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CRUISE LINE'S PULL-OUT 'WORST CASE SCENARIO'

By NATARIO MCKENZIE
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THE Grand Celebration's owner has warned that its restructuring hinges on a new agreement with the Ministry of Tourism, and that a pull-out from Grand Bahama would be a "worst case scenario" which costs the Grand Lucayan 50 per cent of its pre-Matthew business.

David Johnson, a former Bahamas tourism director-general and consultant to Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line, said the company's return to this nation might be "temporary", as it was having "some challenges" in talks with the Government.

He warned that failure to reach an agreement with the Christie administration might cost the potential sale of the Grand Celebration, and "have a negative impact on tourism" at the worst possible time for Grand Bahama.

Giving an insight into the economic devastation that might be created, Mr Johnson said the Grand Celebration brought 280,000 passengers to Grand Bahama annually, with 100,000 or more than one-third staying overnight in a hotel.

He added that the Grand Lucayan would be "deeply harmed" if the Grand Celebration did not return, as the vessel's 'overnighting' passengers accounted for 50 per cent of its pre-hurricane business.

Between Grand Celebra-

Celebration warns GB: 'Return may be temporary'

'Hinges' on reaching deal with Ministry of Tourism

50% of Grand Lucayan business under threat

280,000 visitors in jeopardy for struggling economy



DAVID JOHNSON

tion and Sunwing/Memories, Mr Johnson said 80 per cent of Grand Bahama's tourism business was accounted for.

He told Tribune Business that Hurricane Matthew had "dried up our business" to Grand Bahama and, with "no hotels to go to",

See PG B7

MINISTER ACCUSES CRUISE OPERATOR OF 'BLACKMAIL'

By NEIL HARTNELL
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THE Minister of Tourism has slammed a major cruise ship operator for trying "to blackmail the Government of the Bahamas" over negotiations for a longer term deal for its Freeport service.

Obie Wilchcombe hit out at Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line, operator of the Grand Celebration vessel, for disclosing to the media that it might pull out of Freeport and the Bahamas if it could not strike a favourable agreement with

the Christie administration. Suggesting that it was using the media to pressure the Government into agreeing what it wanted, Mr Wilchcombe said the Celebration's operator was offering no guarantees to the Bahamas in return.

He added that the Celebration had been responsible for "driving down" hotel room rates in Freeport to just \$60 per night, prompting complaints from both the Grand Bahama Island Promotion Board and the Grand Lucayan.

Disclosing that the Promotion Board and Ministry

of Tourism were investing \$7 million annually into co-marketing with the Celebration, Mr Wilchcombe implied that the cruise operator was suddenly seeking a longer-term deal to make itself more attractive to potential purchasers (see other article on Page 1B).

When contacted by Tribune Business, it took just the mention of the Celebration's name to set Mr Wilchcombe off, the Minister immediately saying how he "heard some stupid story" regarding the See PG B10

Celebration owner trying to pressure Govt via media

Obie: No guarantees in return, room rates dropping

KP: \$43m jeopardised if vessel pulls out

Situation 'spells disaster' for hard-pressed Freeport

DEVELOPER URGES: DON'T 'DESTABILISE' RESIDENCY MARKET VIA \$1M MARK

Qualifying threshold rise may upset 50% of market

Fears for 'mid-flight impact' on his \$60-\$70m sales

Bahamas 'can't afford more ripples in water now'

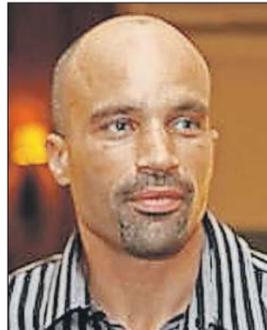
By NEIL HARTNELL
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A BAHAMIAN developer is urging the Government not to suddenly "destabilise" the real estate market through plans to change the permanent residency threshold, expressing concern for his \$60-\$70 million in active sales.

Jason Kinsale told Tribune Business that changing

this policy now would have "a huge mid-flight impact" on his ongoing developments at ONE Cable Beach and ThirtySix on Paradise Island, both of which are targeted at the market segment that will be most affected.

Looking beyond his own situation, Mr Kinsale said the Government's plans to increase the real estate investment threshold for See PG B12



JASON KINSALE

BTC, URCA MUST COME ALIV FOR NEW OPERATOR'S GROWTH

By NEIL HARTNELL
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THE Bahamas' new mobile operator needs help from regulators and its main rival to maintain what its top executive described as a 'double quick' roll-out timeframe.

Damian Blackburn, Aliv's chief executive, told See PG B11

BTC cable access, number portability now essential

New mobile player: 'Hurdles not in our direct control'

Likely to seek more financing in early 2017

RENEWABLE OPERATORS 'PREFER' NET METERING

By NEIL HARTNELL
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BAHAMAS Power & Light's (BPL) 'small-scale renewable generation' proposal has been hailed as "long overdue" by industry operators, despite misgivings over the chosen compensation method.

Guilden Gilbert, vice-president of Alternative See PG B13

Homeowners 'pay for privilege' under net billing

But hail BPL plan proposals as 'long overdue'

Setting aside payment concerns to 'move forward'



FamGuard Corporation announces
Special Holiday Hours

Friday, December 9.....Closed at 11:30 a.m.
(Staff Party - Closure Applies to Freeport Office Only)

Friday, December 16.....Closed at 11:30 a.m.
(Staff Party - Closure Applies to Nassau Offices Only)

FOR THE ENTIRE COMPANY

Friday, December 23.....Closed at 1:00 p.m.

Monday, December 26 (Christmas Day Observed).....Closed

Tuesday, December 27 (Boxing Day Observed).....Closed

Wednesday, December 28.....Normal Business Hours

Thursday, December 29.....Normal Business Hours

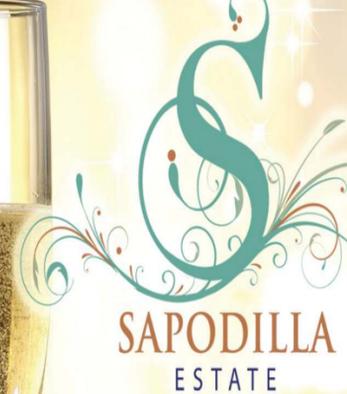
Friday, December 30.....Closed at 1:00 p.m.

Monday, January 2 (New Year's Day Observed).....Closed

Tuesday, January 3.....Normal Business Hours





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