

Contact

Ms. Kalifa Hickinson
Marketing & Communications
PJIA
khickinson@pjiae.com

P.O. Box 460
Philipsburg, St. Martin
Caribbean
Tel (599) 554-7089
E-mail: Offshoreediting@gmail.com

Offshore Editing Services

NewsRelease

Princess Juliana Int'l Airport believes in the 'greening and re-greening' of St. Maarten

Calls made for businesses to invest in environment at Blue Flag tree-planting

BELAIR, St. Maarten (May 13, 2012)—Princess Juliana Int'l Airport, as Blue Flag-designated company for April, in collaboration with Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC) and St. Maarten Nature Foundation, initiated a tree-planting ceremony along Belair Road on Friday, May 11, to culminate its Blue Flag activities and show its commitment to environmental issues.

PJIAE Managing Director Regina LaBega, quoted Frank Lloyd Wright in her remarks, noting "The best friend ... of man is the tree," and added that "the airport believes in the environment and in the greening and re-greening of St. Maarten."

LaBega said that, "Environmental sustainability and economic sustainability go hand in hand and, as PJIAE is a good corporate citizen, (it) will continue to collaborate with organizations of this nature to improve the environmental state of the island."

EPIC Project Manager Rueben Thompson said that, "St. Maarten is no stranger to environmental challenges ... from 1960 we have seen a decline in the number of ponds on the island and Little Bay Pond (which is in the Belair area), is one of the remaining ponds on the island that is ideal for planting trees to help maintain that environment."

The trees that were planted along the Belair Road/Little Bay Pond bank were Sea Grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*) and Green and Silver Buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus*). "Both species are hardy and adapted for this environment and require little to no maintenance," said Thompson.

A total of nine trees were planted along the Belair Road/Little Bay Pond bank.

Ten airport employees, including management, took part in the tree-planting activity along with representatives from EPIC, which included visiting research students, and the Nature Foundation, which brought along two St. Maarten students.

Princess Juliana Int'l Airport called on companies in St. Maarten to collaborate with environmental groups and lauded organizations like EPIC and Nature Foundation for their continued efforts in raising environmental awareness among the general public.

Last month, during the St. Maarten Carnival festivities, numerous garbage cans throughout the Festival Village bore the Blue Flag label. Earlier in April, the airport placed garbage cans with the Blue Flag logo at Mullet Bay Beach during the Easter holidays as a public reminder to keep the environment clean.

"Mobilize the Earth" was the theme for this year's international Earth Day, said Thompson, and he wanted to bring that theme closer to home. So he adapted the slogan to, "Mobilize St. Maarten," with the involvement of PJIAE in environmental efforts. Thompson said the airport's involvement was also a way to increase business sector interest in participating in environmental protection and conservation for the benefit of the whole island and its people.

The Blue Flag program is a prestigious international eco-label for beaches, marinas, and tourism destinations. Through the Blue Flag program St. Maarten is part of some 40 Blue Flag destinations around the world.

The eco-label is recognized as a symbol of quality by governments, NGOs, and the travel industry. The Blue Flag label is also used to promote the awarded beach, marina, hotel or destination.

Photo Caption1:

Students look on while PJIAE Managing Director Regina LaBega assist EPIC Project Manager Rueben Thompson (L) during tree-planting ceremony along Belair Road/Little Bay Pond bank (5.11.12). The planting of nine trees culminated the airport's Blue Flag environmental conservation activities. (*PJIAE photo*)