

Port Lucaya retailer set 'to pull the plug'

From pg B1

the Marketplace would have been "really, really dead" without the Bahamas Celebration cruise ship.

While thankful that the vessel has resumed sailing to Grand Bahama, he added that the Grand Lucayan's closure meant that Celebration's 'overnighting' passengers had been billet-

ed further away from Port Lucaya - a development that had reduced 'walk in' sales and volumes.

Revealing that it was too late for his retail outlet, Mr Fingland told Tribune Business: "It's got to the point where I've looked at the whole economic climate, and my lease is up on March 31.

"I've decided to close my

doors on April 1, after 25 years in business. Memories pull-out is going to hurt all the merchants in Port Lucaya. It's going to be devastating, especially given that this is winter season, and nothing is happening.

"This year, with the hotels closed after Hurricane Matthew, you can forget it now. You can forget it. There's no light at the end of the tunnel."

Mr Fingland said the closure would affect The Jewellery Box's three employees, all of whom have been

with the business for 20-plus years, but it was simply not viable to continue.

Revealing that Port Lucaya's problems had started two to three years before Memories' withdrawal, Mr Fingland said: "Hutchison barred tourists walking through their property to the beach.

"They stopped that, and charged people \$30 if they wanted to come and use the facility. That prompted a big reduction in beach tourists."

He explained that the cruise lines reacted to by directing their passengers to the three excursion providers - Pirate's Cove, Adventure Tours and Grand Bahama Nature Tours - and away from the Port Lucaya area.

"When the ships come to port, 700, 800, 900 passengers go straight to the beach, whereas they used to come here," Mr Fingland said. "We're not getting that traffic flow."

He described the reduction in cruise passenger volumes to the Port Lucaya Marketplace as "huge", and in the vicinity of 50 per cent.

Mr Fingland said two cruise ships, Royal Caribbean's Grandeur of the Seas with a capacity of 3,800 passengers, and Liberty of the Seas with a maximum 2,800 complement, were both docked in Freeport yesterday.

"There can't be more than 100 people shuffling around this place," he added, "and we've had one sale for the day of \$350. Here we've got to do \$10,000 a week to keep afloat, which is the reality. We used to do it; it was fantastic."

Mr Fingland said that despite his business being promoted on-ship to cruise

passengers, Freeport was being marketed by the lines as an adventure tour/beach excursion - as opposed to retail - destination.

He added that Carnival's on-board lecturers were not permitted to even mention there was a beach at Grand Lucayan, further impeding the flow of customer traffic to the Marketplace.

Mr Fingland then revealed that the pre-selling of tours to cruise passengers before they arrive in Freeport, and their subsequent immediate transport to these destinations, had also cut sales for his del Sol/Cariloha retail outlet at Freeport Harbour.

"Last year and the year before, it was not happening, and the tourists were milling around the port," he told Tribune Business. "Now, our sales have dropped 25-30 per cent because of this."

"We're trying to negotiate with Adventure Tours to put a kiosk and booth on the beach to try and get that revenue we've lost at the harbour."

Mr Fingland credited the Bahamas Celebration with ensuring Port Lucaya Marketplace's survival, as passengers staying overnight at the Grand Lucayan generated "a lot of good business" for its retail and restaurant tenants.

"Everybody would tell you that they make more money off that boat than the Carnival and Royal Caribbean boats that come in," he added. But now, with just 200 rooms at the Grand Lucayan open, Bahamas Celebration passengers were instead staying at Club Fortuna, meaning Port Lucaya was now losing that business.

Mr Fingland's assess-

ment of trading conditions was backed by Christopher Paine, a retail tenant in the Grand Lucayan, who said sales were "shockingly down".

"I would imagine people are down by 50, 60, 70 per cent over previous years," Mr Paine told Tribune Business.

"It's really, really poor. The restaurants only seem to have business at the weekend, when some of the locals come out, but during the week it's very quiet. In retail, you have this competition with people on the cruise ships being taken to the beach."

Mr Fingland said his Nassau-based Breitling, Del Sol and Little Switzerland outlets gave him "plenty to keep me going, but up here you can forget it".

"I've been robbing Peter to pay Paul for the last two years, taking Nassau's profits to keep this afloat," he told Tribune Business.

"I used to go to the jewellery shows in Miami and Las Vegas, but for the last two years I haven't bought any merchandise. I could see what was coming with the business and the tonnes of stock I already had."

"It's a struggle. There's no traffic, no one to sell to, and the hotel customers were the ones that spent the money."

Mr Fingland added that in a "normal environment" he might have been able to sell The Jewellery Box as a going concern, but its location in Freeport - and a general absence of financing - meant buyers were few and far between.

"The merchants here are stuck," he told Tribune Business. "You could normally move this merchandise before you close, but it would take a year-and-a-half to sell the stock we have - all \$700,000 to \$800,000."

"When you're only making a couple of thousand of dollars a day, it's virtually impossible. It's bodies and traffic. If 100 people come through your door, you sell to 10 per cent of them. If five people come through your door, you won't sell anything. It's volume."

Employment Opportunity

Help Wanted

Administrative Assistant

The successful candidate will be required to provide administrative support and should possess the following attributes:

- Ability to prioritize and meet set deadlines
- Ability to maintain a high level of confidentiality and accuracy
- Ability to work under pressure
- Strong organizational skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Strong decision making skills
- Proficient in Microsoft Office suite
- Excellent time management skills
- Excellent interpersonal and team building skills
- An enthusiastic and positive attitude

Interested persons should email a résumé to:

humanresourcesbahamas242@gmail.com

Deadline for application is Monday, February 20th 2017



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Restaurant Managers

A food service industry leader is seeking to employ experienced managers for its restaurants. The successful candidates must possess effective leadership skills and will be expected to work closely with the Restaurant Manager in managing the overall restaurant operations.

The individuals should have a solid understanding of the food and beverage industry and possess a minimum of 3 to 5 years experience in the related field with a proven track record of exceptional customer service.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities:

- Ensures the company's customer service excellence standards are exemplified consistently and that all team members are held accountable to same
- Facilitate a high level of customer satisfaction by obtaining regular customer feedback
- Identifies and resolves "bottlenecks" in food preparation and delivery to increase speed of service without sacrificing accuracy of orders
- Ability to maintain a safe, clean and high quality restaurant operation at all times
- Supervises and trains team members on all restaurant systems
- Ability to effectively communicate, both orally and in writing, on a consistent basis with Restaurant Management team, superiors and support staff
- Practical knowledge of inventory control management
- Ability to coach, train and develop team members as well as delegate work in a way that encourages teamwork during shift to ensure smooth restaurant operations
- Proven ability in handling of customer complaints, ensuring speedy and satisfactory resolution
- Ensures the awareness and knowledge of all of the company's systems, policies, procedures and operations through training and development
- Provides productive direction to team members in a clear and concise way, and sets an example for team members by working hard to ensure swift and smooth food production and quality service
- Sets challenging goals for self and team, provides timely performance feedback and ensures accountability

Qualifications and Experience

- Minimum of three to five years experience in the food and beverage and hospitality industries in a managerial or supervisory role
- Working knowledge of computerized information systems used in restaurant operations, e.g. Point of Sales (POS) systems
- Proficiency in various software applications, e.g. Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint

Salary will be commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Interested candidates should submit their resumes in confidence to the following email address:

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Bahamas Law Enforcement Co-operative Credit Union Ltd



NOTICE SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Section 19(1)a of the Bahamas Credit Union Act, 2015, the Board of Directors of the Bahamas Law Enforcement Co-operative Credit Union Limited ("the Credit Union") wish to advise of a Special General Meeting to be held on

Saturday, February 18th, 2017

at

9:00 am

at

**The Paul Farquharson Conference Centre
Police Headquarters
East Street North
Nassau, Bahamas**

The purpose of the meeting is to ratify the updated Bye-laws of the Bahamas Law Enforcement Co-operative Credit Union Limited.