



Caribbean American Chamber Of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (CACCI)

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By Natasha Waldron Anthony

CACCI to strengthen trade & investment between the U.S. and the Caribbean

New York City: The Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry is proceeding with plans to construct a US \$12 million Caribbean Trade Center Small Business Incubator in Brooklyn, New York, which will assist in promoting economic development among Caribbean and American businesses, specifically in New York.

CACCI's President and Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Roy Hastick, told Guyana Times International about the plans for the center. "We have also an international tier. We have hosted almost every Caricom leader here in New York, promoting trade and investment and tourism. We see the trade center as a vehicle to promote trade and tourism between the U.S. and Caricom," he said. "So we want to have that building as a one-stop capital shop to work with CTO, Caricom and University of the West Indies...we're talking about a partnership."

In the meantime, CACCI's chairman of the board, Guyanese Dereck Broomes, told this publication that, while the site has been identified for the 28,000 square foot trade center, since it is a landmark building in the city, approval is necessary. "Once it is a landmark building, you have to make certain that you fulfill all the requirements as to how to build within a landmark building. What you can do and what you cannot do," Broomes said, pointing out that the city has to permit what can be destroyed in the building and what has to remain.

Broomes said that while there is not a specific date for the completion of the center, he is confident of its timely completion. And in a recent message, the CACCI president said: "The project development team has been working with the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) towards the development of the project, including site transfer, design and rehabilitation of the historic structure. The project has received widespread financial support and pledges from Congressional, New York State, and NYC elected officials. The project has been endorsed by CARICOM and the Caribbean Consular Corp of New York."

The building is located in a major commercial corridor adjacent to one of New York City's historic educational institutions, Erasmus High School in East Flatbush, Brooklyn. And when completed, the trade center will serve as CACCI's headquarters, house major anchor tenants, offer fee-for-service domestic and international business services, and create jobs.

Meanwhile, on Monday, January 17, 2011, America celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King Day, and CACCI hosted its annual tribute at the Brooklyn Borough Hall. The president told Guyana Times International that the event is not only to reflect on Dr. King's legacy, but to thank the people who have made it possible for Caribbean Americans to aspire to become noteworthy men and women in the United States.

"It's critical for us to remember where we came from, where we're at, and where we're going. And who more to inspire us than Dr. King's dream, because he struggled for that," Hastick said.

CACCI is funded through its membership, both ordinary and corporate. Part of the chamber's funding is sourced through allocation from the New York City Council and New York State Senate and Assembly.

In the meantime, on January 28, at Flatbush Caton Market Conference Center, CACCI will host its small business assistance program workshop, titled "Managing your business in today's economy." The workshop, sponsored by the New York City Department of Small Business Services, will address topics such as budget preparation, establishing and growing your business, and staying afloat in today's business world.