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NewsRelease

Five PJIA air traffic controllers leave for radar training in Trinidad

SIMPSON BAY, St. Maarten (March 14, 2012)—Five Air Traffic Controllers departed the Princess Juliana International Airport for Trinidad on Saturday to pursue a six-week Basic Radar Course, moving one step closer to becoming Certified Radar Controllers.

Those who will be upgrading their skills at Trinidad's Civil Aviation Training School are Sophia Peterson-Rismay, Elcardo Morris, Dangelo Gumbs, Andrew Williams, and Elymas Richardson. They were all previously trained in Aerodrome/Approach control in Canada in 2003-04, and had received their ratings in Aerodrome/Approach Control.

Director of the ATS Division Raul van Heyningen, said the minimum requirement is four years experience before becoming a certified radar controller.

This time around, the controllers will follow about three months of on-the-job training after their return to St. Maarten in order to become certified Radar Approach Controllers. This will bring to 14, the total number of certified radar controllers, and seven to the number of Aerodrome/Approach controllers at PJIA.

Van Heyningen said the five controllers are currently qualified aerodrome/approach procedural controllers. "When they are finished with the approach radar course, they will undergo on-the-job training in approach radar control. They will then do a practical exam and become certified Approach Radar Controllers in addition to their previous procedural rating."

He explained that the first group of radar controllers was sent for training in 2001 at the Pan Am Flight Academy in Miami, Florida.

Van Heyningen noted that the airport typically conducts an investigation to determine availability and suitability of schedules, before determining which flight school to utilize for training of its air traffic controllers. A request for placement would then be submitted to the chosen training school.

The ATS division director said that it is necessary to continue upgrading its ATCs to remain current with new requirements in air traffic control, as well as to replace those who have retired.

Both Peterson-Rismay and Morris said they are excited about the opportunity to upgrade. "I will be returning with my diploma and after on-the-job-training of about three months and successfully completing the final practical exam, I will be certified," said Peterson-Rismay.

Photo caption:

PJIA air traffic controllers (L-R): Andrew Williams, Dangelo Gumbs, Sophia Rismay, Raul Van Heyningen (ATS division director), and Elcardo Morris. Not pictured is Elymas Richardson. *(PJIA photo)*