular from crude oil, enabled Government to

(Continued on Page 14)



Central Bank of Belize



Fishing Boats in Belize City

particularly inspiring presentation, one most befitting the occasion, as New Year's is a time, like no other, for renewal and hope. Yet, the vision outlined by the Prime Minister was, as he put it, not newborn as the year itself, 2012.

It was more a reflection on what has already been accomplished and an outline of how to, again in his own words, strengthen the efforts, broaden the commit-

our Gross Domestic Product grew by over 3%, which is not exceptionally high, per se, but better than most, if not all its neighbors in the Caribbean at this time, and particularly encouraging in the context of current global conditions. That growth for the entire year is even better than was projected by the Prime Minister himself in his 2011 Independence Day Speech and better than the 2.4% growth

Queen Honours Mayor Simeon Lopez Attorney General BQ Pitts and Others



*Hon. B.Q. Pitts
Attorney General, also a
recipient of the Queen's
New Year's Honours*

Belmopan, Friday 30th
December 2011

In a News Release from Belize House in Belmopan, the Office of the Governor-General Announces that Her Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to make the following appointments to the MOST EXCELLENT ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE on the occasion of NEW YEAR HONOURS 2012:

Order of the British Empire
C B E
To be Ordinary Commander of the Civil Division of the said Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:

The Honourable Bernard Quentin Augustus Pitts, for services to the Law and Public Service

M B E
To be Ordinary Members of the Civil Division of the Said Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:

Anne Gillett-Elrington MD, PhD, for services to the Belizean Diaspora and Medicine
Louise Bridget Lewis, for services to Education and Community Development
His Worship, Simeon Lopez JP, for services to Education and Public

S e r v i c e
Ludwig Lightburn, for services to Sports and the Community
Enelda Regina Rosado, for services into Education and Community Development.
The date for the presentation of awards will be announced later.

Auditor General to Investigate KMH

5th January, 2012.

The Office of the Prime Minister announces that the Prime Minister, the Hon. Dean Barrow, today asked the Auditor General to look into allegations of wrongdoing at the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital (KMH) relating to the hospital's procurement practices.

The Office of the Auditor General will commence its investigation next week. (END)



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Public Notice

January 5, 2012

BWS submits Annual Review Proceedings (ARP) application

On December 23, 2011, Belize Water Services Limited (BWS) submitted its formal notification for an Annual Review Proceeding to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) for the determination or confirmation of the regulated values, rates, tariffs, fees and charges for the period April 1, 2012 through to March 31, 2013.

This submission is being made in accordance with Section 27, Part IV of Statutory Instrument 67 of 2002. The submission officially commences the company's Annual Tariff Review Proceeding.

BWS has informed the PUC that the company is not seeking any change in tariffs. BWS's submission is available for viewing at the branch offices of BWS and on its website at www.bws.bz, and at the PUC office at 41 Gabourel Lane, Belize City, and the PUC website at www.puc.bz.

Members of the public may participate in the ARP by submitting written comments on BWS' submission to the PUC by January 13, 2012, by email at info@puc.bz or in writing at the PUC office.

Where any person submits comments or information purported to be factual, such comments or information shall be accompanied by a sworn affidavit.

Three copies of all applications, reports, documents, comments or information provided by members of the public shall be filed at the PUC's office and a copy shall be provided to BWS at its principal office of business on the same day.

The PUC is required to issue an Initial Decision on the submission by January 23, 2012.

The licensee or an interested party representing users of at least 10% of the water supplied in the preceding year may submit written comments on the Initial Decision within 15 days.

Where there is no objection to the Initial Decision the PUC shall adopt it as its Final Decision.

BWS – Delivering Water and More ...

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HON. GASPAR VEGA



*Hon. Gaspar Vega
Deputy Prime Minister*

My Fellow Belizeans:

As this year draws to an end, we must look back and reflect on the events that have influenced our lives. 2011 has been a year of trials, tribulations, and triumphs! As a country, we were affected by world events that included the global economic and financial turmoil. At home, we continue the struggle to grow our economy even though the rest of the world is still challenged by the economic realities. Despite the many challenges and setbacks, 2011 has been a year of many achievements for which we should all be very proud!

As a Govern-

ment, we continue to invest almost \$200 million dollars annually in education. This ensures that all our children have access to quality education and that our people are able to compete regionally and globally.

We have delivered on our pledge to make the Lands Department more efficient, transparent and effective. To date, we have granted over 11,000 leases with almost 9000 to first time land owners; an additional 4000 leases will be granted to first time landowners in the first phase of the National Land Distribution program; we now have a national land use policy and integrated planning framework to guide the allocation and management of lands.

We have secured almost \$83 million in investments for the Belize Sugar Industry, including almost \$11 million in fuel subsidy to cane farmers and \$33 million for rehabilitation of sugar roads and we continue investing in infrastructure. Our government remains committed to support agriculture and agriculture enterprises throughout this country.

We have written off over 9,200 housing loans valued over \$66 million dollars the majority of these loans burdened low income families and our decision brought relief to them. The United Democratic Party Government in a historical move and after consultation with the people enshrined in our constitution the majority ownership of our public utilities in the hands of the Belizeans – a decision that is already paying dividends to the Belizean people! These are a few of our many accomplishments; however, I would be the first to admit that much remains to be done!

Belize, with the blessing of the Almighty, will continue to move forward in 2012; we will continue to provide for our people and we will strive even more to bring prosperity to all! Belizeans have always been a resilient and proud people; we have never been afraid of working for a better Belize! It is this resounding Sprit of community and togetherness of our people that allows me to convincingly say that 2012 will be a year of unprecedent-

ed triumph and progress for all Belizeans.

As we prepare to enter the dawn of the New Year, we do so with some uncertainty, but we must be mindful not to spend too much time looking behind us lest we trip over the opportunities that lie in front of us.

We must all welcome the New Year with a renewed sense of optimism; with new resolutions and new goals. We must realize that the New Year provides us the opportunity to unfold new horizons and realize new dreams, to touch the lives of those around us and to make Belize a better place to live and to visit.

With sincere hope for a better 2012, I take this opportunity to challenge all Belizeans to continue to unite, to stay vigilant, and to respect each other and always do what is best for Belize!

May the Good Lord continue to shower us with his compassion and his love in the days to come and may the New Year 2012 bring Peace and Prosperity for all Belizeans.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR
BELIZE!**



By **Zelda Hill**

In your moments of reflection on the past year I'm sure your thoughts lingered on those whose lives were suddenly and violently stolen from our midst. The news reports of senseless crimes wreaking loss, suffering and death seemed unparalleled. I'm also sure that in the New Year you resolve to do whatever it takes to make your children, your home and yourself safer and to avoid becoming an integer in the gloomy crime statistics of our marred jewel. But the assaults, robberies and murders are not the only symptoms of what has gone wrong with Belize; neither can they be cured by stronger law enforcements. Belize's relief will come when we target the source of the evil pervading our country, and the world at large, and when we look to the Word of God we see that the heart of the matter is truly a matter of the heart.

What about the heart of a robber who breaks into a family's home armed to kill whoever prevents him from securing his loot? The same heart was present in Cain thousands of years ago when he killed his brother Abel (*Genesis 4:8*). This heart condition is not a recent development! Thousands of years ago the prophet Jeremiah wrote that "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it (*Jeremiah 17:9*)?" The Jews symbolized the various aspects of a person by locating them in certain

physical organs and to them the heart was the organ of reason, intelligence and will. Even today the heart is commonly portrayed as the source of emotions, especially love and desire, but we often overlook the fact that it is also the source of murderous intentions.

What we cannot overlook is the fact that we are all born with the same heart condition that caused Cain to kill and that today causes murderers to callously end a life. It may be difficult to admit but there is no difference between a heart that leads a husband or wife to commit adultery and a heart that leads a murderer to kill, since they are both driven by selfishness and the natural inclination to please themselves rather than God. You may not have robbed your neighbor of valuable property or of his life but you may have a heart that is prideful and motivated to selfish ambition.

You may have a heart that impels you to have a light view of sin and to partially acknowledge and confess it. You may have a heart that is cold, filled with conceit, malice and ingratitude or one that shuns correction and is unconcerned about the ordinances of God. You may have a heart that willfully ignores divine things and even if you are aware of God's righteous standards you may have a heart that tends to stifle the convictions of your conscience. Ultimately, the condition of your heart contaminates your whole life and character and manifests itself through your attitudes and

actions that wound others and even yourself. Indeed, not only the murderer needs a new heart; we all do.

The gangster who holds a grudge, the absent and irresponsible father who deprives his children of love and attention, the family who ignores the hungry children living across the street, the politician who measures the value of a human being by a vote and pretends to care, the grocer who sells expired goods, the unapologetic or unforgiving spouse, the cable provider and the media personnel who endanger our children through sexual and violent messages, the mother who dresses her young daughter to attract men and even forces her to exchange sexual favors for money, the men and women who use their wealth and position of authority to abuse our children...we all need a new heart and it cannot be transplanted by anyone else but God.

He who knows the heart has its cure and from before the creation of the world God already had a plan, which was ultimately fulfilled in Christ. God foretold through the prophet Ezekiel (*36:26*): "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give

you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." Israel's greatest King, David, humbled himself and asked God for a new heart after he had committed adultery and murder. He asked God to cleanse him from within and clear his heart and spirit for new thoughts and desires (*Psalms 51:10*). No matter what condition your heart is in right now, God offers you a fresh start by forgiving your sins and equipping you with a new heart.

Your new heart will seek the benefit of your neighbor above yourself. Through His Holy Spirit living in you, your desires will be clean and constructive. The whole of your infected nature will be changed and you will have new appetites and passions. Your mind will be renewed, your understanding will be enlightened, your judgments will be corrected and your will refined to do what is right in God's sight. You will gain a heart that can feel love to God and to all men, a heart that will be a proper dwelling for the living God. Your greatest need for the New Year is a new heart and it is available from God on request.

Faith Lift

Your Greatest Need for the New Year is a New Heart

Capital Weekly

*From the Heart of the Nation
To the Soul of the People*



Greetings From The

Department of Transport

THERE'S A THIN LINE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

TRAFFIC SAFETY TIPS FOR DRIVERS

1. Check your motor vehicle to ensure that everything is in good working condition. Example- brakes, all lights, horn, wipers, tires, spare-tire, tire tools, oil, water, brake fluid & dash board gauges.
2. Ensure that your driver's license is valid and that your vehicle is licensed and insured.
3. Wear your seat belts at all times when on the highways. (It is an offence for drivers and front seat passengers not to wear seat belts on the high ways).
4. Don't carry passengers in the back of open pickup trucks. (Vehicle only insured to carry amount of passengers as stipulated on certificate of registration/title).
5. Don't drive if you are consuming Alcoholic beverages or taking medication (drugs). Have designated driver (alcohol and drugs affect your vision and judgement).
6. Avoid making calls on cell phone when driving, it is best to pull off to the right to make calls or to answer your cell phone, don't text while driving.
7. Wear your helmet at all times when operating or being carried as a passenger on a motor cycle.
8. Only overtake if you have a clear view of the road ahead, never overtake around blind curves or when driving over a hill.
9. Drive within the speed limit at all times.
10. Obey all traffic law and signs.



THINK! DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE

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Reasons

TO BE THANKFUL FOR THE PAST YEAR**AND TO BE HOPEFUL IN THE NEW YEAR**

1. Belize Economy recovering well; over 3 percent growth in 2011; IMF acknowledges, "Belize is weathering the financial crisis relatively well when compared with CARICOM peers."

2. Essential Utilities (Light, Water and Telecom) nationalized; Public Ownership enshrined in Belize Constitution.

3. Crop Quality dramatically improved in Sugar industry after GOB provides \$10 Million bailout, secures waiver from debtors, and forges memorandum of understanding, safeguarding livelihood of over 6,000 farmers and their families.

4. Corozal Free Zone recording 23 percent increase in year-on-year sales after GOB intervened to avert foreign exchange crisis; Hundreds of jobs also saved.

5. BTL introduces \$49 dollars per month Internet, GST removed (competing providers forced to reduce their rates). 10-10-199 calls reduced by 25 percent to United States, Central America, Caribbean and China.

6. BTL invests over 60 Million to upgrade service in remote areas; company's profits up and handsome dividends paid to local shareholders.

7. Electricity Rates going down (BEL, now owned by Government, applies to PUC for rate review).

8. BEL providing new electrification to 44 additional rural and peri-urban communities; 2,000 new households serviced in outlying areas of Belmopan, Benque, Succotz and Cayo South; Hattieville and Rockstone Pond (Belize District); in Orange Walk and Corozal; in Dangriga Town at Rivas Estate and Wagirale; and in villages of Stann Creek West; Toledo East and West.

9. European Union (EU) funds used for Electrification of villages in Banana Belt; Maya Mopan; Santa Cruz, Monkey River.

10. All affected homes repaired or rebuilt countrywide after Hurricane Richard.

11. Farmers rebound from Hurricane and flooding disasters with assistance

from Ministry of Agriculture and friendly countries like Venezuela and Taiwan.

12. No major storm in 2011, except freak storm in the South affecting bananas, and small tornado in Crooked Tree; immediate assistance provided by Government.

13. Venezuelan funds (\$20 Million) recovered, used to repair and build homes; GOB working with Mexico for new low-cost housing program similar to Venezuelan; GOB in the meantime spending \$5 Million of its own money for home-repairs and improvement;

14. More than 9,200 Housing Loans (\$62.6 Million) written off.

15. PM announces that Government will also purchase and write off \$17 Million in mortgages from Belize Social Security Board, benefitting 780 Belizean families (all mortgages of \$50 thousand or less).

16. DFC re-started; providing loans to students and small business at very low interest (8 percent); Receives additional BZ \$6 Million from CDF (Caricom Development Fund); Government considering converting DFC into full-scale national commercial bank.

17. Partial Scope Agreement allows Belizean exports to Guatemala; similar agreement with Mexico being negotiated (consultation meeting held in Corozal); shrimp already being exported to Mexico.

18. \$300 Subsidy for First and Second Form students countrywide; automatically awarded to those in Stann Creek and Toledo; Scholarships increased at all levels; Improved performance in PSE (Primary) and External Exams (Secondary).

19. New concrete buildings at Georgetown Technical High (Stann Creek District) to replace thatched-roof structures; First graduation held for over 50 students (attended by Education Minister Patrick Faber and Area Rep. Melvin Hulse).

20. New buildings at Mopan Technical High, Lady of Guadeloupe, St. Ignatius High,

101

Reasons

TO BE THANKFUL FOR THE PAST YEAR**AND TO BE HOPEFUL IN THE NEW YEAR**

Independence Sixth Form; Holy Ghost (Stann Creek); new High School at Corozon Creek; Ground broken for new School Building in Sunday Wood, Toledo; new primary and secondary school buildings countrywide, such as Hope Creek (Stann Creek); Santiago Layout School (San Ignacio); Roaring Creek Nazarene, Armenia and St Margaret's (Cayo South); Patchakan RC (Corozal North) and other schools renovated; new computer labs at several schools, like Stann Creek Ecumenical High and Independence Primary; New buildings for Stann Creek Ecumenical High School and Sixth Form; New building for Placencia Anglican Pre-school. Lynam reopened (ANRI); Old Technical College restored.

21. August Pine Ridge RC School Rehabilitation; Bella Vista Government School; Belmopan School Lunches Project; Benque Preschool Rehabilitation; Buena Vista School Building Construction Project; Cristo Rey RC School Rehabilitation; Epworth Methodist Primary School Extension (Dangriga); Guilisi Community Primary School Extension; Louisiana Government School new bathroom and fence project; Midway Government School Extension Project; Patchakan Pre-School repairs (Teacher's Lounge & Auditorium); Red Bank School Extension; Sacred Hearth College Classroom & Bathroom Rehabilitation; San Pedro Colombia Pre-School Building; San Vicente Primary School Extension; St. Augustine R.C School Rehabilitation; United Community Government Pre-School.

22. Pickstock Samuel Haynes Institute of Excellence; Belize City Catholic Diocesan Child Center Expansion project; Gracie Rock Resources Center; San Jose Succotz Resources Center; St. Anns Women Group Skills Training and Center Rehabilitation; National Kriol Council Organizational Strengthening & Skills Training;

23. Sister Cecilia Home for the Elderly; Belize City Mental Association Day Care; Hazel Hutchinson Helpage Building Completion; Hattieville Golden Haven Rest Home Completion.

24. Belize City Computer Skills Training Project; Corozal Bay Women's Group

Computer Training; Youth Education and Skills Training Project; Youth for the Future Skills Training & Maintenance.

25. Punta Gorda Resource Center & Computer Training Program; Roaring Creek Nazarene Resource Center.

26. ITVETs extended countrywide; UB expanded; Teacher-Training increased.

27. Educational and Economic Second Chance opportunities expanded; Monies approved for recurrent expenses for Magazine Road 'Second Chance' Project under Ministry of Education.

28. Belize and Mexico sign New Three-Year Educational and Cultural Cooperation Program.

29. Paving of Placencia Road completed; Last 9 miles of Southern Highway paved (Golden Stream to Big Falls) to complete project started by last UDP administration; Hopkins Road to be paved to complete loop with Sittee River Access Road.

30. New Two-Lane Bridge at Middlesex completed; New Kendall Bridge under construction; Mullins River put to tender; New Havana Creek Bridge being built in Dangriga; New Bridge to be built across Haulover in Belize City; and Four Lane Highway up to Burrell Boom.

31. Project underway to upgrade and pave highway from Big Falls (the Dump) to Belize-Guatemala Border just south of Jalacte (23 Miles of road); funded by OPEC, CABEL and GOB.

32. Paving of Road from Orange Walk Town to Blue Creek Village. Over \$62 Million for Rural Development and Sugar. Projects that commenced in January 2011 include Accompanying Measures for Sugar Phase Two, LOT A, Orange Walk to San Lazaro (8.3 Miles) being paved at \$8.6 Million; and Phase Two Lot C, Patchakan to Xaibe, Calcutta to Xaibe and San Roque to Xaibe (5.5 Miles for \$4.1 Million); Massive SIF-funded drainage project in Trial Farm (OW).

101

Reasons

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33. Albert and Regent Streets repaved; other streets upgraded and paved; Belize City Urban Rejuvenation Project provides hundreds of jobs; Lining of Collet Canal from Yabra to Conch Shell Bay to be done; also paving of full length of C.A Boulevard; Paving of Neal's Pen Road; Ben Bow Street; Amara Avenue; Jane Usher Boulevard (all part of Southside Poverty Alleviation Project Phase II); CISCO-pioneered initiative on Bishop Street moves to Ferrel's Lane and South Street upgrading to cement-paved standard; IDB Loan for drainage in North-side Belize City just signed, to affect Belama, Lizarraga, and some streets in Caribbean Shores; GOB launches \$30 Million Poverty Alleviation Project in Belize City (Ministry of Economic Dev in conjunction with CDB) to upgrade Infrastructure and provide jobs. (On top of OPEC \$4.2 Million for Southside Belize Housing Component). 300 persons being employed (additional to the 486 persons already employed through CYDP.

34. More than \$12 million on small business and countrywide poverty alleviation projects via Social Investment Fund (SIF).

35. \$350 Thousand Grant to small farmers for relief from Hurricane Richard; 4 Million from DFC made available to them; Taiwan assists Rice production in Toledo; Belize now self-sufficient in grains, surplus exported to Jamaica and Central America; Over 25 farmers from Orange Walk and Corozal get training in Tilapia Production (assisted by Technical Mission from Taiwan); Hon. Rene Montero distributed 3,500 tilapia fingerlings in Cayo.

36. Municipal Infrastructure Projects in district towns funded by World Bank; Trial Farm Drainage Project; GOB finds money to repair streets and roads countrywide after rainy season; Roads and Highways improved and rehabilitated countrywide, with new culverts installed at many locations to improve drainage; New bridges at Mexico Creek, Maypen and Rancho Dolores in Belize District; new bridges at San Antonio/Cristo Rey, Santa Familia, Billy White, Macal Low-level Crossing, and Roaring River (Arizona) in Cayo;

Repaving of Main Street in Bullet Tree Village.

37. Funds Secured for New Macal River Crossing in San Ignacio and connecting circuit from Santa Elena to Benque Viejo Road (\$50 Million Project, commencing in 2012).

38. Crooked Tree gets water system; Burrell Boom water system upgraded, projects underway to provide potable water to 9 villages in Belize River Valley (Bermudian Landing to Rancho Dolores); another project provides water system for villages along the Old Northern Highway (Corozalito, St. Ann's, Santana); Cotton Tree, St. Matthews and Frank's Eddy connected to Belmopan Water System; New and Upgraded Water Systems in Maya Center; Hope Creek, Hopkins, Seine Bight, Independence, Sittee River, Sarawee, Placencia, Monkey River, Mullins River; Santa Rosa/San Roman (Stann Creek); New water Systems built in San Luis (Orange Walk North) and other villages up North and countrywide; San Pedro and Caye Caulker Water System (IDB project).

39. Bella Vista Water System Upgrade and expansion; Benque Viejo/San Jose Succotz Water System Extension; Buena Vista Water System; Cowpen Village Water System (Stann Creek); Douglas Village Water System Upgrade (O.W.); Extension of Big Falls Water System to Dump Area (Toledo); La Gracia Water System Rehabilitation; Maya Mopan/Salvapan Water & Sanitation project (Belmopan); San Antonio Water System Upgrade (Cayo); San Felipe Water System (O.W.); San Luis Water System construction (O.W.); San Pedro Columbia Water System Upgrade (Toledo); San Roman/Rio Hondo Water System (O.W.); Yemeri Grove Water System (Toledo).

40. Marion Jones Stadium being upgraded; Civic Center being re-constructed by Mexican Government (\$15 Million Project);

41. Ministry of Sports intervenes to restore democracy in Football Federation of Belize (FFB) through agreement forged with FIFA; Hon. John Saldivar becomes first Belize Sports Minister to be elected Vice-President of the Americas Sports Council (in Brazil);

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Reasons

TO BE THANKFUL FOR THE PAST YEAR**AND TO BE HOPEFUL IN THE NEW YEAR**

42. Major upgrade of Norman Broaster Stadium in Cayo and Peoples' Stadium in Orange Walk; New sports facilities built in all parts of the country, for example new football field in Red Bank (Stann Creek) and Santa Elena (Cayo); upgrading and lighting of existing facilities such as Cotton Tree and Armenia Football Fields.

43. New Farmers' Markets in Cayo, Belize City and Independence; state-of-the-art Slaughter House in Belize River Valley; Belmopan will get new market (EU funds), in addition to World Bank funded municipal infrastructure project.

44. San Antonio Women's Group Chicken Slaughtering Facility inaugurated under Project of Poultry Rearing for income generating in Cayo District.

45. New Poly-clinic in Cayo; Western Regional Hospital (Belmopan) refurbished and upgraded; Corozal Hospital Upgraded with Lab and Operating Theatre; Toledo Hospital getting upgraded (new \$300 Thousand Maternity Annex); new Clinic and Ambulance in Benque Viejo; San Pedro Columbia Health Clinic Construction (Toledo); Libertad Health Center (Corozal); new clinics and refurbished hospitals countrywide; affordable Dialysis through WORTH (Hemo-dialysis Unit established at KMH); Free medical treatment in Venezuela (Mission Miracle).

46. Rehabilitation of Municipal Buildings in Stann Creek and Toledo.

47. NEMO made effective; new warehouses countrywide to stock up on relief supplies; Met Office gets new Doppler radar.

48. Public Transportation better regulated; Bus terminals established countrywide (including O.W. Town); Independence (Stann Creek) becomes the first village to get a full-scale bus terminal.

49. IDB funds Tourism Infrastructure, Solid Waste and Land Management projects.

50. Belize's first ICT Centre built and established with funding from Taiwan.

51. Petroleum Resources now unequivocally and constitutionally owned by Government and People of Belize.

52. Recall Mechanism empowers voters to recall failed Area Representatives before General Elections; Public Confidence in Government restored; Belize regains the trust of Bi-lateral and Multi-lateral partners.

53. Operation Restore Belize launched to restore social values, public safety and national pride.

54. Survey and subdivision of 3,884 residential and agricultural lots countrywide; all registered surveyors now contracted to survey over 4,709 acres identified by Ministry of Lands for allocation of building lots to first time landowners; includes 1,000 Acres on Western Highway for Belize and Cayo Districts; 1,000 in Orange Walk District; purchase price for first time land owners reduced to less than \$1,000 and immediate freehold title obtained upon payment of first installment; Over 3,000 House lots and farming plots issued in villages throughout Stann Creek West, most recently in Maya Mopan, San Roman, Santa Rosa, Red Bank and Sittee River; many more thousands already issued countrywide.

55. New Office Building for Natural Resources opened in Cohune Walk Area; \$5 Million being spent on new Land Management System.

56. New rural Fire Stations built in villages such as Pomona (Stann Creek) and Ladyville (Belize District).

57. Murder rate down in Belize City, thanks to Gang Truce; Jobs created through BELTRAIDE Training; Youth for the Future launches Southside Youth Success Project.

58. Streets paved in Belmopan; lines and safety features put in through SIF Project.

59. Venezuela donates farming machinery (tractor, grader, beans thrasher) and a new wa-

101**Reasons****TO BE THANKFUL FOR THE PAST YEAR
AND TO BE HOPEFUL IN THE NEW YEAR**

ter system to Ministry of Agriculture Central Farm Station through a grant from the ALBA fund.

60. Painting of Haulover; flags lining the Northern Highway into Belize City. Colored lights; welcoming palms newly planted (Spear-headed by First Lady, Mrs Kim Simplis Barrow).

61. Tourism on the rebound; 6.7% increase in second quarter overnight visitors; 16 percent jump in April Alone; for the first half of the year, hotel revenues rose by 17.8 percent; Overnight Tourism up by 3.3 % for the entire year (2011).

62. Improvement of Northern Road Network to paving standard (OW Town to Progresso; OW to Blue Creek; and between San Lazaro and August Pine Ridge to start).

63. IDB-Funded Sustainable Tourism Project (ground has been broken in San Ignacio for the new welcome center)

64. More than 5,000 persons benefitting from Food Pantry; enrolling another 7,000 in San Ignacio/Santa Elena and Benque Viejo.

65. Operation BOOST is providing monthly cash transfers to 4,300 persons.

66. Child Subsidy for Working and Single Mothers coming on stream.

67. Apprenticeship Program enrolling over 1,500 students in special classes countrywide (from St Peter Clever in the South to Corozal Community College in the North).

68. DNA Lab; refurbishment of National Forensic Science Service Building; Foreign Expert to be paid to train locals; new Scenes of Crime Vehicle; new legislation drafted to accept DNA evidence in Court. "Welcome to CSI Belize!"-PM Barrow.

69. Police get three new mobile interdiction units (two in the north and one in the south); Yabra Community Policing Unit.

70. New 911 call center to handle 70 calls

simultaneously; new Crimes Information Management System; electronic finger-printing machines already being installed in each district (to store and match fingerprints of suspects).

71. BELTRAIDE (Belize Trade and Investment Development Service) receives grant from Caribbean Aid for Trade and Regional Integration Trust Fund (CART-fund) administered by CDB (Financed by UK Dept of International Development) to develop National Export Strategy.

72. Fiscal Incentive Program being developed through BELTRAIDE to suit small and medium enterprises.

73. BELTRAIDE, in Conjunction with Regional Centre for Promotion of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise (CENPROMYPE) and Guatemalan Ministry of Economy, launches "Inclusive Linkages Project" (funded by Austrian Cooperation) to "incorporate Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Belize-Guatemala border region into established production chains".

74. Taiwan donates 200 thousand for "Inspiration Center Project" under office of Special Envoy for Women and Children, Mrs Kim Simplis Barrow (aimed at providing services for Belizean population living with disabilities).

75. A Grant of \$6 Million from Japan Social Development Fund (through World Bank) to improve Health and Nutrition of Children in the South (Toledo).

76. Airports extended and upgraded countrywide; construction started on New Office Building for Civil Aviation at International Airport (with VIP area in partnership with Ministry of Foreign Affairs), BZ\$1.35 Million project;

77. "Modernization of Voice Communication" System for Belize Air Traffic Services in the Department of Civil Aviation. New Website for Department of Civil Aviation launched, outlining responsibilities of the department, and facilitating online downloading and

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Reasons

TO BE THANKFUL FOR THE PAST YEAR**AND TO BE HOPEFUL IN THE NEW YEAR**

completion of forms and applications.

78. Higher Quality Healthcare - Innovative Electronic Record for Every Belizean.

79. Onion Producers and Ministry of Agriculture agree on quota system, and three planting seasons for farmers to cultivate 57 acres in Corozal, 26 acres in Orange Walk, and 8 Acres in Belize District.

80. BAHA Receives 10 new Pickup Trucks through IDB Loan; US \$500 Thousand to improve Agricultural Services to support production and export of agricultural products from Belize.

81. Belize Signs UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (148th signatory). Signing on Belize's behalf, First Lady Mrs. Kim Simplis Barrow.

82. Ministry of Agriculture receives \$100 Thousand worth of equipment from Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) through technical cooperation program, to strengthen the National Extension Service.

83. Santa Elena (Cayo) gets brand New Post Office.

84. Community Centers and multi-purpose buildings built or refurbished country-wide, such as Pomona (Stann Creek Valley), Maskall, Corozalito and St. Ann's (Belize Rural).

85. Belize Dental Department enhances dental services to rural area of Central Region through contribution by Western Kentucky University.

86. Free Butane delivered to residents in Cayo and Belmopan Areas through BNE.

87. Ministry of Health receives BZ\$200 Thousand for the Ministry's Child Survival, Education and Development Program, especially in recovery from Hurricane Richard.

88. 200 Acer Desk Top Computers with flat screen monitors handed over to IT-VET institutions countrywide by Education Minister Patrick Faber and Taiwan Ambassador David WU (Donated by Taiwan Government through Ministry of Education as part of Restore Belize Project).

89. Computers presented to St Hilda's Anglican Primary School by Hon. Rene Montero.

90. GST and Import duty removed from a wide range of items, keeping inflation at a minimum (Nil in 2010, less than 2 percent in 2011).

91. Western Paradise, a new village born at Mile 8 on Western Highway.

92. Belize National Coastguard establishes \$3 Million Operational Base at Calabash Caye to police Belize's territorial waters.

93. Hon. Rene Montero issues 101 house lots to youths in Cayo Central (their own 101 reasons to be thankful and hopeful)

94. Fisheries Act revised for better protection management of marine resources.

95. New vehicles (double-cab pickups) handed over by Minister of Agriculture to BAHA, CGA/Citrus Research Education Institute and to the Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (worth \$700 Thousand), obtained from OIRSA Mexico to implement Citrus Greening work plan.

96. Ministry of Agriculture launches Project Execution Unit (PEU) and National Coordinating Committee for Agriculture Research and Development (NCCARD) to fulfill national goals of Food Security.

97. Clean Energy project launched through \$10 Million grant from Japan (Photovoltaic electricity generation system in Belmopan to convert solar energy to electrical power to be sold to national electrical grid system.

98. Productive Sector doing well: Construction Up by 7.4%; Fishing up by 14.5 %; Citrus revenues up.

99. Contract for design and build component of the Solid Waste Management Project signed; 14 Million to be spent between January and July in Caye Caulker, San Pedro, San Ignacio and Belize City.

100. Millions more to be spent in the new year on home improvement and repairs across the nation.

101. 'Turning the Corner' Business Forum held; Business Development Facilitator being appointed in the Office of the Prime Minister to oversee the new relationship with the Private Sector.

Reflections and Projections

PM Barrow Recounts the Achievements in 2011 And Outlines the Continuing Vision for 2012



Police Passing Out Parade

Continued from Page 3

consummate a great leap forward in cementing its social agenda. Job-creating infrastructure projects were implemented; educational and economic second chance opportunities were expanded; and the wind was fully in the sails of our signature home improvement, food pantry and cash transfer programs."

Looking ahead to 2012, the PM announced that a countrywide money contribution for working mothers will join the apprentice-

ally paid dividends in 2011, as towards the last quarter of the year there was marked reduction in murders, relative in particular to the earlier three quarters. While the security forces did step their efforts and coordination, the relative peace towards the latter part of 2011 was no doubt due in large measure to the gang truce presided over by the PM himself, and the accompanying commitment and follow through in providing gainful employment for the parties involved.

Looking back and



PM Barrow thanked by Belizean citizens for enshrining in the Constitution public ownership of essential utilities

ship, food subsidy and BOOST programs, and that the drop-in centers in distressed Belize City neighbourhoods will help with community development, social recovery and violence prevention."

Safety and Security

Inextricably tied to job creation, economic opportunity and poverty alleviation is the issue of crime and safety in the community. The PM's personal conviction and persistence in this regard eventu-

ally paid dividends in 2011, as towards the last quarter of the year there was marked reduction in murders, relative in particular to the earlier three quarters. While the security forces did step their efforts and coordination, the relative peace towards the latter part of 2011 was no doubt due in large measure to the gang truce presided over by the PM himself, and the accompanying commitment and follow through in providing gainful employment for the parties involved. Looking back and

Democracy and Nationalism

A synopsis of the high points and national successes of 2011 would not be complete without recounting the noble initiative of the government, supported by the people, to regain control of essential utilities and preserve their public ownership by enshrining it in the country's Constitution. In that regard, PM Barrow proudly recounted, "Our democracy was also in fine flower. We maintained our commitment to accessibility, transparency and account-

began offering 49 dollars a month Internet, with GST having been removed from those services, thereby forcing the competition to also bring down their rates. The company also reduced 10-10-199 services by 25 % to frequently called countries. That's the Telecom side of things.

Meanwhile, on the Electricity side of things, the PM confirmed in his New Year's Address that rates are certainly and almost immediately going down, as BEL has already applied



Belize Telemedia Corporate Headquarters

ability; and we continued our forward march to true nationalism by way of the Constitutional enshrinement of public ownership of our essential utilities."

Lower Utility Rates

Besides the symbolism of national pride and sovereignty, the nationalization of the essential utilities are already bringing practical benefits to the Belizean people. Belize Telemedia, now owned by the government, invested 60 Million in the past year in upgrading services in some of the most remote parts of the country. The company, in 2011

for a rate review and reduction. The PM said that, based on the figures, the PUC might even reduce it further than BEL itself has requested. And he indicated that his government was prepared to implement legislative changes to fast track the reduction of electricity rates.

"The final decision will be on January 31, and the new, lower rates should under the current law take effect a few months thereafter. But we are a Government in a hurry to do good things.

And the ease to the consumer, the ease in the cost of living,

Continued on Page 15



Belize Electricity Limited Technicians at Work

Reflections and Projections

PM Barrow Recounts the Achievements in 2011 And Outlines the Continuing Vision for 2012

Continued from Page 14

the ease to business and industry and agriculture, can't wait.

Thus, Government will amend the law to implement from the very next day, February 1, 2012, this historic decrease in what Belizeans pay for electricity," the PM Stated.

One thing more about BEL, which the PM (perhaps in the interest of time) neglected to reiterate in his New Years Address, is the fact that since its re-nationalisation, the company has embarked on an aggressive drive to expand services to developing rural and

The Jalacte Road in the South, the Blue Creek one in the North, the Macal River Crossing in the West, the comprehensive Belize City drainage and street works, will all be hitting full stride.

The new Marion Jones stadium will be coming out of the ground; the new Civic Center will be rising from the rubble.

The contract for the design and build component of the Solid Waste Management Project has also been signed; and it will see 14 million dollars spent between January and July in Caye Caulker, San Pedro, San Ignacio and Belize City."



Virtual Reality - What the New Macal River Crossing in San Ignacio will look like when it is completed

peri-urban communities in every part of the country. This will no doubt continue into 2012.

Infrastructure

Since it took office, the Barrow administration has focused a lot on infrastructure, not just for job-creation, but for the long-term benefits to the people and economy. PM Barrow reiterated his government continuing emphasis on this key aspect of development. "In 2012, as one example, the infrastructure drive, and the jobs it brings, will scale new heights.

Land & Housing

Already announced in his 2011 Independence Day Speech, the Prime Minister reiterated his government's initiative to provide thousands of new residential and agriculture lots for first-time land owners; and he gave an update on specific steps towards fulfilling that commitment.

"Every single registered surveyor in this country has now been contracted to work on the subdivision of the 4,709 acres identified by the Ministry of Lands for the allocation of



New Building Housing Lands and Survey Ministry and Department



Social Security Board Corporate Headquarters in Belmopan

building lots to first time land-owners," the PM reported.

Having recovered the Venezuelan housing funds diverted by leaders of the last PUP administration, the government of PM Barrow was able to provide valuable help to citizens around the nation to repair and upgrade their homes.

The PM announced, in his New Year's address that his Government was determined to find new sources of funding, as "millions of dollars will continue to fund Government's home improvement and home repairs across the nation."

Board (SSB) are valued at 50 thousand or less, as the government would be purchasing and writing off those mortgages.

Partnership with the Business Sector

The PM's final announcement was of particular interest to the private sector/business community. He prefaced the announcement by reiterating the fact that there is a need for an equal partnership between government and the private sector, by recounting that in this regard the right start was made late in 2011, and



'Turning the Corner' Business Forum at Old Belize Resort Attended by P.M. Barrow and top Government Officials

And then he dropped the particularly good news that, in addition to the 9,200 loans (\$62.6 Million) already written off by the Ministry of Housing, his Government would early in the New Year, 2012, be offering similar relief to another 780 families whose mortgages with the Social Security

by acknowledging the need for this new partnership to be consolidated in the year ahead.

"Government is therefore, among other things, appointing a Business Development Facilitator in the Office of the Prime Minister to help oversee the new relationship," he announced.

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Education is the Foundation

and Youths are the Future

To our Students, Teachers and all Belizeans

HAPPY NEW YEAR

**Let us continue
to invest in the
future and build
our nation
on a strong
foundation**



From Hon. Patrick Faber

*and the capable team at
the Ministry of Education*

MENSAGE DE AÑO NUEVO 2012 DEL VICE-PRIMER MINISTRO EL HON. GASPAR



*Hon. Gaspar Vega
Vice Primer Ministro*

Mi Querido Pueblo Beliceño:

Al concluir un año más tomemos un momento para reflexionar en los acontecimientos que influyeron en nuestras vidas. El año en curso se caracterizó por los muchos retos, inquietudes y por supuesto por sus triunfos.

Como toda nación, seguimos sintiendo los efectos del receso económico global pero esto no nos ha hecho dar marcha atrás--- Seguimos fomentando nuestra economía. Belice sigue desarrollando. El año 2011 ha sido un año de muchos retos, pero también de muchos logros.

Nuestro gobier-

no sigue invirtiendo en la educación de nuestros hijos. El aporte anual a la educación es de casi 200 millones de dólares. Nuestro compromiso es de proveer una educación de la más alta calidad para todo Beliceño para poder competir en el ámbito nacional e internacional.

Nuestro Departamento de terrenos ahora funciona con más eficiencia y con mucha más transparencia. Hasta la fecha hemos otorgado más de 11,000 arrendamientos y de estos, 9,000 son a personas que nunca antes habían obtenido un lote. Muy pronto, bajo el programa de Distribución de Terrenos Nacionales, se le aprobarán 4,000 arrendamientos más a personas que nunca antes habían conseguido un terreno. Hoy en día la distribución de terrenos es más transparente y más equitativa.

Todos hemos sido testigos de los retos que la industria azucarera ha enfrentado en los últimos dos años. Este gobierno sigue

firme en el apoyo a esta industria. Es por eso que hemos adquirido casi 83 millones de dólares en inversiones a esta industria. Esto incluye 11 millones de dólares en forma de subsidio al costo del combustible utilizado por todo cañero. Hasta la fecha se ha invertido 33 millones de dólares en rehabilitación de caminos azucareros.

A pesar de los atrasos causados por los desastres naturales y el incremento en los precios de los alimentos, a nivel mundial, seguimos con la determinación de invertir fuertemente en el campo de la agricultura y también en el mejoramiento de la infraestructura a nivel nacional.

Este año, en apoyo a los Beliceños de bajos ingresos, nuestro gobierno perdono más de 9,200 préstamos de casas de vivienda con un valor de más de 66 millones de dólares.

En este año se hizo historia cuando nuestro gobierno después de consultar con nuestro pueblo,

plasmó en nuestra constitución que los Beliceños sean dueños mayoritarios de las utilidades en nuestro país. Esta decisión ya está generando ganancias para todo Beliceño.

Este año hemos tenido muchos logros pero soy el primero en admitir que aun hay mucho más por hacer.

Nuestra nación, con la bendición de Dios seguirá adelante en el año 2012, y con la ayuda de Dios, nuestro gobierno seguirá proveyendo para nuestra gente y nos esforzaremos aun más a traer prosperidad a todo Beliceño.

El año venidero promete ser un año lleno de oportunidades. Tomo esta oportunidad para desafiar a todos a trabajar arduamente para realizar nuestros sueños y para mejorar nuestra calidad de vida.

A Dios le pido que nos colme de bendiciones, amor, paz y prosperidad en el año 2012.

**F E L I Z
AÑO NUEVO A
TODO BELICE.**

Belizean Wins KREM New Year's Race



Raynord Garbutt
Special Sports Correspondent

(Continued from Page 1)

the last Belizean to win the Cross Country), was right in there as well.

This annual event, which got started back in 1990 under the guidance of Gerald Garbutt, is the second biggest classic in the country, second only to the Annual Holy Saturday Cross Country Cycling Classic., which is now going into its 84th year.

Ten minutes into the start of last Sunday's New Year's race,

a five-man breakaway made good its escape from the peloton. In that break were former Cross Country Champion Ernest 'Jawmaine' Meighan, riding for Team Santino's; Byron Pope, riding for Benny's Megabytes; Giovanni Choto; riding for Western Spirits; and two other cyclists.

As the five riders, who were averaging a speed of 30 Miles per Hour, opened the gap to fifty four seconds, those in the peloton were satisfied just to hang in there within sight of the breakaway. But upon reaching Mile 88, young Byron Pope and Geovanni Choto decided to make a break (from the breakaway) in pursuit of the station prize at that location.

The break was successful for those two riders as they begun opening up the gap between themselves and the other three riders in the original breakaway, who were by this time being caught by the main peloton.

The duo of Byron Pope and Giovanni Choto began sharing the station prizes between themselves while working for each other, also sharing the pacing. They soon had

a gap of an entire minute and a half on a group of ten riders who had managed to break out of the peloton. In that group of riders, who had broken from the peloton in pursuit of the leading duo, were John Delong, a foreigner riding for Team Hincappi; Marlon Castillo for Team Santino's, Peter Choto riding for Western Spirits; Leroy Casasola, Edward Reyes riding for D & G, Roy McKenzie riding for C-Rays, along with four other riders.

They were now chasing the two riders upfront at an average speed of 30 Miles per Hour, and no letting up. At Mile 69, the duo of Pope and Choto was now caught by John Delong, Marlon Castillo and Peter Choto to make it five riders strong in the lead. For the next ten miles, this group kept the pace high, while the others were hot on their wheels with one mission, that of reeling them in.

At Mile 59, the chase group having their target in sight and closing in, kept up a high tempo while working together. The effort paid off for Leroy Casasola, Edward Reyes of D & G and Roy Menzies of C-Ray, as they caught

the five riders and were now in it for the big station prize that was coming up in Orange Walk Town at the Shell One Stop Gas Station.

This prize for the cyclist is the biggest within the first 40 miles of the race. It is always aggressively pursued and sought after.

Last Year, it was captured by Nissan Arana. The big question on everybody's mind at this juncture (as the eight riders positioned themselves for the prize) was, who would it be this time?

The eight lead riders, having a comfortable two-minute lead on the peloton, were now entering Orange Walk Town with one thing on their minds, capturing that \$ 1,000 cash. The sprint was on; and when the dust settled, it was Roy McKenzie of C-Ray who won the prize.

In the back, those in the peloton, knowing they were now 2 minutes behind, were chasing feverishly, but Chris Harkey (former Cross Country Champion), riding for Team Hincappi, got on the pace trying to slow it down for his teammate, John Delong,

(Continued on Page 19)



Manuel Herrera, First Place, Masters



Zahir Figueroa, First Place, Youth

Belizean Wins KREM New Year's Race

Continued from Page 18

who was in the lead group of eight riders. But the peloton wouldn't have any of that, and continued to press on trying to close the gap on the frontrunners who were still maintaining a pace of 25 to 26 mph.

Upon reaching Mile 39, Marlon Castillo launched an attack, to which none of the others riders responded. He was soon on his way to Belize City all by himself—at least for the time being—opening up a 54 second gap between himself and the chase group, and later, one minute and forty seconds within the next five miles.

As he continued to pick up station prizes, fatigue became a factor for this two-time winner of the KREM New Year's Cycling Classic. At the junction with the Old Northern Highway inside Sand Hill (also known as the Maskall Road), Marlon Castillo was caught by the chase group of John Delong, Peter Choto, Giovanni Choto, Byron Pope, Edward Reyes and Leroy Casasola. Roy McKenzie could not hold on to that group, so he was dropped by them.



Oscar Quiros , First Place, Junior, in the lead (far right)

The race was now seven strong going into Ladyville, with the peloton still coming. At Ladyville, Giovanni Choto and Byron Pope once again tried to make a run from the other riders and momentarily managed to open a gap of about 45 second on the chase, but John Delong wouldn't let them get out of his sight. He

mounted a fierce chase and promptly reeled them back in. So, the lead group was up to seven again.

At Mile 7, Giovanni Choto made a solo attempt, and this time he rode all the way to the finish, for the victory in the 22nd KREM New Year's Cycling Classic.

Thirty seconds later came Byron Pope, who took Second Place,

followed by Peter Choto in Third Place, John Delong in Fourth place, and Marlon Castillo in Fifth Place.

The new Female Champion is Kaya Cattouse of C-Ray; Junior Champion is Oscar Quiros; Masters Champion is Manuel Herrera; First Place Youth, Zahir Figueroa; and First Place Masters Category 2-3, Orson Butler .



Kaya Cattouse, Female Champion



Orson Butler, First Place, Masters 2 -3

UNITED DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Belmopan City Council Candidates

March 2012



Simeon Lopez – Mayoral Candidate

Educator for 40 years; Graduate of Western Australia School of Advanced Education- Perth Australia; Resident of Belmopan for 38 years; Completing second term as Mayor of Belmopan.



Joel Westby

Educator and community activist. Presently teaching at Kuxlin Ha Government School (Maya Mopan). Has worked with the Red Cross, HelpAge and Cancer Society and has served as an officer in the Volunteer Battalion of the Belize Defence Force. Internationally accredited softball umpire and current Chief Umpire for softball in the country of Belize.



Anna Guy

Community activist. A part of her neighborhood committee spearheading neighborhood initiatives and advocating for progress. Owner of Emjay's Beauty Salon.



Amilcar Umaña

Educator at the Belmopan Comprehensive School since 1991 and head of the Information Technology department for the past nine years. Graduate of the University of Belize with summa cum-laude distinction. CXC examiner since 1998 and co-author of five computer textbooks; presently pursuing double Masters Degree in Information Technology.



Steven W. O'Brien

Certificate in Economics, Sixteen years experience in Accounting and Management of Food, Beverage, Construction and Tourism Industries, Community Organizer, Sports Organizer, Social and Cultural Activist.



Tita Balona

Primary school teacher at St. Martin's Primary School in Salvapan, Belmopan. Currently pursuing a degree in primary education at the University of Belize.



Victor Perdomo

Businessman. Currently pursuing a Law Degree. Served as Deputy Mayor and councillor for two terms.