



ISSUE 08 | NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 2013

# thecornerstone

## Introduction

**YET ANOTHER YEAR HAS FLOWN! ALL OF US AT RGM WISH YOU, OUR TENANT PARTNERS – AS WELL AS YOUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS – A JOYOUS AND MEANINGFUL CHRISTMAS SEASON.**

In this special edition of our newsletter, we wanted to update you on the progress of our new corporate space, Savannah East, which is due to be ready for rental by the third quarter of next year. Considering that this landmark property is earmarked to be the first LEED certified green building in Trinidad and Tobago, we thought you would appreciate our energy and money saving strategies on how to have a green Christmas.

Of course, Christmas goes hand in hand with buying presents, so we've updated our annual shopping safety tips and included safety ideas for when you're on the road and at home. The corporate gift giving landscape has also changed, thanks to new global guiding principles on ethics and best practice, so

we offer you a different perspective on proper gift exchange etiquette.

We've noticed that corporate construction projects have restarted in many parts of Port of Spain, and take the opportunity to examine why this could be a good thing for the national economy.

Finally, we've selected a few inspirational quotes to remind you that Christmas is much more than what the marketing machines tell us it is.

**Merry Christmas to all and best tidings for the season!**

## The New Face of Port of Spain

**IN 1986, PORT OF SPAIN GOT THE FIRST AND PERHAPS MOST ICONIC CONTRIBUTION TO ITS SKYLINE WITH THE OPENING OF THE TWIN TOWERS OF THE ERIC WILLIAMS FINANCIAL COMPLEX.**

Since the boom years of the 1970s and early 80s, when the country was economically strong thanks to the high prices of its oil exports, Trinidad and Tobago has survived many economic hills and valleys, the most recent of which was brought on – at least in part – by the Global Financial Crisis of 2008.

Five years later, it seems that the local economy is steadying itself. One of the earliest signs of a vibrant economy is an active construction industry – and of late, there is a noticeable number of new buildings being erected in and around Port of



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## ...The New Face of POS (cont'd.)

Spain. Around the Queen's Park Savannah alone, there are two major projects – RGM's flagship green building, Savannah East, as well as a multi-storey construct along Queen's Park West. In the St. Clair area, there are new commercial properties being developed on both Gray Street and Elizabeth Street.

RGM, being in the business of corporate property development, interprets this progression as an encouraging sign for the local construction industry and the wider national economy. It is proof positive that the sector is anything but dormant. Corporate space is clearly in demand, which suggests that businesses – and the working population of Trinidad and Tobago – are doing well and preparing themselves for the next upward economic trend.



## Dreaming of a **Green Christmas**

COME NEXT YEAR, RGM WILL HAVE CONSTRUCTED THE FIRST-EVER GREEN BUILDING IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, WITH THE OPENING OF SAVANNAH EAST.

We have always been a company that is conscious of how we use resources, because we know that big companies can contribute more to Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, simply because of sheer size and greater energy consumption.

In the past, we have introduced simple, but effective measures to minimise the effect our buildings have on the environment: the shutdown of non-critical building systems like elevators and air-conditioning units after-hours and the introduction of recycling policies, for instance. This season, we thought we'd share some useful energy saving tips, so that you can do more than dream of a green Christmas – you can actually have one!

**1. Give more; spend less.** You know the saying, "It's the thought that counts"? People are generally much more appreciative of a thoughtful gift than of an expensive, store-bought one. Pick sustainable gifts (services as opposed to things; homemade edibles; vintage items) and don't feel bad about shortening – and simplifying – your Christmas list. You can also buy green by selecting presents made from natural materials, or those that are battery-free.

- 2. Turn the lights down low.** An overwhelming amount of Christmas lights not only ups your electricity bill, it also drains natural resources. It's a good idea to keep the Christmas lighting conservative and use LED (Light Emitting Diode) bulbs, which use as much as 95% less energy. Bonus for anyone who has ever struggled with Christmas lights: if one bulb on an LED strand dies, the rest will stay lit.
- 3. Wrap it up.** Consider tagging gifts with homemade cards and wrapping them with alternatives to store bought paper. Brown paper, newsprint, old calendars or even fabric are all fun and festive green options. Top it off with natural finishing touches like leaves, sticks, flowers or the small, local pine cones.
- 4. Bond with nature.** Christmas is a special time of year and even nature knows it. So why not help heaven and nature sing by participating in something cool like the Asa Wright Annual Christmas bird count? Nature enthusiasts from all over the world go there to help spot, identify and count the many different bird species – and there's usually a surprising discovery or two.



# It's That Time Of Year Again

CHRISTMAS IS IN THE AIR, WHICH MEANS YOU NEED TO PUT ON YOUR THINKING CAP WHEN IT COMES TO SAFETY

The Christmas season is full of so many wonderful things – spending time friends and family, gift giving, delicious holiday food and drink, parang music and parties. In fact, there's so much fun to be had that people often let down their guard and are not as cautious as usual. Here are a few tips to help you keep Christmas safe, no matter what you're doing...

## Shopping Safety

- 1. Have a plan.** Know where you're going to shop and what you're planning to buy for each person on your list. This keeps you focused and avoids you having to text or use your cell phone in crowded areas. You may unwittingly reveal personal details or plans during your conversation, and everyone knows that when you're talking on a cell, your decibel level goes up and your attention to your immediate environment goes down. If you're shopping with friends or family (particularly children) ensure that everyone stays close and within sight.
- 2. Trash the cash.** Walk with minimal cash or none at all. Put everything you buy on your credit card or use a debit card to pay for purchases. If you have to visit an ATM, try to do it during the daytime in a well-populated area.
- 3. Lighten up.** Park in a well-lit area if you know you're going to be leaving your shopping location after dark and lock your doors as soon as you get into the car. Try not to park next to panels vans or vehicles with dark tint on the windows. If you're uncomfortable or nervous, ask store or mall security to escort you to your vehicle. Do not linger in your parking spot to count money or make calls. Your car should be in good working order and always have enough gas to get you to and from your destination. If you're taking public transportation, wait in a well-lit and busy area. Regardless of your means of travel, you should be observant as to whether or not you're being followed. If you're concerned

that you are, head for the nearest police station or call for help (hands-free) from your cell phone.

## Home Safety

- 1. Children first.** Be on the lookout for anything that could be a choking hazard to young children, like burst balloons, small batteries and parts that may have fallen off decorations or toys. Make sure that your Christmas tree is sturdy and its lights are in good working order.
- 2. Take your time.** Rushing is what causes most accidents in the home, especially in the kitchen. When entertaining, give yourself lots of time to prepare your Christmas meals: you'll likely get through the season with fewer spills, cuts and burns.
- 3. Lights out.** It's great to see homes and gardens all aglow, but remember to blow out candles and unplug Christmas lights if you are going to bed or leaving the house.

## Party Safety

- 1. Know your limits.** Don't drink and drive; it's that simple. If you know you will be drinking alcohol in excess of the legal limit, designate a driver or have a reliable taxi service on hand to take you home.
- 2. Be aware.** Always be cognisant of your surroundings, especially if you are in a new place. Don't leave your bags or belongings unattended and always keep an eye on where you have left your drink. Never accept drinks from anyone you don't know.
- 3. Protect your ears.** Most DJs these days pump up the music to dangerous decibel levels. If you want to parang all night long, it might be a good idea to walk with earplugs, lest you start to confuse the ringing in the ears with Santa's sleigh bells.

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# The Protocol of Corporate Gift Giving

THEY SAY IT'S BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE, BUT WHEN IT COMES TO CORPORATE GIFT GIVING, THE RULES ARE A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT.

The global focus on transparency and good governance has significantly changed the gift giving game. Multinational companies are bound to an international set of codes and ethics which frown upon any token – no matter how small or well intentioned – that may be misconstrued as a bribe. As a result,

expressing gratitude to clients and business associates, even if it is exchanging presents in the spirit of the season, becomes more complicated. Here is a handy guide to keep you on the right path when deciding upon how to express Christmas greetings to clients or customers...

- 1. Check company policy.** Before you make a corporate faux pas, do a little research, both about your own company and the company to which you intend to give a gift. Many firms have strict policies on if and what its employees may receive, even down to dollar values. Never give cash, as it is easy for the recipient to interpret the "gift" as bribery.
- 2. Go logo-less.** If you're in the type of business where corporate gifts are either welcome or expected, try to stay away from branded items, particularly if they are high-end. Nobody wants a brand name pen emblazoned with your company logo; it's just tacky and it cheapens the gesture.
- 3. Give it away.** Companies appreciate if you give to worthwhile causes on their behalf. Donations to charity not only help the less fortunate at this special time of year, they also avoid the awkwardness of exchanging merchandise that may be unwanted or inappropriate.
- 4. Make it suitable.** Choosing service-related gifts, such as spa days or tickets to events can be a good choice; just make sure whatever you select is appropriate to your business associate's interests. Golf passes, for instance, would be wasted on someone who can't tell a golf club from a club soda.
- 5. Party on.** Want to express your gratitude but don't want it to be misconstrued? Throw a party! It's win/win: a big group gift that facilitates corporate networking while getting into the festive spirit of the season.

The purpose of corporate gift giving is to show appreciation and have people think of you again when it's time to do business. Gifts are essentially a form of gratitude to those who have supported you; choose them well.

## Get Inspired!

To quote that beloved Christmas song, the secret of Christmas is "not the things you do at Christmas time, but the Christmas things you do all year through." These words of wisdom are great reminders of the reason for the season...

“Christmas is the season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of charity in the heart.”

– Washington Irving

“

Maybe Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas... perhaps... means a little bit more!”

– Dr. Seuss

“

My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?” – Bob Hope

## Savannah East update!

The construction of our newest property, Savannah East, is well underway and we are currently on track to realise completion in 2014.

This is intended to be a LEED certified building and, as such, we have been working hard to reduce the impact of our construction on the general public and the environment around us. Dust netting, filter fabric, recycling bins and

many more measures work together to make Savannah East one of the country's more environmental and socially responsible projects.

From start to finish, the Savannah East development will be focused on reduced energy consumption, the health and safety of all workers and the future occupants of the building.



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