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on behalf of PJIAE N.V.
PR2012/006

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NewsRelease

PJIAE air traffic controllers now certified instructors

MAHO, St. Maarten (July 4, 2012)—Five air traffic controllers of the Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIAE) proudly received their instructor's certificates on June 29, 2012 at the PJIA control tower.

The controllers received their certifications from the Florida-based Pan Am International Flight Academy. The controllers are now Certified On-the-Job Training Instructors and three within the group also received certification as Certified Classroom Instructors.

The graduates are Duncan van Heyningen, Sophia Rismay, Shevlin Francis, Reynaldo Richards, and Philmore Watson.

Certified Classroom Instructors are qualified to provide theoretical training to air traffic controller trainees and Certified On-the-Job Training Instructors are qualified to provide the operational training for putting the theory provided in the classroom into practice on the job, said Gregory Hassell, manager of PJIAE's Control Tower and Flight Information Office.

Director of Air Traffic Services Raul van Heyningen sees the culmination of the four-week Certified Instructor Course in part as, "the willingness of the course instructor Gabriel Virlan to fly to the island to give the course and the willingness and interest of the group to learn; often opting to learn more information by missing out on lunch breaks."

Course instructor Virlan participated in the presentation of the certificates to the graduates, whom he said made up the best group he has worked with over the seven years he has instructed this course. He received a heartfelt "Thank you" from the group of new instructors.

Reynaldo Richards said that their instructor was very forthcoming, going beyond the scope to enlighten the group of learners. The graduates also thanked the management of PJIAE "for having the foresight to see the need for the training to prepare our St. Maarten staff for the future," said Hassell.

Regina LaBega, the Managing Director of PJIAE, said that passionate people also made the occasion possible. "You can have all the knowledge, but without passion it will never work," said LaBega.

The knowledge and passion within the group of air traffic controllers could also very well contribute to the goal of establishing the first certified air traffic control academy on the island. Hassell said that "the air traffic controllers look forward to exercising their new knowledge and dealing with the challenges to meet this goal" in the future.

LaBega sees the possibility of a flight academy as one that will "serve the region and further serve as an institution for educational diversification and an economic pillar to the economy of St. Maarten. It will provide numerous opportunities for the island, especially within the tourism industry and will further impact the island's trade and industry."

LaBega said that PJIAE was pleased to work with the Pan Am International Flight Academy – the same school that trained PJIAE's radar controllers in 2001 – "to equip the

airport's staff with knowledge that they too can share with the island and the region. The air traffic controllers are ready to make a difference with the enhanced techniques.”

The controllers closed the graduation ceremony by saying: “We love this job!”

Photo caption:

PJIAE air traffic controllers' Certified Training Instructors graduation, (L-R): Gregory Hassell, Manager, PJIAE Control Tower and Flight Information Office, Gabriel Virlan, course instructor, Pan Am Academy; graduates Philmore Watson, Sophia Rismay, Shevlin Francis, Reynaldo Richards, Duncan van Heyningen, Regina LaBega, Managing Director, PJIAE, Raul van Heyningen, director, PJIAE Air Traffic Services. (*PJIAE photo*)