

Measures being put in place in light of COVID-19

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COVID-19 measures being set in place for Election Day

Taylor meanwhile stressed that specific COVID-19 measures are being set in place for the upcoming Election Day, and ahead of it, to govern how persons operate, given the pandemic.

“The only difference between our preparations for this General Election and previous ones, is the fact that we are in a COVID-19 situation and we have taken a number of steps and measures to ensure that we comply with the COVID-19 protocols. As a matter of fact, the COVID-19 Unit has developed a document of the protocols that we will be following, for every

election activity. That includes EBC meetings with political parties, the media, it includes what we do on Nomination Day, on general polling day, at the night of the count and it even includes information for the conduct of political meetings and other political activities. So we do have the protocols before us and we will be training our staff to be familiar with everything that they have to put in place” the Supervisor of Elections maintained.

She meanwhile noted that a separate team has been established to deal specifically with COVID-19 matters and to ensure that enough persons are on location at the polling stations to take temperatures, sanitise the

hands of voters and ensure social distancing and also to sanitise the polling booths after persons have voted.

Taylor is meanwhile asking voters who do not have to work on Election Day, to leave the morning and evening slots for voters who will either turn out to vote early before heading into work or after work, to ease the load on the polling stations. Workers who can should also use their lunch hour on Election Day to come out and vote, to reduce bottle necks as well, she suggested.

EBC Chairman Leslie Haynes QC has also asked that employers be lenient with workers, who may need a bit more extra time to go and cast their votes. (RSM)



Supervisor of Elections, Angela Taylor.

BHTA's New Year's Message 2022

AS we look forward to 2022, we cannot do so without reflecting on the year that has just closed. In our New Year's message last year it was noted that we were looking forward to a year where the tourism industry and the country would commence economic recovery. While this restoration of our tourism fortunes did in fact commence, 2021 was not without challenges.

The year opened with a lockdown due to increased COVID-19 cases. This was followed by the ashfall from the eruption of the Soufriere volcano in St. Vincent, which interrupted the limited airlift into the island at the time and resulted in a severe impact on already constricted travel, while also straining limited resources in effecting the required clean-up.

We were dealt another blow from hurricane Elsa which was one of the most severe hurricanes impacting the island in decades. Additionally, COVID-19 was not through as we further experienced a global surge due to the Delta variant.

Through all this we persevered and, as was noted in our 2021 New Year's message, we remained strong and, like the phoenix, we rose from the ashes. As the winter season approached, hotels readied themselves to receive guests while restaurants and attractions were prepared to deliver the high level of experience Barbados has become known for. Teams across all of the service providers were primed and ready, and the most heart-warming scene was to see staff back on the job.

The perseverance and concomitant gains made in 2021 shall be carried over to 2022 through the collaborative efforts of the BHTA's members under the guidance of the Board of Directors and the support of the secretariat team.

We look forward during 2022 to continue to build on the recovery that, in the past year, has seen the industry re-emerge from what has been the most impactful event on tourism since the formation of the BHTA. However, we are not under the illusion that we are out of the woods yet nor that COVID-19's potential impact has vanished.

2022 is viewed as a year of promise, but this must be buttressed in the need for all of us to be ever cognisant of the presence of the virus and its continued potential impact on our local population, our visitors' ability to travel and the economic impact on the industry and the country.

We must continue to follow the stipulated protocols. We must also anticipate scenarios that are likely to play out as a result, and put measures in place to mitigate against any negative fallout for Barbados.

At the BHTA we commit to continue our engagement with all of the agencies that have contributed to the discussions and deliberations that have paved the way for the industry and country over the past months. We extend our appreciation to each of these agencies and particularly the team members who have been ever present.

While the agencies to which we would like to say thank-you to are numerous, we do want to name a few, some less obvious

than others, with whom we have spent worthwhile hours in discussion and look forward to continued collaboration with, as we forge a path of recovery and growth.

These include the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport, the Barbados Private Sector Association, the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners, the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc., the Intimate Hotels of Barbados, the Central Bank of Barbados and the Tourism Development Corporation.

“A little progress each day adds up to big results,” is a saying that can be aptly attributed to the efforts of all involved. Some days may be daunting, and such days will no doubt occur from time to time, but that has not prevented, and will not prevent our community from forging ahead to do what is in the interest of rebuilding the tourism industry.

We also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the BHTA Board of Directors and all members of the Association for the work they have done in support of the industry's recovery. Special mention must be made of the BHTA secretariat team for their steadfast commitment throughout the past year. We take comfort in knowing that this team will be there to support all that needs to be undertaken during this year, as the industry continues to build on the recovery foundation laid in 2021.

As we carry on our work in the coming year, we shall continue to focus on engaging with

the wider Barbadian community. Tourism's success is dependent on all of us and our outreach to the Barbadian community shall remain a key focus of our efforts in 2022.

Our plans shall be driven to foster linkages with other sectors to broaden the tourism experience while enhancing the fortunes of players forming these linkages, as well as enriching the Barbadian experience for our visitors.

Barbados has seen the opening of new markets and gateways as we worked our way through the last year, and we look forward and stand ready to aid in the development of new markets and delivery of experiences to many first-time visitors.

In recent times we have spoken of the need to take a different approach to how we look at and do things. We urge all of our members to continue to do so as we move forward to welcome visitors from new markets. This urging is not just for our members, but all Barbadians.

While guests are visiting Barbados for a Barbadian experience, their wants and needs will vary and we need to be aware of this. We are inviting persons to visit our home and, as such, it is incumbent on us to make them feel welcome when they are here. Let us ensure we work together to make this a reality. Let us deliver a Barbadian experience that is second to no other experience. This is our commitment.

The continued development of Barbados' tourism industry remains in the crosshair of the BHTA's strategy. The sub-com-

mittees of the Association ranging from Environmental to Safety and Security are all charged with focusing on areas that will enhance the industry's attractiveness.

At the centre of the development of the industry are our people and the Young Leaders Committee shall continue to be a platform for the growth and development of young persons in the industry. We have discussed a number of other initiatives that will focus on people development, some of which we expect to come to fruition in 2022.

In summary, we see this year as one to build our human capital. This is not something that happens once and then takes a back seat – this is an ongoing process and, while it has been so, 2022 has to be a year of more intense focus on such, as we rebuild the capacity within the industry.

The BHTA is committed to the strengthening of relationships across all players in the interest of our people, our industry and our country. On behalf of the Board of Directors and the staff of the BHTA, we wish all Barbadians and all who call Barbados home a year filled with success and continued growth.

“Success is a journey not a destination” ...enjoy the journey!

Geoffrey Roach
Chairman

June 2019 – December 2021

Renee Coppin
Chairman (ag)
June 2019 – December 2021
January 2022