



GOVERNMENT  
INFORMATION  
SERVICES

# Bulletin

WWW.SABAGOV.NL

S002

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER EDITION



## PLANS UNDERWAY TO INCREASE ISLAND'S WATER STORAGE CAPACITY

*Trucks of the water producers filling up with water from the desalination plants on Fort Bay.*

With the ongoing drought on the island, the government believes that the capacity for water storage on the island should be increased. A comprehensive plan that is being financed with funds from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment (I&M) and put together with input from stakeholders on the island will be put into place in the coming months.

In late 2014, Commissioner Bruce Zagers and representatives from I&M signed a Covenant with the intention to increase the quality and quantity of drinking water on the island. This covenant aims to provide structural solutions to the lack of water on the island particularly when there is a drought. "The Government has been working along with the Dutch Government for quite some

time now to ensure that there is an adequate supply of drinking water on the island. We, unfortunately, do not have many natural sources of water on the island, except rainwater, which we know is not always reliable. The Executive Council believes that by increasing the storage capacity of water we can have a reliable supply of water for residents and businesses even when there is a drought. We will

CONTINUED ON P2

### What's inside?

**P2 / ISLAND GOVERNMENT AND CYF PROVIDE SCHOOL UNIFORMS**

**P3 / SABA RECEIVES UNQUALIFIED AUDIT OPINION FOR 2014 YEAR REPORT**

**P4 / SUBSIDY RECEIVED TO SET UP A DAYCARE FOR THE ELDERLY**

**P5 / TWO AFISO'S COMPLETE CERTIFICATION AT JUANCHO YRAUSQUIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

**P6 / GERALD DE JONG IS THE NEW GOVERNMENT LAWYER**

## PLANS UNDERWAY TO INCREASE ISLAND'S WATER STORAGE CAPACITY

CONTINUED FROM P1

also continue to pursue options that will also decrease the price of water so that when there is a need to purchase water that the impact is not as great as it is now."

Plans for increasing the storage capacity include the construction of a grey water cistern, currently being constructed under the parking lot in Windwardside; this cistern has a capacity of 125, 000 gallons. This water can be used for agricultural purposes and also in cases where non-potable water can be used. Additionally, the capacity of the cistern of new school building was increased to allow for more water storage.

There are also plans being developed for the construc-

tion of two cisterns, each with a capacity of 60, 000 gallons, to be built close to the new Saba Electric Plant. From these cisterns, water will be pumped to the cistern in The Range. At this location, trucks will receive water to deliver to homes and businesses. Having the water pumped to The Bottom should help reduce the price, as trips to Fort Bay will no longer be necessary, saving on fuel and wear and tear on the vehicle.

The water will be pumped to the range in pipes that will be placed underground when the Fort Bay Road is being resurfaced. Pumping stations are to be installed as part of the project to push the water to the higher elevation in The Bottom.

For the future, the government will continue to seek funding to continue to increase water storage capacity, by purchasing land where cisterns can be built to store both fresh water and grey water. "It is no secret that most of the land on the island is privately owned, this means that whenever government would like to build cisterns, they have to purchase land, which sometimes can be very expensive. However, we will continue to look for opportunities to improve the water infrastructure on the island as they become available."

---

## Island Government and CYF provide School Uniforms



*Assortment of uniform shirts ready for distribution to parents and students.*

The Island Government of Saba in collaboration with the Centre for Youth and Family Saba (CYF), provided school uniform t-shirts for the children in need of the Sacred Heart Elementary School.

The local Government made funding available for the first time in August 2014, as part of the campaign to battle poverty on island. Due to the success of last year, the project has been reintroduced on the Government budget of 2015. The CYF distributed the t-shirts.

The school uniforms were purchased at the Saba Artisan Foundation, to stimulate local entrepreneurship.

The Island Government and the CYF would like wish every student success with achieving their academic goals for the school year of 2015/2016.

# SABA RECEIVES UNQUALIFIED AUDIT OPINION FOR 2014 YEAR REPORT



*Commissioner of Finance, Bruce Zagers.*

Auditors for The Public Entity Saba, Ernst & Young have given the Island Government an unqualified (in Dutch: goedkeuren') audit opinion on the financial statements for the financial year 2014. This means that the accountants are of the opinion that the financial statements provided by the government "give a true and fair view" with regards to the financial activities of the organization.

In addition to the unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements the auditors were for the first time able to give an opinion on the compliance to relevant laws. Based on the improvements that have taken place in regards to the island's financial management over the course of 2014, the auditors state that "We were able to obtain sufficient audit evidence relating to compliance for all significant parts of the financial statements and have provided an unqualified audit opinion in relation to the financial compliance of the income and expense as part of the financial statements 2014." This compliance is in line with the Financial Law BES whose requirements are based on those for municipalities in The Netherlands. Saba is the first island to receive an unqualified audit opinion on compliance and on financial statements.

## Surplus

For the year 2014 Saba presented a surplus of USD 1,809,457.00 which is approximately 11% of the total budget for the year. While the surplus appears significant, there are considerations that must be taken into account. A large amount of money was spent on investments. These investments led to a cash outflow but not to expenses in the current year. The government decided not to incur any additional expenses which would have placed the liquidity position of the island under pressure. By not incurring additional expense this led to a surplus in the annual accounts. This shows that the Public Entity of Saba has chosen to be conservative in its spending. Both the Executive Council and the Island Council have recognized that the financial stability of the Public Entity of Saba needs to be improved and has therefore chosen to strengthen its financial position.

Commissioner of Finance Bruce Zagers said that, "The unqualified audit opinion on both the financial statements and the compliance with the relevant laws are due to the commitment of the financial team that has made it their priority to make this possible. Because of our financial management, our relationship with our partners in The Netherlands continues to improve and I believe that this will only prove beneficial to the people of Saba."

The 2014 Year Report was unanimously approved by the Island Council.

# SUBSIDY RECEIVED TO SET UP A DAYCARE FOR THE ELDERLY



*Commissioner Zagers, State Secretary Van Rijn and Kingdom Representative Isabella at the opening of the senior care program.*

The Public Entity has received a subsidy from Dutch Government to set up a daycare program for seniors on Saba. The daycare program is a program for seniors and physically challenged persons who still live at home. The program is being organized in close collaboration with the Honorable Henry C. Every Home for the Aged and the Saba Healthcare Foundation. A study by former colleague, Sarah van der Horn showed that approximately thirty seniors and physically challenged persons on Saba are that are interested in participating in a daycare program. The pilot project for the daycare program was opened when State Secretary Van Rijn visited the island in October.

Activities will be organized in the afternoons, and will take place in the newly refurbished Activities Room at the Home for the Aged. This pilot will be coordinated by nurse Dahlia Lavia, in close collaboration with Ms. Cassandra Wilson. By the end of 2015, a project manager will be recruited to set up the daycare for all interested seniors and physically challenged persons on the island. As the daycare program grows, a permanent location will be sought for the program outside the Home.

The daycare program is being set up to facilitate seniors who would like to keep living in their homes but are not sufficiently mobile to go out and participate in activities on their own. An added benefit family members and caretakers can use the opportunity to have some time for themselves. Transportation will be provided for participants in the program who will be picked up and taken back to their homes. Activities are to be organized five days a week, and meals provided to the participants.

The subsidy for the program is granted to the Public Entity by the Integral Projects Fund, a program that funds project proposals from the Public Entity that aim to improve the socio-economic situation of the island. The subsidy is granted for one year, after that it is anticipated that the Saba Healthcare Foundation, in collaboration with the Home for the Aged, will continue the program under their management.

Commissioner of Health, Bruce Zagers stated, "I am happy to see this project become a reality. Ensuring that our seniors can have a good quality of life as they age is an important for our community."

## NEW SCHOOL BUS ADDED TO THE EXISTING FLEET



The Public Entity continues to make investment where possible. This year a new school bus was added to the existing fleet. Having safe transportation is a priority for the government.

## TWO AFISO'S COMPLETE CERTIFICATION AT JUANCHO YRAUSQUIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



*John Johnson and Cristal Hassell, the latest AFISO's certified at Juancho Yrausquin International Airport.*

The Juancho Yrausquin International Airport now has two more certified Aerodrome Flight Information Safety Officers (AFISO) since August. John Johnson and Cristal Hassell completed their practical examinations that enable them to work alone and provide information to pilots of aircraft arriving and departing from the airport.

Both AFISO's had been working at the airport gaining practical experience for some time now having completed the theoretical part of their training. This theoretical training included modules on Legislation/Air Law, Air Traffic Management, Aerodromes, Meteorology, Navigation, Aeronautical Information Service and Aeronautical Flight

Information Service.

The course prepares candidate AFISOs by giving them the knowledge and tools to function optimally in their work environment. The curriculum for the course has been approved by The Netherlands Civil Aviation Authority and is sanctioned by the Sint Maarten Civil Aviation Authority (SXM-CAA). The course was taught by certified ATS classroom instructors from the Princess Juliana International Airport. The senior AFISO's went through the course to maintain and upgrade knowledge and skills.

In order to be certified to execute their tasks without direct supervision, both AFISO's had

to undergo a rigorous practical exam, which demonstrated their command of aviation phraseology (jargon), the surrounding airspace and emergency procedures.

Commissioner of Aviation, Chris Johnson commended both AFISO's on their accomplishment. "Ms. Hassell and Mr. Johnson have been able to meet the standards that have been set for them to be able to work as AFISOs at our challenging airport and for this they should be congratulated. As the airport moves forward trained and qualified personnel will play a major role in taking the airport to the next level," the commissioner stated.



*Incoming Island Secretary, Tim Muller (l) with former Island Secretary, Wim van Twuijver.*

## New Island Secretary takes up post

The newly appointed Island Secretary, took up his post October. Mr. Muller, who up until recently lived and worked in The Hague, The Netherlands, was chosen after an extensive selection procedure. There were 91 applications for the position which was advertised locally, regionally and also in The Netherlands, using both print and social media.

Mr. Muller, will replace Wim van Twuijver who has returned to The Netherlands. The incoming Island Secretary's most recent post was the General Director of Public Affairs for the city of The Hague. The Island Secretary has said that his goal is to create more structure within the organization and help take the civil service to the next level.

In the next newsletter, Mr. Muller will speak about what his plans are for the organization.

## GERALD DE JONG IS THE NEW GOVERNMENT LAWYER



*Gerald de Jong, Government Lawyer, who took up his post in August.*

As per 1 August 2015, Gerald De Jong started as the Government Lawyer (bestuursjurist) to the Executive Council in Saba.

Gerald obtained his law degrees at the Erasmus School of Law in Rotterdam. During his studies he, among other things, organized research trips to New York, Beijing and Iceland. After graduating, Gerald stayed as a teaching assistant at Erasmus for several years, mainly providing Dutch law lectures, before moving to St. Maarten to become an attorney.

In St. Maarten, Gerald practiced as an attorney at the one of the top law firms in the Dutch Caribbean: VanEps Kunneman VanDoorne. He passionately advised clients in

Aruba, Curacao, St. Maarten, Bonaire, Statia and Saba. His clients mainly consisted of the different governments, government companies and the government foundations.

A few months ago, Gerald, and his partner, who is from the island, decided to relocate to Saba.

Next to advising the Governor directly, Gerald advises both elected commissioners on all legal/policy matters pertaining to their respective portfolios. Gerald remarked that he feels blessed for having the opportunity to practice the law again. He also mentioned that with him, the Executive council will have a dedicated and tenacious lawyer, who will always work hard to get the job done.

# UPDATE FROM THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT SABA



*Dr. Koen Hulshof (sitting) and Nurse Felicia Dookhan perform a hearing screening on a pupil at the Sacred Heart School.*

Dr. Koen Hulshof of the Public Health Department (PHD) has been on Saba for six months now and has taken several new initiatives. Dr. Hulshof explained some of the developments that are taking place in three priority areas:

## Youth Health Care:

- Together with Saba Health Care Foundation we will start screening school children for hearing problems this fall. Hearing loss in children can harm language development, which can be preventable if detected on time.
- We are currently hiring a public health nurse who will extend the Youth Health Clinic, (commonly, known as the baby clinic with Dr Gina Boorsma) to ages 0-19. The nurse will also support the schools on the island in creating a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Together with the island optometrist and the incoming dentist we are strengthening eyesight and dental screening programs for school children.

## Health promotion:

- We are planning a free outdoor fitness area in The Bottom. Obesity is an important issue on Saba, and similar fitness areas have helped people become more active in many different parts of the world.
- Saba-Fit: the course. The Saba-Fit program (geared at preventing youth obesity) will be extended this fall with a course for children who want to live a more healthy life. The program will focus on nutrition, physical activity and on teaching the participants tools on how to continue their healthy lifestyle. Parental involvement will be an important factor.
- Sun safety will also be an important theme this fall: we will look into creating more shade at playgrounds, have a walk-in skin check with the visiting dermatologist and have an awareness campaign.

## Infectious disease control (IDC):

- The PHD, Saba Health Care Foundation, and Benevolent Foundation Saba have set up a workgroup that aims to minimize the spread of infectious diseases in the hospital and old age home. The goal of this workgroup is to protect staff and patients and promote the correct use of antibiotics (and hence limiting the development of bacteria that are resistant to many antibiotics, like MRSA).
- Together with the laboratory on St. Maarten and the RIVM (Dutch Center for Disease Control) we are developing a testing protocol for outbreaks. An algorithm that we put in practise during the minor diarrhea outbreak in May (as the first of the Dutch Caribbean islands).

These are a few examples of the work currently being done by the PHD. Please like our Facebook page for updates, and feel free to contact the PHD with ideas, concerns or other comments.

# FAREWELL TO A BEAUTIFUL ISLAND



Former Island Secretary, Wim Twuijver with his farewell gift.

A few weeks ago we returned to "cold Netherlands" and we miss the beautiful island of Saba. It wasn't possible to personally say goodbye to everybody. I will use this article to thank everybody for their cooperation, the contacts, and the fine hospitality.

Saba was a special adventure for my family and me. Working in an organization and try to help to take the next steps is something I did with all I had and with a lot of fun.

The important thing for me was to bring the "smile" back in the organization and pull

together to improve results. I think we made steps with this goal. With many colleagues, I have worked closely, and we have tried to look together for improvement. I've seen a lot of motivated employees who are able to further enhance your beautiful island.

I am particularly proud that there is a broad-based organization development plan drawn up. This organization development plan provides a basis for the future of the organization. The first recommendations from the plan are being implemented, and I am confident that the Executive Council and Management will implement this comprehensive plan.

I also think it is very important to train employees for the future. What does it mean to be a civil servant in the Dutch system? How can you broaden your knowledge and how can a team be effective? Now there is a multiyear training plan, to help achieve these answers. For this, the ministry has made financial resources available. My successor Tim Muller will set the next steps, and I am convinced that this will be a valuable addition to all employees of the public body.

During the time on Saba I had a very good relationship and worked well with the Executive Council. Everyone on the island has his thoughts and political

affiliations, but the professionalism and knowledge that I have seen and felt is at a high level. The members of the Executive Council gave me the chance to take steps with the organization and increase the professionalization. For this, I thank them.

To everyone I worked and lived with, I want to say: thank you for the wonderful time. I have greatly enjoyed working and living on the island, just like my family. We will not forget the hospitality and special contacts that we have made. Also a special thanks to the teachers, bus drivers and management of the Sacred Heart School, who took care of our children in a very nice and proper manner during their school time at Saba.

We would love to come back on holidays to see how it goes and see you again! All the best for everyone on the island!

*Wim van Twuijver and family*

## COLOPHON

This newsletter is a publication of G.I.S. Public Entity of Saba aims to provide update information to the community of Saba.

Editorial: Vito Charles, G.I.S.  
Design: Sundiata Lake  
Nimojin Media Design  
Printing: G.I.S Inhouse

Do you want to react to the contents of this newsletter or do you have suggestions or contributions for next edition?

Please email: [info@sabagov.nl](mailto:info@sabagov.nl)  
Website: [www.sabagov.nl](http://www.sabagov.nl)