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Talking With New St Kitts and Nevis Tourism Minister Lindsay Grant

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Above: St Kitts and Nevis Tourism Minister (CJ Photo)



By Alexander Britell

MIAMI — Tourism has been on a steady climb in St Kitts and Nevis in recent years, led by a slate of new hotel projects set to come on stream in the next few years, most notably the Caribbean’s first Park Hyatt. So where does the sector go from here? But last month, St Kitts and Nevis chose a new government that included a new Tourism Minister, Lindsay Grant. To learn more about where the country’s tourism is headed, CJ caught up with Grant at the annual Cruise Shipping Miami conference in Miami Beach this week.

What are you working on to begin?

I’ve only been in the job 17 days. I have a good team, and so we’re positioned to continue where St Kitts is at, and just make it better. We have I believe a lot of projects on stream which will really take us a cut above the rest within the next I would say two to five years. From cruise, we have the new pier we are going to build, ready for the 2016 season, so that’s good. In terms of hotel developments, we have the Park Hyatt coming on board in the next 11 months, it’s going to bring a clientele we’ve been trying to attract for a couple of years. We have Kittitian Hill, which is a fantastic site. It’s going to give us another clientele that we ordinarily wouldn’t have. We have Koi Resorts, which should be on stream within 24 to 36 months, so we’re poised for greatness.

What’s your initial impression to the state of the sector right

The sector is in a healthy condition, let me put it that way. My job is to stay the state along its course and to make it better. I think if I might say being very biased, we’re in the top strata of the destinations and we intend to keep it that way and make it better.

How do you see the two islands of St Kitts and Nevis worki strengthen tourism?

I must say politically we are now closer in terms of our cooperation, and that augurs well for the different products that we will bring. The beauty about St Kitts and Nevis is that they attract a slightly different clientele, so it’s great, you’re getting two for ones. When you come to St Kitts, you must of necessity experience Nevis because it’s a different country although we’re one, so that’s the beauty of it, and that’s one of our selling points, the uniqueness of it. So that’s going to be a driving force going forward.

If you could look ahead, what are some of the things you’d this term?

Chief on my agenda is capacity building. I want to move my people up at the same pace that we’re having the growth. It’s no sense having the growth and leaving the people behind. So my task is to ensure that we move forward and as part of that, within the first week that I’ve been in office, I’ve spoken with the the Fitzroy Bryant College, which is our college in St Kitts, and indicated to them that we have to be able to establish a centre for excellence to train our people at the highest level. And so that will spill over to industry and ensure that industry is fed properly with the kind of human resource capacity that is needed at this time. So if I can end my first stint having brought us up a notch in terms of our capacity building in human resources, I think I would have achieved much.

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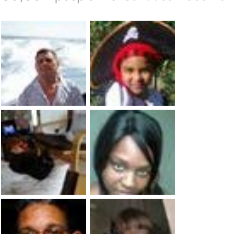
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