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**NEWS RELEASE:**

**CIAA announces Groundbreaking for Expansion and Renaming of Brac Airport**

The Cayman Islands Airports Authority (CIAA), and the Ministry of Tourism, Finance and Development is pleased to announce that the groundbreaking for the expanded terminal facilities and renaming of the Cayman Brac Airport was held on Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> July at the Gerrard-Smith International Airport in West End. The Premier, Honourable W. McKeever Bush, OBE, JP, presented the keynote address following remarks by the Deputy Premier, Honourable Juliana O'Connor-Conolly, JP.

Members of the community were invited to attend the Groundbreaking Ceremony at which the Honourable McKeever Bush, also announced that the Gerrard-Smith International Airport (G-SIA) would be renamed the Charles Kirkconnell International Airport (CKIA) in memory of the late Captain Charles Leonard Kirkconnell, OBE, JP.

The Premier paid homage to the late Captain Charles, a prominent and well-liked local businessman whose great-grandfather had settled in the Cayman Islands in the early 1840's. "He served as an elected representative for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman for three consecutive terms from 1976 to 1988 and served as the Executive Council Member responsible for Communication, Works & District Administration. This re-development of the Cayman Brac airport will greatly enhance comfort and ease of use - which is how a port of entry should be. We are pleased as a government to complement the infrastructure of the Sister islands in this way. To also commit to re-naming this airport to honour the memory of the late Captain Charles Kirkconnell is most fitting, given all of his valuable contributions, including his leadership in the building of this very airport. Visitors and residents alike should welcome the changes," he remarked.

The Premier praised the CIAA's Deputy Chairman, Mr. A. Steve McField, under whose chairmanship of the CIAA's Building Committee the expansion of the terminal is being realized. "Mr. McField's initiative to move this project forward is greatly appreciated by the Ministry. We applaud the efforts of this Committee as we prepare to commence the works at the Charles Kirkconnell International Airport in the coming months.

The Honourable Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, who also addressed the gathering, applauded the Premier, Honourable McKeeva Bush, the CIAA Chairman, other Board Members, the CEO and other CIAA staff and the architects for their outstanding efforts and involvement in the design process.

"It may have seemed like a tall order when we were in the initial stages of this process but considering the broad implications that the expansion will bring to Cayman Brac and perhaps even spin off to Little Cayman the upgrades were born out of necessity. We are building a nation and expanding the airport will give Cayman Brac more accessibility to the wider world if we are to move our tourism product forward.

"Now that Cayman Airways has a direct international flight these renovations and enhancements are very necessary in making the facility more user friendly. I look forward to more nonstop flights from the United States, the Caribbean and the rest of the world. The expansion will be good for the Brac's economy both in short and long term," she said.

The Deputy Premier also praised the Premier for renaming the airport to Charles Kirkconnell because "Capt. Charles has made a tremendous contribution to these islands and the Kirkconnell name has long history on the Brac."

The CIAA's redevelopment of the Charles Kirkconnell International Airport will facilitate nonstop international flights by increasing operating areas and services. Phase one of the project will accommodate a larger ticketing hall, enhanced passenger and baggage screening facilities, and the addition of outgoing Immigration counters. The departure lounge will also be expanded to create additional retail space and a larger restaurant. Office space is also being created for Cayman Airways as well as the airport's Security unit. Phase two of the project will see enhancements to the arrivals hall (immigration and customs areas) as well as the addition of space for the Public Health and Agriculture Departments.

The coming months will see various phases of the project enacted, including tender selection and construction. As the terminal facility is to remain operational during the construction phase, efforts will be made to carry out the additions to the facility with minimal interruption to passenger processing. The terminal building will extend to the east and west and there will be some temporary relocation of functions, to allow for refurbishments to be carried out on the existing facility.

According to the CIAA's CEO, Mr. Jeremy Jackson, "The expansion of the Brac terminal is being funded by the Cayman Islands Airports Authority and the project will undoubtedly provide a much-needed boost to the Brac's economy, which has seen its fair share of challenges since the passing of the devastating Hurricane Paloma in November 2008." Mr. Jackson also remarked, "We are confident that the ability to attract direct international flights, without the stopover in Grand Cayman, will provide even greater opportunities for local businesses in the years ahead. The CIAA looks forward to playing its role in the continued economic development of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman."

In his Vote of Thanks, the CIAA Chairman, Mr. Richard "Dick" Arch, MBE, JP, acknowledged the confidence that had been bestowed upon the Board of Directors by the Premier's Office and the Ministry of Tourism, to oversee the expansion project on the Brac, subject to approvals by the Central Planning Authority. He also recognized the efforts of the CIAA's Project Manager Mr. Nicholas Johnson, the lead architect Mr. Donal McGrath of BDCL Architects, BCQS Quantity Surveyors, the District Commissioner, Mr. Ernie Scott, and various other government agencies as well as other individuals who had made significant contributions to the project thus far.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Arch recalled his own long association with the Brac, when he first visited in the early 1960s to recruit another Brac icon, the late Captain Keith Tibbetts as an agent for British West Indian Airways and remarked at the significance of the occasion. He also expressed his confidence that the people of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman would be proud of their enhanced terminal when the expansion concludes in 2013.

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