



**Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry**

**Post-Budget Press Conference Comments**

**Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry**

**The Hon. Patrice K. Minors, JP, MP**

Good Afternoon:

I'm pleased to provide a brief overview of the direction that the Ministry will take as it moves to drive economic growth and create employment opportunities during the next fiscal year.

In accordance with our mandate to improve the economy by addressing the needs of local business and realizing the career aspirations of Bermudians, the community can expect new programmes to launch next fiscal designed to assist specific target segments. These include:

- Recent high school graduates;
- Recent college graduates;
- Lower skilled adults seeking employment;
- Experienced and qualified technical skilled adults seeking employment; and
- Experienced and qualified professional adults seeking employment

Our aim is to help these groups 'reinvent' themselves, so they are 'job ready' to work within the current job market. For most, it will mean starting a programme to upgrade or change their skills. For some, it will mean taking a job that they may feel is below their skill level, while they learn new skills to meet the requirements for a better paying job.

Our recent job placement and retraining efforts have focused on one segment, mainly lower skilled jobs however the community can expect the launch of programmes directed at assisting recent college graduates who may be unable to find employment given their lack of experience as well as re-training and job placement programmes for experienced professionals.

Preliminary stakeholder consultation with respect to the development of these programmes has already commenced to ensure that these programmes meet the needs of both the job seeker and the prospective employers.

You will know doubt be aware that people who come to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry for help often have multiple needs.

The One-Stop Career Centre will provide a single point for assistance, helping the person who comes in whether the reason is wrongful dismissal, unemployment, career advancement or training. The process will have greater integration between these functions, thereby making services more 'user friendly'.

In order to effectively achieve this mandate and better service the people of Bermuda a facility that is fit for purpose is required.

**The community can expect that the Department of Labour and Training will move to the government-owned facility that formally housed Magistrates Court.** I can share that the preliminary drawings have been approved and planning is in progress.

Meanwhile, in an effort to realize the Job Corp Programme, the Government has entered into a contractual agreement with **Olde International** to guide us through the planning phase of the Job Corps Replication programme.

Odle International will facilitate the Bermuda Job Training Programme. Training commences February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 for the Phase I.

Odle International will serve as *Subject Matter Experts* for the Government of Bermuda to establish our policies and procedures that will govern the Job Training Replication Programme, with collaborative efforts supported by Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the One-Stop Career Center, Bermuda College and other related entities.

A host of local public and private stakeholders have agreed to serve on core groups. These stakeholders will work with the government to develop all rules, regulations, policies and procedures that will govern the operations of the Bermuda-based Job Corps programme once it is up and running.

In an ongoing effort to address the stabilization of the economy and unemployment from a different angle we are doing all that we can to let the international business community know that 'Bermuda is open for business'.

When international businesses set up in Bermuda it creates a 'multiplier effect' in the formation of jobs – direct jobs within the companies, which in turn create jobs for people in the construction, housing, service and hospitality sectors.

The 10-year work permit is one of tools being used to secure jobs. These permits are issued to senior executives in the international business sector wherein the post holder is supported by other workers, many of whom are Bermudian. The granting of these permits therefore secures jobs for Bermudians.

Recently upon approving a 10-year work permit I recognized the milestone as a signal that the International Business Community has confidence in Bermuda.

Generally, it is expected that the work permit processing procedures will be overhauled to effect a more rapid processing and response time in our efforts to better meet the needs of the business community. There will also be a new website and other communications changes.

This represents only an overview of the plans for fiscal 2012/13.

Thank you.