



THE AUDIENCE at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre that came to hear American Dr Neil deGrasse Tyson, astrophysicist. (Picture by Xtra Vision Photography.)

## Science, maths 'key' to solving world's problems



NEIL deGRASSE TYSON (left), an American astrophysicist having a light moment with Dr Larry L. Palmer, United States Ambassador to Barbados, minutes before delivering his lecture at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre yesterday.

COUNTRIES that put emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education will be the ones that will unearth solutions to difficult problems facing mankind.

This is one of the messages from internationally acclaimed American astrophysicist Dr Neil deGrasse Tyson as he delivered a free lecture to hundreds at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre yesterday.

He said he wanted to be surrounded by people who have, "the will and energy to do something when disaster strikes" and not those who bought up all the toilet paper and leave when disaster struck.

Tyson spoke of Germany's engineering prowess and also referred to the recent landing of the European Space Agency's spacecraft *Rosetta* on a comet.

"You can't own science, who knows who would lead the world in science next," he said.

He transfixed the audience with his almost two-hour lecture which captured the story of astrophysics, a branch of space science that applies the laws of physics and chemistry to explain the birth, life and death of stars, planets, galaxies and other objects in the universe.

Tyson, in an interactive delivery, told the audience which comprised of many schoolchildren that he wanted to celebrate science and noted the relevance of scientific current events and the role they played in the society.

He also spoke about the success of *Cosmos*, a television science documentary series of which he was host. He said it was distributed in 181 countries and in 47 languages.

Tyson was invited by Dr. Larry L. Palmer, United States ambassador to Barbados to deliver the lecture. (JS)

# BL&P: Job losses unlikely

THERE IS UNLIKELY TO BE an exodus of workers from Barbados Light & Power Company (BL&P) as the electricity company restructures and shifts its focus to renewable energy.

But a number of the company's employees will have to adapt and fill new posts here, while others with have opportunities to work elsewhere in the Caribbean.

This signal came Wednesday night from senior officials of BL&P's Canadian parent company Emera Inc. during a presentation at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre.

Emera Caribbean Limited president Sarah McDonald said some restructuring at the electricity utility was likely but that "we see it as a regional opportunity and we don't think it should be seen as a negative for our staff".

"It's a transition, but for our employees we recognise that it is a change so if we know that the traditional generation that we do is shrinking then we have to look at how we can retrain our

employees to be prepared for the new world," she said.

"So if there are more customers interconnecting, then we need to make sure we have enough people who can assess, and inspect and be prepared to interconnect those customers. If we are installing solar, do we have the expertise, can we retrain our employees so that they can build and operate a utility scale solar project?"

"We have some time and we can plan it out and so we can look at who's interested, who's got the skills. So there may be changes in the type of skills that we have, the type of employees that we have but we will be able to actually lay that out and give people opportunities in different areas."

Emera Inc. president and chief executive officer Christopher Huskison said any restructuring would be gradual and that Barbados would be used as the Emera's Caribbean base "where a lot of the human capability exists to actually service all of our businesses". (SC)

## Room for lots more on grid, say officials

BARBADOS LIGHT & POWER COMPANY (BL&P) is prepared to accommodate "a lot more" private renewable energy producers on the electricity grid.

That is based on the preliminary findings of a new Intermittent Renewable Energy Penetration Study expected to be presented to the Fair Trading Commission (FTC).

BL&P officials previously said that the company's infrastructure could only accommodate a restricted number of installations from Barbadian businesses and

households who generate their own electricity using photovoltaic systems.

And in August, following concerns raised by the Barbados Renewable Energy Association and others that the renewable energy sector could be derailed because BL&P's Renewable Energy Rider only allowed installations up to seven megawatts, the FTC raised the capacity limit to nine megawatts in August.

But speaking Wednesday night at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford

Centre during a presentation on renewable energy, senior representatives of BL&P's Canadian parent company Emera Inc. said the new research showed the limit could be expanded.

Emera Caribbean Limited president Sarah McDonald said "the study we are nearing completion on is indicating that we can handle a lot more, and a lot more of commercial or residential, a lot more of utility scale and also including some wind". (SC)

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