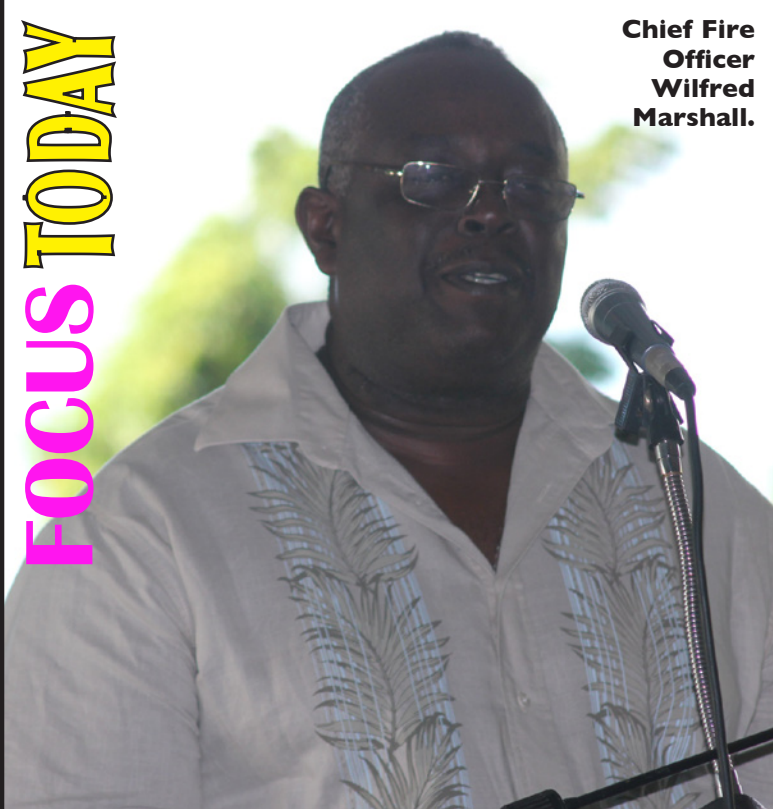


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Chief Fire Officer Wilfred Marshall.

Year-round planning

ORGANISATION PRAISED FOR THEIR EFFORTS TO REMAIN PROACTIVE

Disaster and emergency planning are not just a six-month activity, but one that engages professionals year-round. This assertion was made by Chief Fire Officer Wilfred Marshall last evening as he addressed the annual general meeting of the St. James Central District Emergency Organisation at Bagatelle Great House.

The chief told the small audience that meeting: "Disaster planning is not a six months affair that occurs between the months of June and November, but rather a year round activity and it is commendable that throughout the year this organisation can be seen making efforts through seminars, workshops and media presentations to ensure that its

members and constituents are kept informed and remain proactive.

"The call from all quarters is to think outside of the box in which case you are not expected to develop atrophy or slip into inertia but to be dynamic and cutting edge. You are expected to have higher levels of productivity with lower levels of inputs or in other words you are expected to have a dance and a dinner for a dime."

He furthermore praised the active DEO for the work it had done, especially in partnering with the fire service for activities like clearing and marking of hydrants and training of community emergency respondents.

"What has captured the attention of the Fire Service administration is the emphasis which you have placed on community fire safety and fire protection resources within the districts you serve. These specific elements have always been at the forefront of the department's performance indicators.

"Within the last five years, however, and certainly with

the advent of the Fire Prevention Unit, there has been a more focused effort on ensuring that the most vulnerable in our operational space are paid due attention. At the same time various strategies are being employed to identify, mark and maintain the fire protection provided through the hydrant network in Barbados.

"These approaches have paid dividends, as over the past three years, while the total number of fires in successive years have risen and fallen the service has been able to record a progressive decline in private dwelling house and commercial building fires.

"Statistics would show that in 2012, we recorded 86 house fire calls, down from a high of 133 in 2010 and 95 in 2011. Our success in this area is not only reflected in the number of fire calls recorded during this period but also in the actual damage recorded," said the chief.

Marshall said it was just as important to recognise the work of the fire service, as it was to salute the support services that enabled them to record successes.



Members of the audience at the event.

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The executive members of the St. James Central DEO.



He told the members of the DEO that their safety of the elderly and disabled programme and their hydrant checks were efforts that aided the service's fire prevention and mitigation.

"You have certainly been bold and visionary in pursuit of minimising both human and economic lost in the event that a disaster strikes in your area. You have researched and refined your response mechanisms and you are also constantly building capacity.

"This model which you are developing can be easily transferred across the other DEO's and can serve as a catalyst in rejuvenating some of the less vibrant ones. Your main challenge going forward will be to forge linkages with corporate entities and other service providers to ensure that all of your programs are sustained and remain meaningful over the longer term," he said. (LB)



From left: Chairman Selwyn Brooks chats with Anthony Browne of the NAB, Stephen Reid of the Ministry of Social Care and head of the Drainage Unit, Keith Barrow.



Chairman of the DEO Selwyn Brooks chats with Joyce Marshall, wife of Fire Chief Wilfred Marshall.



Joyce Marshall (left) presents a gift of appreciation to The Towners Management Group, accepted by Sharon Coyle.



Cynthia Brooks of the DEO (right) presents Joyce Marshall with a token of appreciation.



The Chairman's Award went to Cheryl Babb.



Fire Chief Wilfred Marshall chats with St. James resident Amal Reid.