

- Christen Suckoo, Chief Officer, Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs
- Brian Holland, Director, National Workforce Development Agency
- Major sponsors and exhibitors
- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Welcome to the 2016 Chamber of Commerce Careers, Education and Training Expo.

Now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, this event has become the Islands' leading showcase that connects some of Cayman's top employers and educational institutions with students, school leavers and job seekers.

35 exhibitors representing the major industry sectors are assembled here

- this demonstrates their commitment and willingness to
  - connect with the community
  - and their efforts to attract Caymanians and legal residents for employment and career opportunities

that exist within their organisations.

Identifying the right talent in today's competitive business world is a challenging assignment particularly in an economy that creates more jobs than there are residents to fill them.

Many of Cayman's leading employers collectively spend countless hours and invest millions of dollars to attract motivated and experienced Caymanians to grow their businesses.

Today's event and those held over the past 20 years, demonstrate a tangible financial and human resources commitment to educate students and school leavers about future opportunities.

This includes scholarships, and internships which can lead to full time employment.

Over the past 50 years, Chamber members have supported various private and public initiatives that promote work readiness, improvement of educational standards and economic development.

I would like to briefly discuss some of these with you.

1. The Chamber's Professional Development and Training Centre offers more than 65 workshops and courses each year.

A series of Legal Masterclasses that provide small businesses with an affordable opportunity to receive informational legal advice on business matters was added to the offerings this year along with an expanded list of Ken Blanchard courses.

These workshops are affordable and are intended to assist all levels of management and employees in an organisation and are available to anyone in our community. I would highly recommend looking at the Chamber Website to get more detail about these workshops.

2. Leadership Cayman, now in its 7<sup>th</sup> year, is gaining popularity and having a significant impact. Each year the participants:

- learn about their leadership style and skills,
- network with some outstanding leaders
- and receive inside information about the key issues

affecting the community from some of Cayman's top business and political figures.

I am proud to be a graduate of last year's Leadership Cayman class and I can say from personal experience, that it is a great tool for developing your own understanding of our Islands and making new contacts. It's also a lot of fun.

3. Started in 2002, Mentoring Cayman matches 50 high school students each year with business and government leaders so that they can learn from each other.

It is always great to witness the bonds that are created at the graduation ceremony each year at Government House when the Governor, who serves as the programme's patron, presents certificates of participation to the students and mentors with their parents and sponsors in attendance.

4. Each year the Chamber also presents awards to high school and college students at most of the graduation ceremonies. This is our way of demonstrating the Chamber's commitment and support to higher learning and achievement in our schools.

Turning now to a government lead initiative:

This week President Paul attended a meeting of the Ready2Work@KY initiative. The Chamber is pleased to be working with Government and other business leaders to develop this programme. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that all Caymanians and legal resident who are willing and skilled to work are given every opportunity to succeed in today's workplace. We intend to provide Chamber members with regular updates about the initiative and how you can assist with its success.

While it is clear from the items I have discussed the Chamber has been active we are constantly looking for ways to improve.

To this end, last week the Chamber Council and Staff participated in a two day retreat in East End. We developed a three year plan and adopted a new vision for the organisation.

The new vision reads:

"The Cayman Islands Chamber of Commerce will be a **catalyst**

**for positive change** connecting community, business and government.”

In short, what this means is that we care about our community, our government and the businesses that operate here. We intend to be the catalyst that connects these three groups,

As we realise that we can only achieve positive change by working together in partnership and collaboration.

It's no secret that we need everyone to come together to build and maintain a prosperous society and the Chamber intends to do its best to facilitate this.

For more information about any of the things I have discussed or anything else about the Chamber please feel free to approach us at any time or check out the Chamber's website.

Thank you all for attending and your support of this annual event.

I would like to extend a special thank you to those exhibiting at this event. It is collaboration like this that helps ensure that no

Caymanian or legal resident is left behind and everyone is given a chance to succeed.

Thank you for your attention.

Enjoy the show.

It is my pleasure to now introduce Mr. Christen Suckoo, Chief Officer in the Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs who will be delivering remarks on behalf of the Hon. Tara Rivers.

Mr. Suckoo has worked in the Cayman Islands Civil Service for over 14 years.

He began his career in Risk Management and has held several roles such as Policy Analyst in the Cabinet Office and he was instrumental in the Constitutional Modernization Initiative which brought about Cayman's current Constitution as the Deputy Director of the Constitutional Review Secretariat.

His most previous role was the Deputy Chief Officer in the Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs with responsibility for finance, administration and special units.

He is now the Chief Officer in this ministry with full responsibility for its portfolios and a staff of over 600 people.

I would like to now invite Mr. Suckoo to deliver today's opening remarks.