

NO: 541/19

BRA TO HOST TAMIS TAX FILING CLINICS

Taxpayers will have an opportunity to receive one-on-one assistance with filing their 2018 income tax returns online in the new Tax Administration Management Information System (TAMIS) at upcoming tax clinics.

The Barbados Revenue Authority (BRA) will be hosting clinics this Saturday, April 20, at the BRA's Treasury Building and Holetown locations, as well as the Rices, St. Philip and Valley, St. George, community centres.

Clinics will also be held on Saturday, April 27, at the BRA's Treasury Building and Holetown locations, along with the Briar Hall, Christ Church; Deacons, St. Michael and Gall Hill, St. John, community centres and the Holy Innocents Church in St. Thomas. All clinics will be held from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

The deadline for filing income tax returns is Tuesday, April 30. **(BRA/BGIS)**

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FIXED RATES ON RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS FOR 20 YEARS

All commissioned systems of 500 kilowatt or less and licences issued for systems of this capacity as at July 6, 2019, will be "ring fenced" at the current rates for 20 years for electricity supplied from renewable energy sources.

Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Wilfred Abrahams, made this revelation during a press conference on Tuesday, at the ministry's conference room, Country Road, St. Michael. In addition, he noted that the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) would set rates for electricity supplied from renewable energy sources for systems up to 1 megawatt (MW) using feed-in tariffs by July 6.

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ADD: FIXED RATES ON RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS FOR 20 YEARS - 1

Minister Abrahams said that he is optimistic that this methodology to the pricing policy for the renewable energy sector “would kick start the sector and catapult us to where it is we want to get, that is, to a 100 per cent renewable energy and a carbon neutral Barbados by 2030”.

Noting the fuel import bill for 2018 stood at \$513 million, the Energy Minister explained that the decision to have a fixed rate for commissioned renewable energy systems and new systems, for which licences have been issued until July 6, for 20 years, is “an effort to accelerate the process of connecting renewable energy systems to the grid, to reduce the importation of fossil fuels, and to help drive the cost of electricity down”.

He further explained that the decision was approved by the FTC, the Ministry of Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Commerce, sector stakeholders and related ministries that have an input or concern within the energy sector.

Highlighting another benefit Minister Abrahams stated “because the current rates for the feed-in-tariff were temporary, people found it difficult to get loans based on temporary rates...so it became difficult for potential investors to get the funding and financing they needed to push renewable energy systems.

“By fixing the existing rates for 20 years, we’ve protected those who took the risk in the early days to invest...and there is certainty you can now take to the bank.”

Minister Abrahams said the unavailability of financing for renewable energy projects had effectively grounded the sector to a halt, and this ‘good faith gesture’ of a fixed rate to people in the sector would help, and also encourage smaller investors, in particular, to get on board.

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ADD: FIXED RATES ON RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS FOR 20 YEARS - 2

“So that between now and July 6, this year, we expect to see a plethora of licence applications for people willing to take advantage of this rate that is fixed now for 20 years,” Minister Abrahams stated.

The Minister of Energy and Water Resources pointed out that after July 6, the FTC will make a determination on the appropriate methodology or combination of methodologies for the pricing of renewable energy systems to be connected to the grid over 1MW. **(SF/BGIS)**

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MCCS TO HOST OPEN DAY

The Community Independence Celebrations Secretariat (CICS), under the aegis of the Ministry of Creative Economy, Culture and Sports (MCCS), will host an Open Day on Friday, April 26.

It will be held at Sky Mall, Haggatt Hall, St. Michael, from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

There will be information booths displaying the products and services of some of the ministry's departments, such as the National Library Service, National Sports Council, National Cultural Foundation and the Archives Department.

In addition, a number of entrepreneurial displays will be set up by members of some of the Parish Independence Committees.

The Open Day will also feature a lunch-time concert in the food court of the mall, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

All are invited to attend. **(CICS/BGIS)**

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POLICYHOLDER TOWN HALL MEETINGS DELAYED

The town hall meetings planned for claimants and policyholders of Resolution Life Assurance Company Ltd (ResLife), to update them on the proposed settlement scheme and liquidation of the company, have been postponed until next month.

During the March 20, 2019 Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals by Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Mia Amor Mottley, it was disclosed that town hall meetings would be staged to inform policyholders on the new settlement scheme proposed by government for the state-owned entity.

These meetings will now take place during the month of May. More details on the dates and times of the sessions will be publicized shortly.

Minister in the Ministry of Finance, Ryan Straughn, will lead the interactive sessions, along with key officials from his ministry, the ResLife Board of Directors and Management. **(BGIS)**

ATTENTION NEWS EDITOR

THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT WILL HOST A GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR ITS ASMAN (ACQUIRING SKILLS MEN ACTUALLY NEED) PROGRAMME, TOMORROW, THURSDAY, APRIL 17, AT THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, PINFOLD STREET, BRIDGETOWN, BEGINNING AT 2:00 P.M.

CHILD PROTECTION SPECIALIST AT UNICEF, HEATHER STEWART, IS EXPECTED TO DELIVER THE FEATURE ADDRESS.

THE ASMAN PROGRAMME IS TARGETED AT MALES BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13 AND 16, AND SEEKS TO DIVERT YOUNG OFFENDERS FROM FURTHER OFFENDING BY EQUIPPING THEM WITH THE NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO ENABLE THEM TO "THINK FIRST" AND CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR ACTIONS.

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO COVER THIS EVENT.