

# ARGYLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT UPDATE



The Cuban contingent posed for photo at the E.T Joshua Airport on their return.

## Earthworks resume while history is being preserved at Argyle

**E**arthworks at the Argyle International Airport project site resumed on January 28th, following the return to the state of the Cuban workers, who spent their Christmas break in Cuba.

The Vincentian and Cuban workers, known as the Chatoyer-Che contingent, returned to the field revived, refreshed and full of vigour and a renewed sense of commitment. It was full speed ahead!

With most of the work concentrated on the 2nd kilometer during the first week after resumption, one could have been easily misled into believing that they were there for the entire month of January. The volume of work done within that first week was indeed tremendous.

Work also continued in the 1st kilometer. Blasting operations resumed in the area formerly owned by Charles Agard, but will return to the area of Fort Hill in March.

Meantime, Consultant Engineer Leonardo Perez is forecasting that they will end this year with 65% of the earthworks completed. Trenches have already been dug in preparation for the installation of box culverts, which will channel the water under the runway in the 1st kilometer down to the sea. These culverts are to be installed early this year. The runway is almost at the required height in the 1st kilometer and will reach that height early this year.

Detailed design work on the terminal building and other landside facilities is expected to be completed by March 2010, in readiness for submission to firms that are to be pre-qualified for bidding for the contract for construction services. The contract for the construction of these facilities is expected to be awarded in time to allow construction work on the facilities to begin by 1st July 2010.

Meantime, the IADC and the St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Trust continue to collaborate to ensure that this country's heritage is preserved. Following two previous working visits by archaeologists, the IADC and the National Trust in January welcomed again a third set of archaeologists, the second team coming from Leiden University in the Netherlands.

Unlike the previous archaeologists who, between January and March 2009, concentrated on the pre-colonial settlements of the saladoids



Work extends from Johnson Hill in the 1st kilometer into the 2nd kilometer.

(Arawak), the five member archaeology team from Leiden University focused on the ridge just above the Argyle River, which is believed to be the Cayo or Island Carib habitat. The Island Caribs are the ancestors of the Black Caribs who we now refer to as the Garifuna People.

One of the objectives was to combine their findings with those from similar sites in other Windward Islands to determine how these people, whom they described as mysterious, lived from the pre-Colonial era right up to the 18th century.

According to Alistair Bright of the five member Leiden team, the assistance from the SVG National Trust and IADC enabled them to identify a small Amerindian village consisting of three small structures, kilos of Amerindian pottery and pieces of colonial pottery.

Bright highlighted the importance of this as one of the few sites that yielded the type of material for which they are looking. He noted that the site is the first to be excavated in this way, leading to the discovery remnants of Cayo's house post holes. With the successes to date, the team plans to return in the summer with more members to continue their excavations as they have so far exposed only about 1/3 of the site.

Chairperson of the SVG National Trust Archaeology committee, Kathy Martin has again appealed to Vincentians to support the National Trust, which facilitates these sorts of

investigations. She noted that it is also important to have the political will to support historical documentation of primary sources of our history and took the opportunity to thank the International Airport Development Company for its foresight and assistance in helping to document the history, and preserve the heritage of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mrs. Martin also revealed that from the excavations, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has recorded two major discoveries: the first being the discovery of a long house, 35 meters long, the first one to be discovered in the entire Caribbean. This was exposed by a team of Canadian Archaeologists headed by Jo Moravetz. The second is the first Cayo habitation site exposed in part by post holes by the archaeologists from Leiden University.

Meantime, help is on the way to assist with the removal and relocation of the Petroglyphs at Yambou one. According to Kathy Martin, thanks to interventions by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sir Louis Straker, Chairman of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Trust, Mrs. Louise Mitchell-Joseph, and Minister of Culture Hon. René Baptiste, a team from Egypt is expected here shortly to assist with this venture.

To learn more about what is happening with the Argyle Airport project, you can check us out on the web at [www.svgiadc.com](http://www.svgiadc.com) or [www.argyleairport.com](http://www.argyleairport.com) or you can call Tel: 458-0333 to be part of the next organized site tour.



The Cuban team returning from their Christmas break in Cuba. Out front is Lucy Perez, wife of Consultant Engineer Leonardo "Professor" Perez following closely behind.



Some of the interesting pieces of artifacts found at the Cayo site at Argyle.



A view of the 2nd kilometer one week after the resumption of earthworks, following the Christmas break.



Work continues apace in the 2nd kilometer.



Pushing the fractured rocks off Fort Hill.



Loading the rocks onto trucks for transport to the 2nd kilometer.



Depositing rocks in the 2nd kilometer.



Working on Johnson Hill/Rocks en route to the 2nd kilometer.



A general view of the 2nd kilometer.



Archaeology students from Leiden University excavating on the ridge above the Argyle River. The National Trust Roydon Lampkin assisting the team.



Removal of top soil in the 2nd kilometer.



A member of the Leiden team explains her work to IADC's staff member Lawrence Stephens.



View of the 2nd kilometer from Johnson Hill.



More Archaeology students from Leiden University excavating the ridge just above the Argyle river.