

Pioneers of Prosperity Awards Programme was launched

By Jennifer Hudson

The official launch of the Pioneers of Prosperity (PoP) global awards programme on Abaco was held on March 4 at the Anglican Parish Church Hall in Marsh Harbour. Assisting with the launch on Abaco were the Abaco Chamber of Commerce represented by Michael Albury, Chamber President, and the Bahamas Development Bank represented by Marcus Cunningham, Island Representative. Presenting an overview on behalf of PoP was Country Representative, Abby Noble.

Partners of Prosperity is continuing in its quest to identify, reward and promote truly outstanding businesses that can serve as role models to their peers. This global awards programme seeks to inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs in emerging economies and business owners, and entrepreneurs based on Abaco are being encouraged to participate in the programme which is now in its third very successful year.

The programme has extended throughout Africa during its first two years and this year marks its official installation in the Caribbean region including Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Haiti, Guyana, Jamaica and The Bahamas. "We are excited to have our awards programme in The Bahamas as part of our regional Caribbean programme. Our commitment lies in ensuring that small- and medium-sized business owners can access financial awards while being recognized for their enormous contributions to nation building," commented Ms. Noble.

Advantages of applying for a PoP award are the following:

Winners are awarded cash prizes ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000 to invest in their company. Ten to fifteen awards of up

to \$50,000 will be granted with at least one winner from each country. One grand prize of \$100,000 will be awarded to the winner for the entire region, and this will be presented at the awards ceremony in Jamaica.

Winners of the PoP Award are connected to networks of technical expertise, potential investors and other cutting edge entrepreneurs on the local, regional and global level.

Every company that is selected as a finalist will be showcased during the awards ceremony, an event attended by business leaders, innovators, top ranking government officials and field experts.

"The PoP award is for small- and medium-sized businesses. Companies eligible for the award should have at least five and no more than 250 employees and earn between \$100,000 and \$5,000,000 in revenues per year. It is an advantage to have been in business for at least two years. The grants received by the winners will be for investment in technical infrastructure such as computers, training facilities and software as well as training for their executives and employees to be disbursed with accountability and transparency," stated Ms. Noble.

Pioneers of Prosperity partners include the John Templeton Foundation, the Inter-American Development Bank, the OTF Group which is the world's leading specialist in building country competitiveness in emerging and transitional economies around the world and the Social Equity Venture Fund (SEVEN).

In his opening address, Mr. Albury remarked that he believes that the Abaco business community and business leaders are indeed stellar role models for the entire Bahamas and as such he wished to imple-

ment all business leaders in attendance and entrepreneurs throughout Abaco who are eligible to apply for an award.

Mr. Cunningham informed the audience that just as the Pioneers of Prosperity programme is centred on inspiring business leaders, so is The Bahamas Development Bank which has, over the past 31 years, provided financing to enterprising business leaders to support their various entrepreneurial and business pursuits.

Following her overview, Ms. Noble encouraged all present to sign up online at

www.pioneersofprosperity.org. Although the current application deadline is March 9, Ms. Noble stated that if the expected quota of applications was not received by that date, the deadline may be extended giving more persons time to apply.

Some of the businesses which have already received awards are agri industries - exporters of vegetables and coffee, tele-marketing and customer service, digital television and Internet service via satellite and a web service company.



The Pioneers of Prosperity program is designed to award successful entrepreneurs and highlight their accomplishments so they are a role model for other businesses. The main presenter was Abby Noble, who is the country representative for the program. The presentation was made on March 4 at the Anglican Hall. Others taking part in the program were Einar Cornish with Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation, Abaco office; Administrator Cephas Cooper; Preston Roberts, Chief Councillor for South Abaco; Ms. Noble; Marcus Cunningham, Bahamas Development Bank, Abaco office; and Michael Albury, Abaco Chamber of Commerce president.

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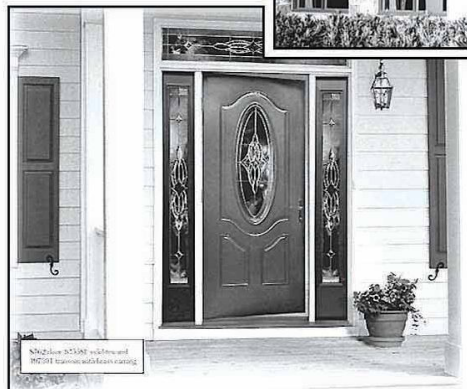
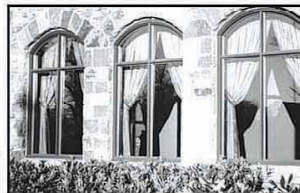


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