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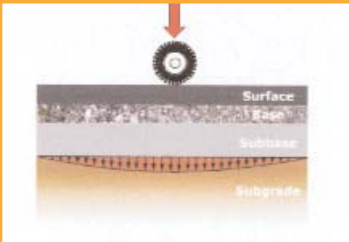
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## New round of Flood Mitigation Programme underway



Advisory Board member, Don Mullings (left) points to an area along the Mandela Highway where NWA did flood mitigation work. Also in the picture are Board Chairman, Easton Douglas (right), Chief Executive Officer, Milton Hodelin (centre) and Engineer, Cowell Lyn (Straw Hat).

The Board members recently toured sections of Mandela Highway to get a first hand look at some of the drainage issues along that corridor. The tour came out of efforts by the NWA to mitigate flooding along one of the major gateways to the city of Kingston. The NWA has spent nearly 40 million dollars on cleaning drains. Both the Duhaney and Fresh Rivers, which are sources of flooding along the roadway were also cleaned. The Agency has since June commenced another round of Mitigation works islandwide. The new programme is targeting nearly 100 drains and is valued at \$200 million.



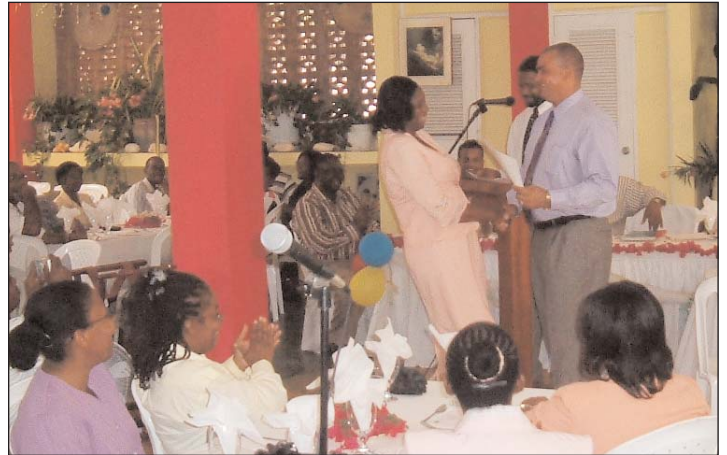
## NWA Staff Members of the Central, North Eastern and Western Regions *meet with CEO*

Members of staff from the Central, North Eastern and Western Regions met with CEO and other members of the Senior Management Team on Tuesday, 2007 May 29 at the Sunflower Resorts and Villas in St Ann.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Neville Anderson, Administrative Manager - Central Region and All-Island Boss of the Year.

### Greetings

Mr. Richard Azan, Minister of State with responsibility for the Agency briefly addressed the staff. He expressed pleasure at being associated with the NWA, and was mindful of the Agency's achievements despite limited resources. He encouraged the members of staff to continue to maintain and strengthen their social and professional interactions.



*Minister of State in the Ministry of Housing, Transport, Water and Works, Richard Azan making a presentation to Quality Assurance Officer, Bobbeth Buchanan for outstanding performance during the 1st quarter of 2007. The presentation was made at the Staff Meeting held at Sunflower Resorts and Villas in St. Ann.*



*Jennifer Henry - Director of Human Resources Management and Administration, making a presentation at the staff meeting held at Terra Nova Hotel in Kingston.*

### Presentations

The CEO, Mr. Milton Hodelin acknowledged the efforts of staff in accomplishing goals during the year. He however pointed out that the Agency was operating with a small budget and staff was free to make other suggestions in addition to those aired to meet the shortfall.

Among the achievements highlighted were:

- Training for various levels of staff;
- Ceremonies of recognition & appreciation of various categories of staff;
- Completion of Segment 2 of the NCHIP;
- 80% Completion of the \$22M Bridge Programme;
- Completing the rehabilitation of South Camp Road in record time;
- High level of fee collection.

### Projections

- Continued representation from the various groups;
- Completion of Segment 3 of the Northern Coastal Highway improvement Project and full implementation of the CDB Road Improvement Programme.

Mr. David Knight, Manager, Personnel & Industrial Relations reminded staff members that while the accomplishment of our goals and targets was important the human resources was fundamental to all of these.

### Highlights

- Announcement of the Employees of the 1st quarter of 2007
- New & Promoted staff members;
- Performance Evaluation for 2006/7;
- Loan facilities available to staff;
- The provision of uniforms for Office Attendants.

Mr. Knight appealed to staff members to participate in the Rewards & Recognition Programme and advised that the prizes had been enhanced.

Mr. Wain Anderson, Director of Asset Management in his presentation expressed concern for office security and advised that where appropriate, Grounds Men who could also provide some security would be employed. The number of CUG phones had been increased and the use of these especially in the offices was encouraged.

### Interaction

A period for questions and answers was entertained by the CEO.

## Special Flood Damage Programme -(Part II)

To date the entire amount of \$3.9 billion allocated to the Special Flood Damage Programme has been committed. The original sum allocated was \$3.5 billion; however an additional amount of \$412 million was made available in December 2006 to undertake major patching, roadside bushing and flood control works island wide.

Overall, the programme is 85% complete. Cambridge to Montpelier in St. James, Roaring River in Westmoreland, Silent Hill Road and Jericho to Coffee Piece in Clarendon, Knightsdale Drive in St. Andrew and Collie Smith Drive in Kingston are among the completed works to date.

Roads that are still under repairs include Rhinesbury to Osbourne Store and Frankfield to Lampart in Clarendon, Williamsfield to Gobay in St. Catherine and Point to Flamstead via Maroon Town in St. James.

The programme also includes a Critical Retaining Wall component. Walls in Bartons to Ginger Ridge, St. Catherine, Yallahs to Petersfield in St. Thomas and Ulster Spring to Stettin in Trelawny have been completed.

Works that are ongoing under this aspect of the programme are Kupis to Colonel Ridge in Clarendon, Glengoffe to Williamsfield in St. Catherine, Runaway Bay to Orange Valley in St. Ann and Silver Hill Gap to Guava Ridge in St. Andrew.

All works under the Flood Control component of the Programme are complete. Of significance are the repair works to the Sandy Gully invert and Protective and River Training works at Trout Hall to Grantham and Water Lane in Clarendon as well as Worthy Park in St. Catherine.

George Knight, Manager of the Special Flood Damage Programme told the Roadster, that the KSAC, Parish Councils and the NWA main drains island wide were cleaned as part of the Agency's Disaster Mitigation plan. He however stressed that the effectiveness of these drains can only be realized through regular routine maintenance. He also pointed out that the Special Flood Damage Programme has been implemented through the Force Account and contract services. The Programme is set for completion in September 2007.

Contract Services for carrying out rehabilitation works were procured by advertising in the major newspapers and also through the tender process using the NCC guidelines for emergency work.

### Challenges

Timely payments to contractors for works which have been completed is an ongoing challenge. This challenge is heightened when work is being done through the Agency's Force Account.

This issue has hampered progress on several projects with the exception of those that are considered to be emergencies.



Major Projects Manager, George Knight looking at one of the drains in St. Thomas slated to be cleaned as part of the Disaster Mitigation component of the Special Flood Damage Programme.

Mr Knight is concerned about the Agency achieving ISO certification. How does his concern fit with the role and objectives of the Special Flood Damage Unit? It is under staffed and at present there is not sufficient supervisory management of the projects. If the NWA is to move a step closer to be ISO certified then the issue of staffing must be addressed in order to assure quality. The programme needs four regional engineers to assist with design and supervision. This will improve project delivery and the quality of output. Mr. Knight says that if we are unable to secure personnel locally, he is recommending the employment of Cuban Engineers with experience in road design and proficiency in Auto Cad. These Engineers could assist the already short staffed Technical Services Department.

### Conclusion

According to Mr. Knight, the programme is a major success despite the limitation of the resources that were made available. He stated that "even though the programme was announced in the April 06 /07 budget presentation, the actual approval to undertake works was not given until late August 06".

Despite this, he is satisfied that all the works for which approval was given under the programme were contracted by December 06. He emphasised that no praise is too high for his team's outstanding achievement as they regularly went beyond the call of duty to ensure the success of the programme.

Over the past five years a substantial amount has been allocated to carry out flood damage works, however he feels that much more is required to complete repairs and rehabilitation after the passage of hurricanes and flood rains. Mr. Knight and his team stand ready to take up the challenge of implementing subsequent programmes.



## WESTERN ROUND UP



with Janel Ricketts  
- CRO Western Region

### Howard Cooke Bridge

Commuters travelling along the Howard Cooke Boulevard are much more comfortable, as The National Works Agency (NWA) has completed repairs to a section of the Montego River Bridge.

This repair work was carried out on an Expansion Joint that became loose on the east bound bridge. The work was carried out by Nakash Construction and Equipment Ltd. and was completed on Sunday, June 27. There was minimal disruption of service as the bridge was closed for only 24 hours.



Completed Gabion retaining and head wall in Blackgate in Hanover.

### North Coast Highway Update

Work on segment 2A of the highway is well underway. The project is approximately 55% complete.

The contractors are now working assiduously to complete the two southern lanes between the Montego Bay Airport Round-a-bout and the Flankers main road in St. James. In addition to this, significant excavation is being done in the Flanker/Ironshore, Industrial Estates area in order to facilitate the construction of four lanes of carriageway. The contractors are also constructing a major drain near the Industrial Estates area. This drain will mitigate the problem of flooding in the area. Work is ongoing on various other sections along the highway corridor.

This segment of the highway consists of approximately 13 km of dual carriageway between the Sangster's International Airport and Sea Castles and 14km of two lanes between Sea Castles and Greenside, Trelawny, with two underpasses at Half Moon and Rosehall Resorts, numerous accesses, bus bays, junctions, and drainage structures.



A drain under construction in Flankers near the Industrial Estate. The drain is being built as part of Segment 2a, of the North Coast Highway Project.

### Red Dirt - Garlands, St. James

The National Works Agency (NWA) has spent 18 million dollars to rehabilitate the Red Dirt - Garlands parochial road in St. James.

The project involved the rehabilitation of 2.5 km of roadway with double surface dressing and the improvement of drainage structures. The project was contracted to Construction Solutions and was completed in June 2007.

This project formed part of the Agency's Special Flood Damage Programme for the parish.

### Great River - Blackgate

The National Works Agency has allocated \$30M to rehabilitate the Great River - Blackgate parochial road in Hanover which will see repairs to the roadway, construction of Gabion & retaining walls as well as drainage devices.

The project is now 85% complete and is being completed by the Agency's Force Account teams.



Completed section of the Red Dirt to Garlands main road, in St. James.

## Are we prepared?

Many customers of the National Works Agency are asking themselves this question, "How prepared is the NWA to respond to the vagaries and uncertainties of the 2008 hurricane season?" The NWA, anticipating a busy hurricane season, has revisited its disaster preparedness plan, made adjustments and changes so that the Agency will be prepared and current in its approach to meeting the demands of an active season.

As part of its preparation the Agency's Disaster Preparedness Committee met on Thursday June 7, 2007 to discuss the Agency's plans to deploy resources and personnel in the event of a hurricane or major flooding. The Committee also discussed coordination of activities and responsibilities among the various departments and officers.

A meeting was also held with Contractors who work for the Agency and the Director of Regional Implementation to discuss:

- The role of Contractors in the event of a hurricane or major flood event;
- Deployment of equipment, especially in flood prone areas and;
- Response time to minimize effects and ensure quick recovery.

The activation of the Agency's Emergency Operation Centre was sanctioned, its purpose being to create and ensure lines of communication between the Agency and its stakeholders.

Problem areas across the island such as the Buff Bay Valley, the Yallahs Ford, and the Junction Road were identified and the Agency will be deploying equipment at strategic points so that in the event of blockages or slippages, response time will be minimal.



*Disaster Preparedness Meeting with contractors - June 20, 2007. From left: Richard McHarge - Director Regional Implementation; (standing) Milton Hodelin, CEO-NWA; Richard Azan, State Minister, Ministry of Housing, Transport, Water and Works; and Wain Anderson, Director-Asset Management-NWA.*

*Bottom right inset : Some of the contractors who attended the meeting.*

Having examined the measures we have taken, we are satisfied that should the expected forecast be fulfilled, one would conclude that the Agency was prepared.

## BREAKAWAY ALONG TO THE KUPIS to COLONEL RIDGE ROAD

The National Works Agency has earmarked a total of \$17M to rehabilitate a large breakaway along the Kupis to Colonel Ridge road section in Northern Clarendon. This breakaway occurred in 2004 during the passage of Hurricane Ivan and became worse during the 2005 hurricane season.

The freedom of movement on this roadway was affected, as it was reduced to single lane. Rehabilitation activities began in May 2007 when Alcar Construction Ltd was engaged to construct a retaining wall. These works are being facilitated under Phase Two of the Agency's Special Flood Damage Critical Retaining Wall Programme.

The wall will extend to more than 100 metres below the road surface. The execution of these works will include the construction of Gabion Walls to retain the toes of the fill. U drains will be built and the existing roadway will be re-aligned.

On completion of these works, scheduled for August 2007, there should be a roadway to facilitate two lanes of traffic and a wall to prevent slippages. The rehabilitated section of the roadway will facilitate free movement of goods and services for the residents of Kupis to Colonel Ridge.



*Stockpile of boulders to be used in constructing the retaining walls in Clarendon.*



## '07 HURRICANE SEASON:

*Are you ready?*



Hurricane Hazards (hurricanes, tropical storms, flooding, high winds and surges) are not unique to Jamaica. One mention of the words hurricane or storm and most of you would find yourselves minutes later engaged in a conversation about old and recent hurricane experiences. Most persons can still recall clearly Hurricanes Gilbert (1988) and Ivan (2004) which still linger in the minds of many who felt the devastating blow of these two storms.

### THE BAD NEWS: HIGH SEASON

According to the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), the country suffered damage amounting to nearly \$37 billion from Hurricane Ivan. "The last major hurricane season was dark, wet and costly for many Jamaicans. Getting prepared for this season might help keep those costs at a minimum and reduce some of the confusion. The 2007 Atlantic hurricane season which

began June 1, is said to be above normal with meteorologists predicting at least 14 named tropical storms, with the possibility of seven of those storms becoming hurricanes.

The 2007 JPSCo Rate Schedule states, under rate 10 - which governs rate for residential households, that the customers will face an additional rate charge of "\$0.0741 per kilowatt-hour for all kilowatt-hours. This charge will remain in force for a period of 24 months commencing with bills prepared as of July 1, 2007 with reconciliation at the end of the period to determine any over or under recovery. This is evidence that consumers will still feel the effects of recovering infrastructural damages incurred by the power company.

### THE GOOD NEWS: GET READY

By knowing our vulnerability and what actions we should take, we can immediate-

ly reduce the effects of hurricane hazards.

The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), launched June 1, sees Caribbean countries pooling risk through the world's first ever multi-country catastrophe insurance pool aimed at helping vulnerable countries and citizens start repairs quickly.

The first and most important thing anyone should do when facing a hurricane threat is to use common sense and take action before, during and after the threat. These actions are vital to guarding against injury to life and property that could come from the effects of a hurricane.

## TAKING ACTION is as easy as 1-2-3:

### 1. BEFORE

Before the hurricane season starts YOU SHOULD:

#### Assemble your Disaster Supply Kit.

These items are often scattered around your home and simply need to be brought together into one location.

#### Write out your Family Disaster Plan.

Discuss the possible hazards with your family. Determine if you are in an evacuation area. Identify family contact in other parishes.

### 2. WATCH

When a Hurricane Watch is issued YOU SHOULD:

#### Check your Disaster Supply Kit.

Make sure nothing is missing. Determine if there is anything you need to supplement your kit. Replenish your water.

#### Activate your Family Disaster Plan.

Protective measures should be initiated, especially those actions that require extra time (securing expensive tools, equipment, animals etc.).

### 3. WARNING

When a Hurricane Warning is issued YOU SHOULD:

#### Ready your Disaster Supply Kit for use.

If you need to evacuate, you should bring your Supply Kit with you.

#### Use your Family Disaster Plan.

Your family should know protective actions and route to the safest location to be during the storm.

Of course, food isn't the only thing you need to be prepared for in an emergency situation. You should also have a Disaster Supply Kit ready in advance. If you stock up ahead of time on vital ingredients and supplies, you can ensure a more comfortable situation and reduce costly errors from being unprepared.

Our supply list includes common-sense things, like bottled water, flashlights, a manual can opener. Also, keep your important papers handy. And, of course, enough non-perishable food to last two weeks or more. Below is our basic Survival Supply List--you can adapt this to suit your own needs.

We use it more as a basic checklist, with several more specific lists added to this one:-

- Keep recent computer backups on discs or flash drives with your Disaster Emergency Kit.

contd on page 7

- Keep set of supplies in car, including food, water, first aid kit, sleeping bags, blankets, etc.
- Keep your gas tanks full - Gasoline will be unavailable if the power goes out because the pumps operate by electricity. Therefore, it's a good idea to fill up regularly, especially before an approaching storm.
- If you need transportation to a public shelter due to special needs, such as age, physical disability, or mental disorders; register in advance with the nearest Parish Council Office or the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM).

**When a hurricane threatens**

- Turn refrigerator and freezer to the coldest level. Freeze water in plastic containers. Sanitize bath tubs and fill with water.
- Tie down or bring in all outdoor objects (such as awnings, patio furniture, garbage cans).
- Pick fruits such as coconuts, mangoes etc., from trees. Clear your yard and drains of debris.
- Remove all pictures, clocks, books, figurines, tools, office equipment, appliances and important papers (passports, birth certificates etc.); wrap them in plastic or in waterproof containers; and store in a safe room.
- Turn off electricity at the main switch and remove TV and radio antennas from roofs.
- Refill prescriptions needed.
- Fill your car with gas to avoid long queues after the hurricane.
- Park your car in a place that is safest from falling trees and utility poles.
- If you are in a high-rise building, know the location of the nearest stairways. Don't use the elevator.
- Batten down windows and doors with shutters or lumber. Wedge sliding glass doors with a bar.
- Unplug major appliances.

**During the hurricane**

- Be calm! Your ability to act logically is very important.
- Stay away from windows and doors even if they are covered. A windowless or interior room or hallway is usually the safest.
- Listen to the radio for information
- If you are in a two-storey house, stay on the first floor.
- Do not go outside during the calm when the eye of the hurricane is passing.

**After the storm**

- Wait until you hear on the radio or television that the dangerous winds are definitely out of your area.
- Do not go sight-seeing.
- Do not go outside barefooted. Avoid wearing open shoes and watch out for sharp debris.
- Do not use phones or CB radios unless vital. Keep lines clear for emergency calls.
- Bury all dead animals as soon as possible.
- Beware of downed power lines, weakened bridges and washed-out roads, and weakened trees.
- Purify drinking water by boiling or by adding bleach, 2 drops of bleach per litre of water, 4 drops if the water is cloudy. Do not purify all your water at once. After adding bleach, let water stand for 30 minutes before drinking
- Use perishable food first, then non- perishable foods and sta-

- ples after.
- Do not cook more than is needed for one meal
- Report broken sewer or water mains to local authorities
- Be sure to check your house for structural damage before moving back in.

**Emergency supply list**

Water, enough to last 2 weeks; Foods that do not require cooking; canned or salted fish and meat; Packaged oats; Biscuits and crackers; Condensed or powdered milk; Canned soups and vegetables; Juices; Cereals; Coffee, Tea; Flour, Rice, Cornmeal, Sugar and Salt; Infant formula; Bread

- Battery-operated radio
- Flashlight
- Extra batteries
- Matches and candles, Hurricane lamps
- Bleach and other cleaners
- First Aid Kit: petroleum jelly, aspirin, eye wash, bandages, cotton, diarrhea medication, antacid, laxative
- Tissue, soap, sanitary napkins
- Disposable cups, plates, utensils
- Manual can opener
- Large plastic trash bags
- Containers for water and fuel storage
- Coal or oil stove
- 100 feet of rope, Tape
- Needle and thread, scissors
- Blankets and towels
- Mosquito repellent
- Tarpaulin (canvas or plastic)

For more information visit the ODPEM website and view the contact details of the Local Parish Disaster Committees in Jamaica (<http://www.odpem.org.jm/pdcl/index.html>)



# The Deterioration of Flexible Pavement and suggested ways to alleviate the problems and improve Pavement life.

## Introduction

Jamaica, the third largest island in the English speaking Caribbean, boasts a relatively extensive road network of approximately 19,920km. The National Works Agency has responsibility for approximately 5,000 km of this network. With an economy which relies heavily on road transport for movement of both peo-

The condition of the island's road network however, is influenced by factors ranging from drainage to traffic load. Being in the hurricane belt, Jamaica is under constant threat of infrastructural damage, its roads being most vulnerable.

## Road Components

Roads are classified as either being 'flexible' or 'rigid pavement'. Roads which are constructed of bituminous and granular material are called 'flexible pavement'.

Flexible pavement is comprised of:

**Sub-grade** - This is the bottom of the road structure on which the pavement layers are constructed. The strength of the sub-base is determined by the soil type, its density and moisture content.

**The Sub-base course** - This is the layer of material situated between the base and sub-grade. This component performs the important functions of providing a structural layer which distributes loads to the sub-base. It may provide a drainage layer to remove water from the pavement and it serves as a blanket to protect the base from volume change in the sub-grade.

**Base Course** - This is the layer immediately under the wearing surface. The base course must be of extremely high quality in order to carry traffic loads without shear failure. The base course therefore distributes traffic loads over the sub-base,

**The Wearing Course** - This, to the commuter is the most important component of the road structure, being the top layer of pavement which makes direct contact with traffic. Paramount among the various conditions which the wearing course must satisfy, is the provision of surface that is not only acceptable but of a high quality. Professionally the wearing course must be able to:

- resist deformation by traffic;
- protect the lower pavement layers from water;
- contribute to the strength of the pavement.

*(Next issue we will look at the reasons for failure and suggested ways to alleviate these).*

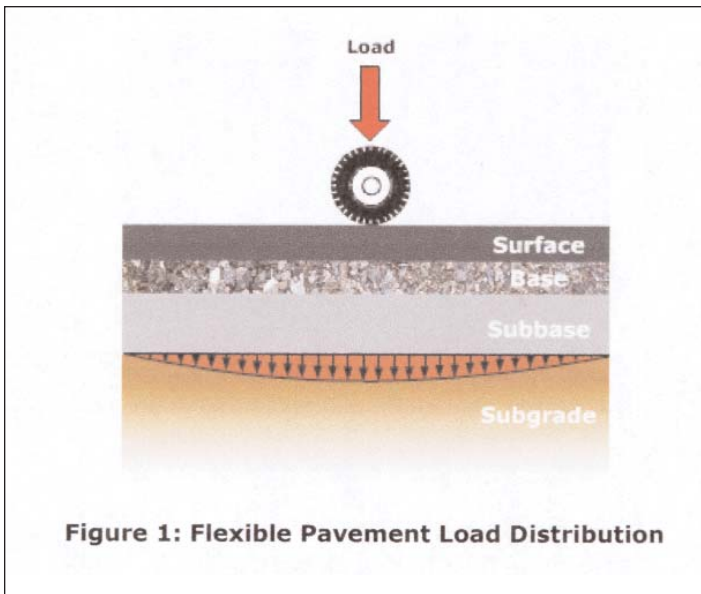


Figure 1: Flexible Pavement Load Distribution

ple and freight, the island is known to have the second highest road density in the world. Regrettably, in 2001 only 13% of the road condition was considered to be 'good'.





## BRIDGE PROGRAMME

The Ministry of Housing, Transport, Water and Works has over the years embarked on several programmes to upgrade the island's bridge system. The Ministry and the NWA recognize the important linkages that are created through these vital features of our road network. Consequently, the thrust to develop a programme to address the construction and repair of bridges has been given priority.

The mandate of the National Works Agency is to Develop Safe, Reliable and Quality Roads. Based on this and the priority that has been placed on our bridge development programme, we embarked on a master plan to replace or repair bridges that were in need of immediate attention.

Our commitment to repair or replace our bridges has been undertaken in two major programmes. These are the R.A. Murray Bridge Programme and the Mabey & Johnson Priority Bridge Programme.

Two phases of the contract agreement with R.A. Murray for the design, fabrication and supply of bridges are complete. These two phases have allowed for the supply of 17 bridges, which are to be constructed by the Government of Jamaica. Of this number, 12 are in storage, four erected and one nearing completion. The completed structures are located at Washington Boulevard in St. Andrew, Styxx River in Westmoreland and Fort George in St. Mary.

Under the Mabey and Johnson Priority Bridge Programme, we have

identified over 50 sites for the construction of new bridges: The construction of the new Yallahs Bridge will be included in the 50. Over 90% of the bridges for this programme have been supplied and are either in storage, already constructed or currently under construction.

The importance of bridges to the economic and social life of communities in which they are located cannot be over-emphasised. It

is for this reason that the Comfort Hall Bridge in Manchester was repaired at a cost of just under \$12 million and is now open to the public. New bridges have also been constructed at Boswell Heights, (Temple Hall) in St. Andrew, Worthy Park, and Agole at Tulloch in St. Catherine, Fort George in St. Mary, Serge Island and Plantain Garden in St. Thomas.

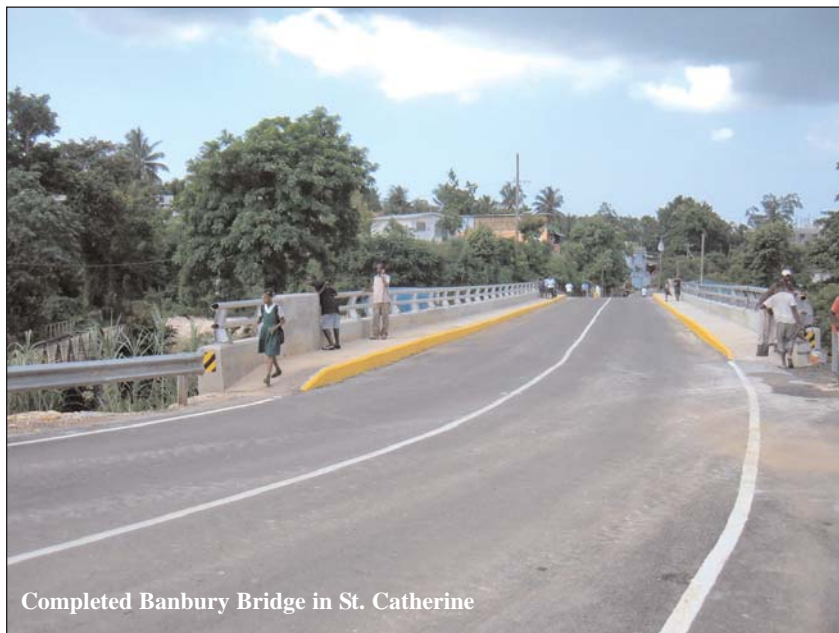
We have also completed construction of two new bridges at Wakefield and Springvale along the Barry main road in St. Catherine. The Barry main road serves as one of the alternative routes for the Bog Walk Gorge whenever the Flat Bridge becomes impassable. Construction of a new bridge at Pedro River along the border of St. Ann and Clarendon was completed in May. This bridge will link communities in the parishes of St. Ann and Clarendon as well as Salt Gully in St. Catherine.

In addition to the construction of these new structures, we have also completed rehabilitative works on the Spanish Town Road (Sandy Gully) Bridge in St. Andrew, the Black River Bridge in St. Elizabeth and the Flat Bridge in St. Catherine.

We have awarded contracts to construct the Alligator Church Bridge in Portland, the Cassia Park Road Bridge and the Queensbury Bridge (Ackee Walk) in St. Andrew. In January 2007, the National Works Agency advertised for the procure-



Completed Plantain Garden River Bridge in St. Thomas



Completed Banbury Bridge in St. Catherine

ment of contractors to construct the Enfield Bridge in St. Mary, Kings Valley (Delveland) Bridge in Westmoreland and the Harbour Head Bridge in St. Thomas.

As was stated before, the Agency's bridge construction projects are being facilitated under two current programmes. Present emphasis is on the R.A. Murray programme which allows us to enter into a contractual arrangement for the construction of eleven bridges that are in storage. This agreement will also facilitate an additional nine bridges, which are to be designed, fabricated and constructed, making a total of twenty bridges. These bridges will be constructed across the length of Jamaica. The contracts that have been signed will also include resources for River Training an activity on which the NWA has spent over 250 million dollars since April of 2006.

We have spent 10 million Canadian dollars under the R.A. Murray bridge programme, over two phases for the design, fabrication and supply of seventeen bridges. Four of these bridges have been constructed and are now being used.

Phase 1 of the Mabey and Johnson bridge programme is now complete. This programme facilitated the construction of twenty six new bridges, costing 14.9 million pounds. This includes 10 pedestrian bridges. During phase 2 of the programme, over fifty bridge sites have been identified and bridges are being constructed. The loan amount for this programme is 22.8 million pounds.

An audit of our road net-

work has shown that approximately 40% of the 750 bridges are in need of urgent repairs or should be replaced. Consequently, Phase 3 of the R.A. Murray Programme is being discussed. This third Phase will last for 3 years and should include construction of another 20 bridges.

Residents of St. Thomas and individuals who use the Yallahs Ford regularly have been patiently awaiting the construction of the new Yallahs Bridge at Poorman's Corner. Bridge parts are now in storage at the site in Poorman's Corner. Tenders were invited earlier this year for the construction of this new bridge. The contract was awarded to the Consortium,

comprising Mabey & Johnson Ltd. (who has first right to construct the new bridge) and E. Pihl & Sons AS.

These, approximately US\$ 100 million bridge programmes, while seeking to improve the island's infrastructure, also has as its focus the provision of employment for 80 persons who are skilled in River Training techniques as well as over 200 unskilled labourers who would be needed on the various construction sites.



Completed Wakefield Bridge in St. Catherine



Completed Pedro River Bridge in St. Ann



## NWA's Training Unit *at a glance*

The Roadster recently spoke with the Manager of the Agency's Training and Development Unit, Michelle Nesbeth. She told us about the Unit's organization, achievements and plans.

**Roadster:** An examination of Government Departments prior to the advent of Executive Agencies suggested that our training and development of employees never took place across the board. It was limited to Managers and Supervisors. How do you think employees of the now defunct PWD view the present training and development programmes existing in Executive Agencies like the NWA?

**MN:** The majority of employees at NWA are now cognizant that training and continuous development is necessary for personal growth and increased efficiency and effectiveness on the job. Acceptance of the paradigm shift and the change process has however been a little slow for some employees, as they are either timid or reluctant to take on new challenges.

**Roadster:** How do you determine the training needs of NWA employees and what is the long term vision for training and development?

**MN:** The T & D Unit relies on the following initiatives in determining training needs and solutions:

- Agency performance gaps/business needs.
- Directors/Managers/Supervisors directives for employee skills Improvement.
- Individual Performance Evaluations - indicating skills gap and need for further development
- Training Needs Analysis.
- Employee self appraisal - indicating need to improve knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The long term vision of the T & D Unit is to continue the mandate of training and developing the staff of the Agency to enable them to perform their jobs effectively and meet the short, medium and long term skill requirements of the Agency. With this in mind, we hope to ensure that the Agency will become a knowledge base and learning organisation.

**Roadster:** The unit conducted a number of training sessions last year. How is the effectiveness/success of these training sessions measured?

**MN:** We administer a post evaluation survey for a selected number of training programmes, three to six months after the scheduled training. The objective of this is to measure the transfer of learning, job effectiveness and changes in attitudes.

**Roadster:** There may be the perception (real or imagined) that there is inequity in meeting the training needs of the various categories of employees. How is this addressed? In other words how do you seek to level the playing field?



The Training Unit: (seated) Michele Nesbeth - Manager; (from left : standing) Geraldine Miles - Training Officer, Kim Grant - Admin. Assistant, Halcyon Henry - Training Officer;

**MN:** The Training Plan is prepared based on inputs as mentioned above, incorporating the need for training for a wide cross section of employees. The 2006/07 Training Plan covered areas across the board. In naming a few, we had interventions for the legal staff, office attendants, service technicians and technical staff. In addition we conducted training in applications, such as the Civil Survey Software.

**Roadster:** All members of staff should be aware of the facilities offered by the Training and Development Unit. What steps are taken by you, the manager, to ensure this?

**MN:** The Unit uses a number of media to disseminate information to the staff about the services offered. Training opportunities are communicated via email; The Loan Policy and the sensitisation to the re-vamped R & R programme was carried in both internal publications. We have placed the information on the Loan Facility under the current MOU on Web Works as well as the revised loan and reward and recognition forms.

**Roadster:** Does the unit assess itself, and if so, what tools are used in this exercise?

**MN:** The Unit assesses itself through: monthly progress reports; (targets) quarterly performance appraisal; (competences) fulfilment of the Training Plan and annual review of objectives, focusing on attainment of objectives, time lines and budgetary allocations.

**Roadster:** In light of constant workplace change (academic, technological) what approach will the unit take to the training and development needs of employees?

## Summer Jokes



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**MN:** We are aware that we cannot continue to conduct business as we usually do because of changes in the workplace and technological advancement and as such we have to change the way we operate. We are concentrating on equipping our staff with the necessary skills to meet the challenges and manage the changes. We are currently facilitating the programme where our IT personnel are being certified as network administrators and are trying to ensure that all members of staff have the basic skills necessary to use the Microsoft Office Suite and Outlook application. The Lab staff has benefited from specialised training facilitated by an overseas consultant, where they are now able to evaluate pavements using a 'Falling Weight Deflectometer' machine instead of using manual assessment.

**Roadster:** Are you personally satisfied with the work of the unit so far and do you have fears and misgivings?

**MN:** I am satisfied with the progress the Unit has made and the willingness by the members of the Unit to embrace change. These employees have been very supportive and I must commend them on their professionalism and high level of job performance. While there are no fears and misgivings there are concerns about the punctuality and attendance of some employees to scheduled training programmes since training is job related.

**Roadster:** How has your experience in training and development assisted you in dealing with the challenges of the NWA?

**MN:** The experiences brought to the Agency has allowed better organisation of business processes within the Unit.

**Roadster:** What aspect of training and development gives you the most satisfaction and what is your personal vision for the unit and the Agency?

**MN:** My satisfaction comes from the realisation of making a positive impact on the Agency and on any individual employee. Making a difference not only in the area of Training and Development but continuously adding value and assisting in the attainment of the Agency's, goals, is the vision of the Unit.

**Roadster:** Thank you for spending the time with the Roadster to speak about the Training and Development Unit.

