



Bulletin

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Water filling station Windwardside now open



The water filling station in Windwardside has become operational. This means that water trucks can now fill up at this location to supply drinking water to Windwardside and Hell's Gate instead of having to fill up in The Bottom and making the drive uphill. The new filling station is similar to the first one in The Bottom, and is part of the larger water project funded by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, to install a waterpipe system and to make quality water accessible and affordable for the people. The new filling station is located at the big parking lot, which has a large cistern underneath, divided in three compartments. Under the supervision of the Planning Bureau, one compartment was cleaned and sealed off to store the water. The price per truckload of water is US \$60, which is kept at this level through a government subsidy, so the water remains affordable for the people. The waterpipe was extended to Windwardside early 2019. The works included the construction of a cistern and pumping station next to Lollipop's. The processed water from the Reverse Osmosis plant in Fort Bay, comes up to Windwardside through an ingenious system of cisterns and pump stations at different locations. The water project is considered a highly successful project whereby the cost of water has been reduced dramatically. "We thank the Dutch Government and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, and also Vitens Evides for their assistance," said Commissioner Bruce Zagers.

Minister Slob visits schools

Minister of Primary and Secondary Education and of Media Arie Slob visited Saba January 13. He visited the Sacred Heart School (SHS) where he spoke with grade 5 and 6 pupils and several teachers. At the Saba Comprehensive School (SCS) he spoke with a few students and teachers. He visited the Expertise Center Education Care EC2 where he was informed about the challenges of this organization that assists special needs children. The Minister also went to the revamped Queen Wilhelmina Library and toured the Laura Linzey Day Care Center.



Slob left Saba with a positive feeling. “I am proud that the people in the educational field managed to raise the quality to this level. The system remains vulnerable due to the island’s small scale, but I saw very motivated people who are working really hard and who have education at heart.” He mentioned the recruiting and securing of sufficient personnel, and the maintaining of quality as some of the challenges of the education sector. He said that his Ministry remained committed to supporting Saba, and referred to the agreement regarding the school buildings whereby the responsibility for the up-keep and the construction of the schools was transferred to the Public Entity. The construction of a new day care and kindergarten building is being planned, a project that should start soon. Saba is working on solving the issue of capacity at the day care and kindergarten, he said.

Director-General Ministry I&W visits

Director-General Mobility of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (I&W) Kees van der Burg visited Saba January 15-17. At the airport, Commissioner Bruce Zagers and Airport Manager Maegan Hassell provided an explanation of the completed airport renovation project, which was largely financed through the Ministry of I&W. At the landfill, Commissioner Zagers gave an explanation about the waste management process in which recycling plays a large role. Many infrastructure-related projects on Saba are funded through the Ministry of I&W. One of these is the multi-million project to construct a new harbor. Initially, the plans focused on the location of the existing harbor at Fort Bay. The plans have now shifted to the Black Rocks area where the conditions are more favorable. Harbor Project Manager Ton van der Plas explained during a presentation that a survey and feasibility study of the alternative location have been completed and approved. A soil investigation and design work need to be done before the project can go to tendering. The director-general visited both the Fort Bay harbor and the Black Rocks area. This was the first visit of Van der Burg to Saba. He said he found it important to visit Saba soon after his appointment on September 1, 2019. “It is important to speak with the people here and to see things with my own eyes,” he said. Van der Burg said that he was struck by “enormous progress” that has been made by the people. “In the open talks that I had with the Executive Council and the Island Council, several concerns were expressed, which I will take back to the Netherlands.”

No more plastic bottles at Public Entity, SCS



In light of the pending ban on single-use plastics and to further reduce the amount of plastic waste, the Public Entity Saba and the Saba Comprehensive School (SCS) decided to set the right example. Employees of the Public Entity Saba received a Doppler reusable, sustainable hard-plastic bottle to eliminate the use of disposable small plastic bottles. SCS students and staff received a stainless-steel bottle which they can refill at tap points with filtered water at different locations or at the water dispenser in the school cafeteria. The initiatives at the Public Entity and SCS will save an estimated combined 60,000 small single-use bottles on an annual basis. The 200 Doppler bottles for the civil servants were donated by Doppler, and have the World Wildlife Fund Netherlands WWF-NL logo

and the logo of the water bottling plant Saba Splash on them. The initiative is part of the project to construct a water bottling plant which will produce drinking water in large refillable water containers when it opens before the summer. From the large containers, which will be placed in dispensers, civil servants can refill their Doppler bottle. Using water dispensers and reusable bottles means a large reduction of plastic waste. Both the Public Entity and SCS will no longer buy disposable plastic bottles.

Successful presence at Vakantiebeurs

Saba's presence at the 2020 Holiday Fair ("Vakantiebeurs") in Utrecht, the Netherlands from January 15-19 was a success. Saba, represented by Glenn Holm and Desiree Johnson of the Saba Tourism Bureau and tourism policy advisor Nicole Johnson, shared a larger booth with the St. Maarten Tourism Office. Sharing a booth is not only more cost-effective, but it also made a lot of sense because the islands work together in tourism and it is conducive in promoting Saba and St. Maarten as complimentary destinations for travelers who wish to visit both islands. The delegation received many inquiries about Saba as a vacation destination for people who like to dive and hike. Being at the Holiday Fair is important, said Director Holm. "We have to maintain our presence. The Holiday Fair is the only large trade show that we attend in Europe." Saba has attended the travel fair, the largest in the Netherlands, for over 20 years. While in the Netherlands, the Saba delegation had a number of meetings scheduled, with a diving and hiking magazine, and with several travel agencies.



Crispeen Trail renovated



Renovation works on the Crispeen track that connects The Bottom and St. John's, have been completed and the trail is back in use. The Crispeen Trail, an old, historic track, suffered severe erosion to the point where the safety of people using the trail was at stake. Reason for the Public Entity Saba to take action. Funding was applied for and secured from the Ministry of Economic Affairs in the form of a special allowance for projects to promote nature con-

servation for an amount of about US \$200,000. The project, which took place in 2019, focused on repairing the urgent parts. Works, carried out by a local contractor under the supervision of the Saba Conservation Foundation (SCF), included the restoring/reconstructing of walls, in some cases with a foundation, the reconstruction of a number of steps and the construction of a concrete path at Midway. The Crispeen Trail is popular among tourists and residents. Large parts of the track had become dangerous due to erosion. In many parts, the side walls were badly damaged, and some walls had completely eroded. The 2019 project concerned the most urgent renovation. More funding would be necessary to do a complete restoration of this track.

KNMI meets Island Council



The Island Council on January 23 met with representatives of the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI) Elske de Zeeuw-Van Daltsen and Reinoud Sleeman to talk about the KNMI work on Saba to monitor seismic and volcanic activity. The main conclusion was that there is no reason for concern. The KNMI experts were here to inspect and service the measuring equipment. The KNMI has seismic equipment at the airport, in St. John's, Windwardside and The Bot-

tom. Also, at the first two locations Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) instruments are installed. All instruments transmit the collected data to KNMI in real time. No out of the ordinary seismic activity has been measured that could indicate a change in dormant Mount Scenery volcano. "There is no cause to be worried," volcanologist De Zeeuw-Van Daltsen said. A GPS (Global Positioning System) receiver was installed next to the Satel building. The GPS receiver instrument measures its precise location on the ground, allowing to track it if the location is moving. The experts collected the data of the temperature measuring equipment at the hot spring opposite Green Island. No reason for alarm at the hot springs either, because the temperature has been a constant 82 degrees Celsius. Island Council Members had a lot of questions for the KNMI experts. They asked in detail about the measuring and monitoring system, the occurrence of earthquakes in the region, the possibility of volcanic activity and erosion.