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Pioneers of Prosperity Program to Select 2009 Regional Grand Prize Winner

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By SC Admin

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Sept. 10, 2009 -- On September 11, 2009, ten finalists from seven countries across the Caribbean will compete for a grant of US \$100,000 to invest in the growth of their company, and the prestigious title of *Pioneer of Prosperity*.

Final Award Ceremony Hosted by the Prime Minister of Jamaica

Sept. 10, 2009 -- On September 11, 2009, ten finalists from seven countries across the Caribbean will compete for a grant of US \$100,000 to invest in the growth of their company, and the prestigious title of Pioneer of Prosperity. Experts in the fields of business and finance are arriving in Jamaica from around the world to judge the final stage of the competition.

From an astounding 580 applications, ten Pioneers of Prosperity emerged representing some of the most innovative, dynamic businesses in the region. Each one of the finalists has already won a grant from the Multilateral Investment Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) of US \$40,000 and will be connected to a global network of technical expertise, potential investors, and other cutting-edge entrepreneurs.

The Pioneers of Prosperity Awards Program is a global program made-up of regional competitions spanning the Caribbean, Africa and Central America. Seven countries participated in the inaugural Caribbean competition: Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago. The program will launch in Central America on September 14, 2009.

All events for the Caribbean awards will be held at the Half Moon Bay Resort in Montego Bay, Jamaica. A ceremony will be held the evening of September 11th to mark the occasion, hosted by the Hon. Orette Bruce Golding, M.P. Prime Minister of Jamaica.

The Pioneers of Prosperity Program seeks to inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs in emerging economies by identifying, rewarding, and promoting outstanding small to medium size businesses who will serve as role models to their peers. The Program is sponsored by the Multilateral Investment Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank, the John Templeton Foundation, and the Social Equity Venture Fund (S.E.VEN Fund) and was conceived and initiated by Michael Fairbanks, a recognized thought leader in the area of enterprise solutions to poverty. Michael Fairbanks is a co-founder of S.E.VEN Fund. The program has also built a network of over 35 local partners throughout the Caribbean. Jamaica Trade and Invest is co-hosting the Final Awards Ceremony.

A brief description of each finalist follows:

From Jamaica two country winners were identified: Sandra Samuels of Totally Male Limited, a company she founded in 1994 which offers Jamaican professional men with a full aesthetic upgrading experience, and Silburn Clarke of Spatial Innovision, a company he founded in 1998 to provide custom implementation of land mapping technology, were identified as country-level winners and will proceed to the regional ceremony.

In Haiti, two country winners were identified: Alternative Insurance Company, founded in 2001 by Olivier Barrau to provide a range of insurance products adapted to the local market and aimed at Haitians earning less than \$4 a day, and Solutions S.A., founded by Kurt Jean-Charles in 2000 to provide customized software and database solutions as well as conceive and implement new information systems.

In Trinidad & Tobago, two country winners were identified: Analytical Technologies, founded in 1996 by Namdeo Maharaj to provide industrial lab and environmental remediation and consulting services for the local petrochemicals industry, and Sacha Cosmetics, founded in 1979 by Kama Maharaj as a premium make-up brand that caters to "exotic" or ethnic skins, were selected.

In Belize, Robert Lopez, founder of Hummingbird Furniture Ltd. in 1987 and maker of high-end bamboo, wicker, rattan, and poly-resin furniture, was selected. In Guyana, Howard Bulkan of Bulkan Timber Works (founded in 1997) was selected as a maker of house building materials including wall cladding, tongue & groove flooring, wall studs and rafters, for clients across the Caribbean. In The Bahamas, Ray McKenzie of Caribbean Civil Group (founded in 2000) was selected for his civil engineering firm which offers public and private sector clients expertise on transportation and infrastructure projects, along with Trinity Homes in Barbados, founded by Elizabeth and Christopher Cupples in 2000 to provide a "one-stop-shop" for middle class home buyers by walking them through the entire process of building a high-quality, customized home within their budget.

For additional information on the Pioneers of Prosperity Awards Program, visit www.pioneersofprosperity.org.

