

Throne Speech 2004

Delivered by HE The Governor Mr. Bruce Dinwiddy, CMG, 2 July.

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Introduction

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is a great honour for me to present to you my second Throne Speech, in this finely refurbished Chamber.

I feel that we have come a long way since my first Throne Speech, presented in Cayman Brac nearly 16 months ago. We have successfully managed, even if not totally eliminated a tension which had arisen shortly before that time in Cayman's relations with the United Kingdom. We have achieved this, despite the problems posed for Cayman's financial services industry by the European Union Savings Directive and the failure to bring to a conclusion the negotiations with the United Kingdom on a new Constitution.

I remain conscious that a key part of my role as Governor is to provide a bridge between George Town and London. That bridge and its supporting structures were largely designed many years ago, some would say in another age. Some changes are long overdue. And I strongly believe that is in our joint interest to continue to work for Constitutional reform, even if there are different perceptions about how far it should go. I hope that opportunity will be taken during the forthcoming election campaign to take forward debate in Cayman on this, and to ascertain more clearly what proposals the electorate would like the new government to make to London next year.

Meanwhile, this occasion gives me the opportunity to pledge my continuing commitment to work with you all, with the public service, with the private sector and the wider community, to the best of my ability and within the parameters prescribed by the Constitution, for the benefit of our Islands and our people.

To this end, I am glad that public sector reform has been further advanced since I first addressed this Honourable House, after my swearing-in, in May 2002. The Public Finance and Management Law poses some big challenges, and I commend the many people, including Hon Ministers and other Members of this Assembly, who have striven so hard to meet them. I believe there will be substantial benefits, in terms of improved public service and better value for the money voted by this House for public expenditure.

I hope that the reforms associated with the Financial Management Initiative will soon be complemented by reform of personnel management in the civil service, through the passage in this House of a new Public Service Law.

I meanwhile take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Hon James Ryan CBE, Chief Secretary, who will be retiring at the end of October after ten distinguished years in that office. We wish Mr Ryan a long, healthy and happy retirement. I announced earlier this year that he will be succeeded as Chief Secretary by the Hon George McCarthy OBE, whose place as Financial Secretary will be taken by Mr Ken Jefferson. These two appointments will take effect on 1 November.

I turn now to report on the activities and plans of various Ministries, portfolios and Departments, starting with a new Department, the Cabinet Office, which is already strengthening our machinery of government.

Cabinet Office

The Cabinet Office which in July 2003 replaced the office of Executive Council is guiding coherent and informed policy-making across the whole range of Government activity by coordinating the development and implementation of policy between Ministries and Portfolios and across the wider Government domain.

Judiciary

The main objective for the Judicial Department with the support of the Government is to expand the Court premises. The Courthouse was built in 1972 and is now grossly inadequate for the judiciary's needs.

Government property at Half-way-Pond has been identified as the site for the new Summary Courts Building.

The Judicial Administration, the Attorney General's Department, the Administration of the Legislative Assembly and the Government Information Services Department will make a collaborative effort to establish a Cayman Islands Judicial and Legal Services Website in 2004.

Portfolio of Internal & External Affairs

The Elections Amendment Bill 2004 will be presented to the House during this meeting. The amendments will introduce much needed changes to the law.

Personnel

The Personnel Department is looking forward to the enactment of the Public Service Bill and will develop Regulations to complement this.

Government Information Services

The overall goal for 2004/05 for the Government Information Services will be to continue strengthening the quality of its services.

Major focus will continue on identification and training of civil servants as departmental press officers, while strengthening media-relations skills among top civil servants.

GIS will also be refining its internal systems with regard to its revenue earning capacity. Introductory efforts in 2004/05 will include offering chargeable training workshops to the private sector in areas such as media relations, speechwriting and public speaking.

Royal Cayman Islands Police Service

The Police Department will commence this financial year with a full establishment of officers. To complement our high-quality local personnel, experienced officers were recently recruited from the United Kingdom, the Caribbean and Canada. Additionally, the Police and the many Security Firms in the islands are working on an accreditation scheme to include security guards as an extension to the RCIPS. They will also acquire a mobile Police Station to provide a police presence where required.

The Police are taking forward these initiatives with enthusiasm. I share the Commissioner's vision of a more professional, effective service enjoying the full confidence of the public, with a well resourced work force, well trained and well equipped, making the best use of technology and enjoying strong leadership and effective management, all aimed at reducing crime and the fear of crime and improving the quality of life in our community.

They are also considering ways of strengthening our capability for coastal surveillance with the possible purchase of new equipment for drug interdiction and search and rescue.

Legislative Department

There is another challenging year ahead for the Parliament and its officers. The Department has recently returned to its newly renovated building though certain items still require completion. The building was shut down in February 2003 for major renovations.

Under the auspices of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, arrangements have been made to hold a Post-Election Seminar for all sitting Members of the Parliament in February 2005.

Also the Legislative Assembly website is currently being designed, in collaboration with the Judicial and Legal Departments. It is planned, through a link to the Parliamentary website, to make laws available online.

Immigration

A major focus of the Immigration Department in 2004 will be the introduction and application of the new Immigration Law and regulations.

The Department will also focus its enforcement efforts on detection of undesirable persons through the use of intelligence and enhanced information systems developed "in house".

At the airport, the Department will extend expedited immigration clearance to frequent visitors, including those who own homes in the Islands, through the Caypass system successfully launched in late 2002.

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Portfolio of Legal Affairs

The Portfolio of Legal Affairs will continue its efforts to enhance Cayman's ability to participate in the global fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism. All our anti-money laundering legislation will be consolidated to provide for a single regime.

The portfolio in consultation with the Judiciary is committed to ensuring that the criminal justice system continues to work efficiently and fairly and in the course of the year will introduce legislation to further this aim. It will include amendments to the Penal Code and new legislation to provide for alternative sentencing in the form of community service orders, conditional sentences, and measures to deal with certain drug offenders.

The Legislative Drafting Department expects an extremely busy year, and will be focusing on legislation in Social, Education, Financial, International and other fields.

The Law School will reinstate a redesigned Professional Practice Course, which will be more skills based and supported by locally produced course manuals.

Portfolio of Finance & Economics

The implementation of a major public relations campaign to heighten awareness within the global financial services market place of the significance of the Cayman Islands as an international financial

centre and to demonstrate the relevance of its contribution to commerce within the global financial community will continue in 2004/2005.

Also, the Portfolio will continue to participate in influencing existing and emerging international standards being promulgated by standard setting bodies to ensure their consistency with practices deemed appropriate in fostering the continuing growth and development of our financial industry.

In relation to fiscal affairs, one of the key undertakings of the Portfolio during the fiscal year 2004/2005 will be to manage the issues which may develop as a result of accounting for the activities of Government in accordance with the Public Management and Finance Law.

Two of the three phases of the Financial Management Initiative have been completed. The third and final phase is the delegation of greater input decision making authority to Chief Officers. This is scheduled to take effect from 1st July 2005.

Other notable undertakings for the Portfolio during 2004/2005 include the establishment of a Revenue Unit. Its initial focus will be to enhance revenue collection from existing sources. In the medium to longer term, the Unit will examine possible new revenue sources for Government as well as develop, in conjunction with other Government agencies, revenue behaviour models.

Cayman Islands Monetary Authority

The Authority intends to nurture the continued growth of the financial services industry, and to enhance legislation to ensure that it continues to meet international regulatory standards.

The outlook for business activity during the upcoming fiscal year remains good, with signs of significant growth, particularly in the insurance, mutual funds and fiduciary services sectors.

On the international front, the Authority will address issues arising from the International Monetary Fund report to ensure that the jurisdiction continues to be supervised in accordance with international standards.

General Registry

Prospects for the registration of new companies in the fiscal year 2004/2005 look bright.

The web-based Cayman Online Registry Information System that was launched in September 2003, will receive further enhancements. An exercise to update the Registry's electronic database with companies' officers and directors has just begun.

Shipping Registry

The Shipping Registry will expand its representative office in Greece to include on-site survey capability. It is exploring the possibility of opening offices in Germany and the Far East.

Cayman Islands Stock Exchange

As of March 4th 2004, the Cayman Islands Stock Exchange was granted "recognized stock exchange" status by the UK Inland Revenue. This will increase the number of companies wishing to list on the Exchange. The Exchange will continue in 2004/2005 to pursue further recognitions from overseas regulators.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat will continue its monitoring, analysis and reporting functions with respect to opportunities and challenges for the financial services industry, especially in the area of international initiatives, including those originating from the OECD and the EU.

Budget & Management Unit

The Budget and Management Unit will work to enhance the capability of the Civil Service in Strategic Management, Financial Management, Personnel Management and Production Management.

The Unit also plans to assist in the preparation of legislation and regulations relating to public authority reform to ensure consistency with the Public Management and Finance Law, the Financial Management Initiative and Personnel Reform.

Internal Audit Unit

The Internal Audit Unit will focus on revenue systems within government agencies, statutory authorities and government-owned companies in order to help strengthen internal controls and improve the collection of revenue.

Treasury

The commencement of accrual accounting took effect from 1 July, with the Government's financial transactions now recorded and reported on that basis. The Entire Public Sector Reporting Unit is now fully staffed to deal with the new challenges of accrual accounting.

The processes of the Treasury's Cash Management Unit are being redefined and enhanced to provide for the additional requirements under the Financial Management Initiative in forecasting and managing Government's working capital.

Ministry of Tourism, Environment, Development & Commerce

Cayman Airways

Although it was a challenging year for the airline industry, the results for 2003 - 2004 are a strong endorsement of Cayman Airways' strategy: the airline carried nearly 31,000 more international passengers than in the previous year.

Cayman Airways is committed to further increasing air arrivals by maintaining low fares and adding flights to existing and new destinations. In 2004 - 2005, the airline will introduce a second Boeing 737-300 into the fleet. The 737-300 aircraft can carry more passengers and more baggage, is more fuel efficient, and is able to fly to more distant locations than the 737-200 aircraft. The new aircraft will be used to improve customer service and will allow the airline to launch direct scheduled service to Boston in October 2004. The addition of direct service to this major US gateway is expected to be a major boost for tourism in the Cayman Islands.

Tourism Attraction Board

The Tourism Attraction Board will develop policies for its attractions that will enable them to become more competitive. It will develop long term strategic plans and new marketing strategies, and seek to improve and enhance its attraction products. The board also intends to seek new partnerships with cruise lines and tour operators and privately owned attractions, in order to increase the number of visitors to its sites.

The Tourism Attraction Board has been designated to assume responsibility for the management of a new craft market, which will be located in George Town. This is expected to be completed early in the financial year.

Pedro St. James

Pedro St. James "Castle" has added to its historical and cultural appeal with the addition of two new exhibits entitled "How Cayman Was" and a "Cayman Stamp Collection." Both exhibits are on permanent display in the Resource Centre Room.

In the new financial year, Pedro Castle will strive to increase its portfolio of weddings and special events.

Botanic Park

With the extension of the Water Authority's services to the Eastern Districts, the Botanic Park will soon have piped water delivered to its property. This will provide the Park with a dependable supply of water and reduce operating costs.

There are plans for a new Palm Garden by the end of 2004. Funding has been received from an anonymous donor to replace signs throughout the Park and this exercise should be completed early in 2005.

Pirates Week Office

Popular support for the Pirates Week Festival continues to grow. As no admission fees are charged for the events downtown, the festival critically depends on corporate support, in cash and kind. Efforts are underway to secure a major sponsor for the Festival. A new feature, offering humorous presentations, will be introduced in the Float Parade event. Apart from providing an outlet for individual creativity, these smaller presentations will also give a promotion opportunity to small business.

Hospitality Services Training Centre

The John Silvers Inn in West Bay has been purchased by Government and will be developed into a Hospitality Services Training Centre.

The Ministry is working with the New England Institute of Technology to develop a programme to progress this project which will facilitate greater Caymanian involvement in the tourism industry. It is expected that the centre will focus on the vocational disciplines of the tourism industry.

Cayman Islands Development Bank

The main thrust in the first quarter of 2004/05 will be to raise new funds in order to meet the growing demand for development financing. The CIDB is expected to finalize new funding arrangements for on lending to its target sectors.

While the CIDB will continue to offer development financing for projects in the housing sector and for human resource development, it will concentrate primarily on the advancement of the small business sector by offering creative and relevant financial products as well as actively promoting the spirit of entrepreneurship within the community.

Cayman Islands Investment Bureau

In the new world economy, the importance of cooperation and partnerships with other organizations is becoming paramount to the success of inward investment. The Investment Bureau will continue to set policies and implement programmes that will enhance Cayman's comparative economic advantages as a domicile for business. Included in the Bureau's promotional strategy will be the launch of a website, the production of new collateral materials and a full schedule of financial marketing conferences.

A highlight of this year's programme will be the official opening of the Investment Bureau's office in Hong Kong.

Department of Environment

In 2002-2005 the Department of Environment will continue to assist the Ministry in the development and implementation of policies and legislation that afford protection to the environment. Among other initiatives, in collaboration with the National Trust, the Department will compile existing and new information on native flora to generate a comprehensive "red list" for those species in need of urgent conservation planning.

In 2004-05 the Department will continue to assist the Ministry of Environment with the acquisition of land and implementation of plans for the proposed Barkers National Park.

Port Authority of the Cayman Islands

The successful implementation of new mandatory International Security Procedures by 1 July 2004 has recently dominated the attention of the Port Authority of the Cayman Islands.

The capital development work on the Royal Watler Cruise Terminal will continue this year with the marine works scheduled for completion in October 2004 and the upland works in December 2004.

The land acquisition for the West Bay Cruise facility has commenced and it is expected that ground breaking will take place in August 2004.

Vehicle Licensing & Transport Unit

Government has acquired property in Bodden Town next to the Civic Centre and intends to establish a Sub-Unit on this site to further decentralize its services to the Eastern Districts.

The Unit's plan for 2004/2005 includes the further development and strengthening of the Traffic Law and related legislation. This includes legislation for people who are physically challenged and enforcement in relation to their designated parking spaces.

The Unit will also play a central role in the development of plans for Public Transportation in line with Vision 2008 and the more recently adopted National Tourism Management Policy.

Cayman Islands Fire Services

In order to maintain the level of competence and efficiency required to meet international obligations, particularly with respect to the Airport Rescue and Firefighting section, nine officers will attend special courses for certification and re-certification at a recognized institution during the 2004-05 financial year.

An order has been placed for a new airport crash tender for Grand Cayman, to be delivered in mid 2004. This vehicle will upgrade the level of fire protection and ensure compliance with the International Civil Aviation Organization's requirements due to come into effect on 1st January 2005.

The department is also pursuing the purchase of a new 135 ft ladder truck to cater for the higher-rise buildings now being constructed.

Plans are in place for a new fire station in Cayman Brac to enhance existing fire services on that island.

A Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) bulk storage facility has been installed by Home Gas Ltd in Cayman Brac. The department is pleased that the proprietors are working in tandem with the department to ensure that the installation of the facility complies with all aspects of the adopted National Fire Protection Association Standards. There is also an ongoing programme between Home Gas Ltd. and the department to identify and upgrade premises not in compliance, including small private dwellings, with the growing problem of the improper use and storage of small LPG cylinders.

Crisis Readiness

We are all aware of the growing number of world crises. Our economy, our reputation in the global community, and our relationships with key stakeholders are directly impacted by these events and how we prepare to respond to them.

The new reality of risk requires a new standard of leadership on our part. We must bring to these challenges a vision; a new approach and shared commitment that will raise the bar of excellence for government as well as businesses.

Building on our long established hurricane preparedness procedures, the Government will this year inaugurate "a Cayman Islands Crisis Readiness Programme." This will enable public and private organizations to better prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from all kinds of potential threats including:

- Financial services threats (e.g. imposed external legislation or international accounting scandals)
- Industrial accidents (e.g. oil spills)
- Technology failures (e.g. damaging power outage)
- Public health threats (e.g. SARS)
- Terrorism (e.g. bombings)

The Government is considering entering into an agreement with the Marsh McLennan group of companies who will work closely with the Cayman Islands' government and business community to develop and implement this programme.

Ministry of Health Services, Agriculture, Aviation And Works

Ministry Statement

During the 2004-05 budget period, the Ministry of Health Services, Agriculture, Aviation and Works will continue to enhance its strategic policy advice capability. Steps will be taken to refine internal processes to ensure the Ministry is able to effectively meet its goals and manage any necessary changes.

Health

The Strategic Plan for Health that was successfully developed along with action plans during this past year will be implemented by partners within the health service industry. Maintaining rates of preventable diseases within the World Health Organization standards will remain a priority. Focus will be on coordinating health promotion activities to emphasize the positive aspects of life-style that can reduce or prevent, for example, the onset of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension and some forms of cancer. The National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS will be incorporated into the National Health Plan.

Health Insurance Commission

The establishment of an office and the appointment of two inspectors along with the recent amendments to the Health Insurance Law and Regulations, enable the Health Insurance Commission to carry out its remit of monitoring and regulating the insurance industry. A comprehensive public education programme will be undertaken.

Health Services Authority

The following three key strategic goals and objectives for the 2004/5 financial year are part of the Strategic Plan, which has been developed for the Health Services Authority:

- Ensure the provision of patient-focused care that complies with internationally accepted standards;
- Improve the cost effectiveness of the Health Services Authority and the services it provides;
- Create a stable, motivated and empowered workforce.

The recent opening of our Women's Health Centre (the first in the region) and a purpose built Inpatient Mental Health facility allows for enhanced services to these priority groups of customers. The services on Cayman Brac and Little Cayman have been enhanced by the recent recruitment of a full time Surgeon and Obstetrician/Gynaecologist. The Little Cayman Health Centre which has recently been relocated to a new site will also be offering expanded Medical and Dental services.

A significant accomplishment that will assist the Authority in achieving its goals is the capturing of data, which started since the implementation of a new integrated health information system (CERNER) on October 28, 2003. The Cayman Islands National Insurance Company will also be receiving claims electronically from the Health Services Authority. In the next year reliable statistics and trends will be available.

Cayman Islands National Insurance Company Ltd. (CINICO)

CINICO supports government's goal of ensuring all residents have access to affordable health insurance coverage. The Company (established as the most effective governance structure) manages government's healthcare liability and offers an insurance product to persons unable to afford or access coverage in the private sector.

Agriculture

The Ministry and the Department of Agriculture will engage in the development of a national agricultural plan that will refocus and realign activities in keeping with recent 21st century developments.

Civil Aviation and Airports Authority

The Airports Authority Law, 2004 and the new Civil Aviation Authority Law, 2004 came into effect on June 15th 2004 effectively segregating the provision of air transport facilities and the regulation of their use. In keeping with the policy directives of the Cayman Islands Government, the construction of a new airport in Little Cayman will begin this year.

Radio Cayman

It is expected that later this year, Radio Cayman will become a Statutory Authority. Work on this has already commenced.

National Roads Authority

The National Roads Authority Law, 2004 was passed in June. The Roads Division of the Public Works Department becomes the basic resource of the new authority. The Authority is charged with the responsibility for ensuring the effective and efficient management of all public roads including planning, design, construction and maintenance.

Public Works Department

Public Works will continue to provide project management, architectural, quality surveying and construction management services to government departments and authorities. Following the major refurbishment of the Legislative Assembly, the main capital building projects this year include the new Prospect Primary School and the completion of the refurbishment and expansion of the West Bay Post Office.

The Buildings Division of the Public Works Department is currently undertaking several other projects for 2004. These projects include the Island's first Abattoir, the Savannah Post Office, the conversion of the West Bay Town Hall to a District Library, the extension to the Savannah Primary School, hurricane upgrades to Fire Stations at Cayman Brac, Frank Sound and West Bay and finally, generator upgrades to three hurricane shelters.

Ministry of Education, Human Resources & Culture

The Ministry considers Education and Human Resources to be the building blocks to mould, develop and nurture the people of the Cayman Islands. In the same vein, Culture is the central interface, the tool to inform the life choices of our people, and the mirror for self-reflection.

During the 2004/05 financial year, the Ministry will introduce key initiatives in all of its three core areas of responsibility. At the same time it will strengthen and consolidate initiatives already in hand. This reflects the commitment of the Ministry, and its various departments, sections and units, to help realize the goals of Vision 2008, and the promise of:

- a world class education system; and
- a multi-literate, productive, adaptable workforce and community,
- which will seize opportunities for life-long learning and demonstrate
- pride in self and country and "a job well done".

Education

School Improvement

In 2004, the Ministry will also build on its work in school improvement, with the establishment or continued implementation of the following key initiatives:

1. The introduction of a comprehensive and modern Education and Training Law. Drafting instructions for the new law are to be scheduled shortly, and the Ministry aims to present an Education and Training Bill to the House in September 2005.
2. The continued implementation of the ITALIC (Improving Teaching and Learning in the Cayman Islands) programme. ITALIC is designed to improve teaching and learning in primary, middle and secondary schools, through enhanced use of technology in the classroom and education sector.
3. The development and introduction of a parallel phase of the ITALIC programme, ITALIC TOO. This initiative will focus on Years 11 and 12, post-secondary education and the community and will ensure continuity and progression of the work being covered through ITALIC.
4. The development of an educational strategy for technical and vocational education at secondary and post-secondary levels. This strategy will draw on the findings of the recent inspection report on technical and vocational education in government secondary schools.
5. The National Educational Leadership Programme (NELP).
6. The Development of a new School Improvement Planning model.
7. The appointment to the Education Department of a School Development Adviser in September 2004.

University College

In September 2004, the University College (formerly the Community College) will offer its first four-year degree courses, in the areas of: economics, business management, accounting and finance. This represents significant progress towards the Ministry's goal of improving access to tertiary education for the people of the Cayman Islands.

School Construction and Development

The pressure for places in government schools continues to present challenges. The Ministry is working to accommodate this demand, while ensuring that there is no compromise in the quality of education provided for our students. The Ministry will be pursuing the following capital works projects for education:

- the delivery of the new Prospect Primary School, on time for a September 2004 start;
- the construction of a new Primary School in West Bay to open in September 2005;
- the start of the redevelopment of the George Town Primary School, with the first classroom block to be completed by September 2006;
- the purchase of land and the design and other preliminary preparations for the building of a new High School, for delivery in September 2006;
- the purchase of four temporary classrooms for John Gray High School, one for North Side Primary and one for Cayman Brac High School, for September 2004.

Cayman Islands Cadet Corps

The work of the Cadet Corps will be further strengthened by the introduction of an externally accredited course, allowing cadets to earn a vocational qualification accepted in the UK as equivalent to 4 'O' level passes.

Human Resources

Pensions

The review of the National Pensions Law, announced in December 2003, will result in a white paper, which will be circulated to the general public for comment.

Human Resources Development and Training and Labour

As part of the ITALIC TOO initiative, the Ministry will facilitate the development of a Human Resources Development and Training Policy.

The Department of Employment Relations plans to coordinate the production of a National Labour Market Information Plan and the establishment of a Labour Market Information Library.

Investors in People

The implementation of the Investors in People Programme (IIP), an internationally recognized management standard, was launched in 2003 with both government and private participants. In 2004 it

is projected that around nine of the pilot organizations will be assessed against the standard and an additional 15 will be signed up for the pilot programme.

Technical and Vocational Education

A National Training Board will be established, as part of the new Education and Training Law, to advise the Minister on policy, accreditation arrangements, standards and other matters relating to training in the Cayman Islands.

A second TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) Fair is planned for the last quarter of 2004, to highlight the career opportunities and training available.

Culture

Initiatives in 2004 and beyond, with culture as the primary driver, yet appropriately linked to education and human resources, include:

- continued development of the National Cultural policy framework by the Taskforce;
- the awarding of a cultural scholarship;
- development of cultural facilities.

National Archive

Construction of an Extension to the National Archive will begin in 2004, and is scheduled to be completed by December 2005. The extension will provide secure, cost-effective storage for the nation's archives and official records, specialist facilities for government's central computer equipment and vital records, and a Reading Room where school groups, students and the public will be able to do first-hand research on the history of the Cayman Islands. The building is designed to be an emergency operations centre for senior civil servants in a post-hurricane situation.

National Museum

During 2004, the second phase of the Maritime Heritage Trail and Shipwreck Preserves will be developed.

National Gallery

Work continues to raise funds for a locally designed purpose-built facility for the National Gallery, to be located off the Harquail Bypass.

Library

With the contributions of private sector partners, the Ministry is anticipating that construction will commence in 2004 of a 3-story extension to the George Town Public Library. This new facility will triple the usable floor space of the current library and provide modern facilities and easy access to a wide range of resources, including internet-enabled computer stations. Work will also proceed in 2004 on plans to network district libraries.

Ministry of Community Services, Youth, Sports & Gender Affairs

The Ministry's goal is a healthy population in a safe and secure country for residents and visitors, achieved through cooperation and collaboration of all departments and agencies.

The Ministry of Community Services, Youth, Sports and Gender Affairs has embraced the concept of community-based collaboratives, which are focused on comprehensive service integration to address the root causes of people's need for assistance, rehabilitation or being mandated to services or custody. The following highlights the objectives to be achieved in 2004 - 2005:

Develop appropriate legislation to safeguard the rights of dependent persons, review legislation governing the Adoption Law and the Review of the Maintenance Law, and develop regulations for the Children's Law 2003.

Decentralize the Department of Children and Family Services with fully functional District Offices in George Town, West Bay and Bodden Town.

Develop and implement the National Parenting Programme to strengthen the parenting abilities, discipline methods, and responsibility of parents.

Create a National Advisory Board and provide tutors to assist with the implementation of the Commonwealth Youth Programme. This programme will train people working with youth by offering a two-year Diploma in Youth Development Work at the University of the West Indies Distance Learning Centre.

Implement changes suggested by the Parole Commissioners' Board using a collaborative approach that involves the Prison Services, Probation and Aftercare Unit, Department of Substance Abuse Services (DOSAS) and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reform the Parole System.

Create a therapeutic approach in the rehabilitation of inmates sentenced for substance abuse or drug related offences or who have been assessed to have a substance abuse problem.

Address the comprehensive needs of youth involved in the criminal justice system by using standardized assessment tools, specially trained youth counsellors, family therapists and psychologists in order to reduce the likelihood of these troubled youths going into the prison system as adults.

Extend services of the Department of Substance Abuse, the Women's Resource and Crisis Centres and Probation and Aftercare services to Cayman Brac.

Assist the National Housing & Community Development Trust in providing Affordable Housing to qualified applicants.

Investigate appropriate housing or group homes to enhance clients' transitioning from the treatment process or support systems.

Implement a Public Education Programme on the initiatives and projects of the Ministry to gain better understanding and cooperation of the community.

Continue with programmes such as Super Saturday, monthly town hall meetings, the Youth Flex radio show and the Commonwealth Youth Club's Ambassador Programme to empower young people and allow their voices to be heard.

Continue sports coaching in local communities and schools recreationally and within the sports associations for the training of national athletes to represent the country.

Organize a National Sports Award ceremony and a regional Sports Ministers' Conference.

Continue extending the water distribution system throughout the eastern districts in Grand Cayman.

Review the feasibility of extending the piped water supply in Cayman Brac.

Complete the new wastewater treatment plant project.

Ministry of Planning, Communications, District Administration & Information Technology

The Ministry of Planning, Communications, District Administration and Information Technology expects a very challenging year ahead in 2004-2005. The Ministry's main focus will be on fostering the continued liberalization of the telecommunications market, the granting of a new non-exclusive licence to Caribbean Utilities Company Ltd and providing a legislative framework to allow for future competition in the electricity sector. The aim in both telecom and electricity sectors is to reduce rates for the public while maintaining a healthy and viable competitive environment.

Another key area for the Ministry will be furthering the provision of Government office accommodations. The current situation is most unsatisfactory and the Ministry will continue to actively pursue various options to find the most satisfactory and economical solution or combination of solutions to this pressing issue.

Cayman Brac Power & Light

Following the signing by Government and Cayman Brac Power & Light of a non-exclusive licence for electricity supplies in the Sister Islands, which caps prices over the next 15 years (save for direct fuel price increases), the Ministry continues to work with the company for the relocation of the facility on the Bluff, to provide for increased safety from storms and hurricanes.

Caribbean Utilities Company Ltd.

Government and CUC continue to work in earnest on reducing electricity rates on Grand Cayman and to introduce future competitive bidding in new generation capacity. It was recently announced that a Heads of Agreement on the way forward had been reached. A final agreement is hoped within a short period of time.

Telecommunications

The Office of Telecommunications is embarking on several new technology projects in 2004/5 that will enable agencies, especially the emergency services, to take advantage of new and improved capabilities in the area of radio-communications.

A \$1.8 million project with Motorola to upgrade the radio-communication system has just been completed. Users of the system will now benefit from enhanced signal transmission that ensures they will be able to maintain radio contact when operating inside concrete/steel buildings and other structures.

In accordance with a new Government policy that promotes the sharing of technical infrastructure, OFTEL's radio towers are being made available to private sector Information and Communications Technology (ICT) licensees. This provides Government with a new source of revenue and enables ICT licensees to launch new services more quickly, without the time and expense of erecting their own radio towers.

In the Sister Islands, the national radio-communications system is benefiting from a new tower in Little Cayman. This provides users in Little Cayman with full coverage and also provides an important back-up facility to users in Cayman Brac.

Emergency 911 Communications

The department now has its own Training Officer who is a certified First Aid and CPR Instructor as well as Emergency Medical Dispatch Instructor. He is also a certified paramedic.

Environmental Health

The Department of Environmental Health (DEH) will continue to work towards the selection of the most appropriate solid waste collection, treatment and disposal system for Grand Cayman.

Postal Department

The Postal Department will be focusing on two main projects:

- The implementation of a postcode for the Cayman Islands; and
- The construction of a post box kiosk at the Airport Post Office.

Much development work has already taken place on the creation of a postcode -- known as a zip code in the USA -- and will continue over the next few months. The Postmaster General anticipates that a major public education campaign will be part of the implementation of the postcode, so the public will hear much more about this project in the near future.

Subject to approval of capital development funds, construction of the new Post Office in Savannah will get underway during the year. This new facility will offer 1100 more Post Boxes than the present Savannah Post Office, as well as a Post Shop.

To better streamline postal operations across the three islands and in accordance with the Cayman Islands Postal Law, the postal staff in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman have been brought under the direct supervision of the Postal Services Department as of 1st July 2004.

District Administration

With further upgrading of nature sites and expansion of the number of attractions, hopes are still high that late 2004 will see day visits of cruise ship passengers to Cayman Brac.

Expansion of the national airline, Cayman Airways and introduction of Cayman Airways Express, along with Island Air, gives visitors a wider choice of access to the Sister Islands. Visitors to Little Cayman will now experience greater comfort following the recent rehabilitation of the Edward Bodden Airfield.

Economic activity continues to show promise, with the opening of several new businesses and one office complex expected to open later in the year. Liberalization and expansion of telecommunications is expected to complement other private sector and government initiatives.

Suitable land has been identified and will be purchased early in the financial year to allow for the construction of affordable homes. Land has also been identified and will be purchased in 2004 to allow the construction of a new Fire Department sub-station in the eastern district of Cayman Brac.

Information Communication Technology Authority

The Information Communication Technology Authority will continue to develop the regulatory environment for telecommunications, sound and television broadcasting, all forms of radio operations including amateur radio, and the .ky Internet domain. Additional regulations will be proposed as required, following comprehensive consultation with the various stakeholders and the general public. Steps will be taken to educate consumers on the competition and consumer protection provisions of the ICTA Law, both of which are new concepts to Cayman.

The Authority is already one of the most open and transparent organizations in Cayman. All its decisions, and the reasons for them, are published on its web site, as are its consultative documents and all responses received from interested parties. The complete text of all licences issued is also available online. Over the next 12 months, the Authority plans to further enhance these facilities by making publicly available all submissions received from licensees together with the Authority's responses.

Lands & Survey

The department's new e-business web-site caymanlandinfo.ky was launched on 17th June. The variety of products and services made available through this medium will increase during the year and it is planned to offer full credit card payment facilities online in the near future. This will be a first for a government department.

The department recently commissioned new aerial photography of all three islands to permit the preparation of a new set of ortho-rectified images. This data will be utilized in the production of the Second Edition of the Cayman Islands Street Atlas, which will be released early in 2005.

Global Positioning System (GPS) coverage to aid with the accurate surveying of land will be extended to the Sister Islands. Both public and private sector surveying services in the Sister islands will thereby be greatly improved.

A new unit in the department will take over full Facilities Management responsibilities for several large Government buildings.

Computer Services

The management and staff of the Computer Services Department recognise that effective and efficient Information Technology is a key ingredient in achieving a cost effective and highly productive Government.

The department's focus continues to be on the advancement of Electronic Government or E-Government. CORIS (Cayman Online Registry Information Services), the Government's first E-Government implementation developed in partnership between General Registry and Computer Services, has been very successful. CORIS makes available online to clients, both locally and worldwide, the registries, good standing certificates and payment of services for Companies, Trusts, Partnerships, Patents and Trademarks.

CORIS has paved the way for E-Government in the Cayman Islands. But this is just the beginning. The Computer Services Department in partnership with the Customs Department are working diligently to deploy electronic declarations for major importers and customs brokers.

In order to fully embrace E-Government the Computer Services Department will work towards the cost-effective and secure implementation of electronic payments for government services by means of online processing of credit cards, debit cards and other means of electronic transactions. This will not only improve government's cash flow, it is likely also to lower the cost associated with traditional invoice, cheque and receipting systems.

Mosquito Research

The Mosquito Research & Control Unit will continue the ambitious new programme of pre-emptive mosquito control begun in May 2004, by means of greatly increased applications of larvicide pellets. Designed to prevent the emergence of mosquitoes, this strategy will build on successes already achieved and will be sustained through 2004 into the 2005 mosquito season.

The Department will complete construction of a new Operations Building & Pesticide Store, and commence construction of new Laboratories & Offices. The Operations Building will greatly improve workers' health and safety, as well as helping provide better services to the public. Additional laboratory space will allow scientific staff to conduct research work designed to better safeguard Cayman against the threat of mosquito-borne diseases such as West Nile Virus, Dengue Fever and Malaria.

Planning

The proposed amendments to the 1997 Development Plan should be tabled in this Honourable House in the near future. Once approved there will be amendments to the Planning statutes to ensure the implementation of the policies of the new Plan. Simultaneously, the 1975 Guidelines for Development Control in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman will be replaced by policies and guidelines more reflective of current events.

The Planning Department will continue to re-evaluate its business practices to ensure that they are responsive and appropriate to the needs of its customers. The Department's other strategic objectives for 2004/2005 are:

- To finalize the Procedures Manual so that internal processes continue to meet customer expectations;
- To continue improving the Express Review procedure for houses and other routine applications to reduce the amount of time taken to review these;
- To continue staff training to equip Caymanians to assume increasing responsibilities;
- To complete Area Plans for Bodden Town and West Bay;
- To complete a Development Plan for Little Cayman and Cayman Brac; and
- To introduce a Voice Response System for the planning application and building permit computer Trak-It system, allowing contractors to request inspections over the phone and query the status of projects.

Conclusion

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, as I come to the close of my second Throne Speech, I wish to thank the many people who played a part in preparing it.

My references earlier in the speech to crisis readiness are a reminder of the manifold blessings that Almighty God has bestowed on these beautiful Islands, which with His help it is our duty to protect.

As you embark on a new Session of the Legislative Assembly, a Session which will necessarily be relatively short as we prepare for elections to this House on 17 November, I pray that God will continue, during the coming months and in the longer future, to watch, preserve and prosper these Islands and all who live in them.