

REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE RUEBEN MEADE
MINISTER OF FINANCE - MONTSERRAT
FOR FINANCIAL INFORMATION MONTH
October 2009

Brothers and sisters

Cognisant that the public needs information and resources to handle their personal finances and make right decisions, the ECCB has since 2001 been partnering with financial institutions, the media, private and public sector institutions and community groups to promote a regional financial education campaign.

The celebration of October as Financial Information Month is now a permanent feature on the official calendar of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank member countries. It is a month in which special focus is placed on improving the public's understanding of financial and economic issues.

The theme this year, "*Save and Invest Today...Enjoy Tomorrow*" seeks to emphasise savings, wise investments and long-term financial planning as key concepts to building a secure future. The theme is in keeping with the ultimate objective of the Financial Information Month initiative, which is to empower all persons to make the types of investment and spending choices that will allow each individual to build wealth, become financially secure and retire in comfort.

The logo portrays a royal blue piggy bank promoting the following concepts:

- ✓ regular savings
- ✓ prudent spending guided by a savings plan, and
- ✓ investing for the future.

Royal blue which is synonymous with hope, willpower and strength, represents the financial success available to everyone that adheres to the aforementioned principles.

The following are among the initiatives planned to celebrate Financial Information Month, October 2009:

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

1. Discussions with community groups and business institutions.
2. Active participation in the services of a church in the month of October.
3. Exhibitions at public libraries

SCHOOL PROJECTS

1. Primary Schools Short Story Contest – “Adventures of the EC\$5.00”- The contest provides the opportunity for the students to explore and examine good spending and savings habits through the creative medium of story telling.
2. Visits to Primary and High Schools – Representatives from financial institutions will visit schools to engage students in discussions on savings, wise use of money, budgeting, financial planning and entrepreneurship.
3. Presentations at Parents-Teachers Meetings - Recognising that teachers and parents can benefit significantly by learning how to make smart spending, saving and investment decisions, financial institutions will make presentations at these fora. School officials identify the appropriate schedules when these visits can best be accommodated by the school.

MEDIA PROJECTS

1. Financial Information Month theme song promoted on radio stations.
2. Daily tips on money management and investing.
3. Newspaper Articles on financial matters.
4. Media Programmes with discussions on financial matters.

PROMOTIONAL PROJECTS

1. T-shirts sporting the theme and logo
2. Street banners promoting the theme and logo
3. Media Programmes with discussions on financial matters.

Today, the economic and financial crisis, which has affected the international community, serves as a stark reminder of the need to manage money and to make wise spending and investment decisions. The activities outlined are expected to engender healthy money management practices among our people which will in turn help them to achieve their life's goals. It is further hoped that promotion of the activities will serve as a springboard for ongoing financial programmes in our communities so that ultimately all ECCU citizens and residents can reap the benefits of greater access to information designed to improve their money management practices.

As Minister of Finance I encourage you to take time out during this month to participate in the programmes provided by the ECCB and learn all you can so that you can put it into practice.

God bless you all.