



## Sister Cities News Bulletins

### Ambergris Ranked #1 Island by Trip Advisor Travelers

According to reports from Belize's tourism officials, the new logo and slogan campaign is paying off in spades. The Bureau reports a 9.2% increase in overnight visitors in 2014. CTO (Caribbean Tourism Org.) reported and the country was ranked the second highest in tourism growth (Eastern Caribbean) year over year, following Turks & Caicos. The island has 154 hotels and resorts registered out of 765 for all of Belize; or 1,896 units compared to 7,210. Tourism is the second largest sector in Belize's economy; agriculture being the first, making Ambergris Caye a major contributor to the country's GDP. Current projections suggest that the tourism sector will create an additional 10,000 over the next decade.

The island was ranked number one in the world for 2013 and 2014 by users of Trip Advisor, a popular online travel site. Most reviewers are in awe of the barrier reef and Blue Hole diving sites, but the island and mainland both have much more to offer visitors of all types. In addition to the Marco Gonzalez site on the south end of the island, there are several significant Mayan ruins to explore on the mainland, which is a 20 minute flight or 1 1/4 hour boat ride away.

In order to better accommodate tourists and residents alike, the San Pedro town council has made road improvements a top priority. Ambergris Caye is 25 miles



long and separated by a channel. Until recently once you crossed the Sir Barry Bowen Bridge you had only sand roads to travel north of town. The first phase of the

construction of a road from the bridge north to Blue Reef Resort was completed last fall.

Photo credit: Grand Caribe Belize

Phase one cost \$3 million and went from the Belizean Shores Resort to the bridge. And yes, there are speed bumps. The entire island has a 15 mph speed limit and golf carts are considered vehicles.

### Mayor Daniel Guerrero Wins Second Term

Voter turnout in San Pedro for last month's general elections was 65.71%, exceeding the country average, and beat 2012 numbers by over 4 percentage points. The UDP (United Democratic Party) won all seven seats. The six councillors included: Hector Alamilla, Flora Ancona, Ruben Gonzalez, Gary Grief, Severo Guerrero, and Gabriel Nuñez. On election night, Mayor Guerrero in a statement to the media said, "Progress will continue in San Pedro. The UDP is doing great work across the country. With my full UDP slate we will work better for our island community. What I want now is for everyone to get united to work together as one community..."

Congratulations to Mayor Guerrero and the councillors on a successful campaign. Councillor Grief was appointed deputy mayor at the swearing in ceremony on March 6.

### Traveling to Barbados - Check out the offerings through the Hospitality Institute of BCC

Back in 1997 Barbados Community College (BCC) had the vision to acquire the former site of the Marine & Pomeroy Hotel to establish an experiential program for students enrolled in the culinary arts, tourism and travel, and hospitality



studies degree programs. Today the Hotel PomMarine offers 22 guest rooms and two restaurants on-site – the Golden Apple Café and the Muscovado Restaurant. The latter offers a 7 course gourmet meal on Friday

nights prepared by culinary arts students and is open to the public in addition to hotel guests. The hotel is a 10 minute drive from Wilmington's sister city – Bridgetown and close to beaches, restaurants, and shopping.

Bernice Critchlow-Earle, the Hospitality Institute's program director, says enrollment in the associate degree program has been growing annually, and she would like to see it evolve to add a bachelor of arts degree in the future. The program was the first of its kind in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean allowing students to have both theory and practice while earning their degree. BCC also offers a general catering program for applicants who don't meet the prerequisites for the associate degree program.

For more information on the program: [www.bcc.edu.bb/Divisions/HospitalityInstitute](http://www.bcc.edu.bb/Divisions/HospitalityInstitute), or to inquire about reservations email [pommarine@sunbeach.net](mailto:pommarine@sunbeach.net).

## Doncaster College Alum Earns Innovative Design Award

Aiden Litchfield, a former student of Doncaster College, was among the honorees at the Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers Annual Dinner and Awards Presentations in November. Litchfield was recognized for his innovative ideas to improve a piece of PolyPipe pipework molding machinery using robotics. He happily accepted a check for 500£ and is now employed in his chosen field.

Litchfield worked on the project while studying at the BSc Integrated University Centre – Doncaster. In addition to the robotic arm for use with stacking pallets, he designed a smart phone app the company can use to measure the return on investment for the project or any other project.

The Polypipe award program was started about 6 years ago to stimulate interest in engineering careers. Polypipe is a leading UK company that designs, develops, and manufactures plastic piping for residential, civil and infrastructure uses with 17 sites and 2000 employees. The company's main offices are located in Doncaster [South Yorkshire] and it has locations outside the UK in Italy, France and Dubai. Company website is [www.polypipe.com](http://www.polypipe.com). Business inquires can contact either David Hayward or Linda Marshall at - [international@polypipe.com](mailto:international@polypipe.com)

## Other News

### Commission Updates

The Commission engaged in a planning session at its January meeting. Two high priority items identified as focus areas for 2015 included raising community

awareness of our sister cities; and exploring the potential to organize cultural immersion and/or economic development trips. It was noted that in the two community surveys conducted by the Association results indicated a high interest in arranged trips/tours.

Dr. Denise Di Puccio announced she will be leaving her post at UNCW in June. Di Puccio is currently the university's representative on the Commission.

## SCAW Annual Meeting

Dr. Li Tan Nichols, outgoing board member and corporate secretary, was recognized for her contributions over the past 2 years. Shanhong Luo was elected to fill the vacancy created by Dr. Nichols departure. Shanhong is a native of China and received a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's in personal and social psychology from Beijing University. She received her doctorate from Iowa State University and is currently a professor in the Department of Psychology at UNCW. In the community, Shanhong has mentored students, volunteered with Good Shepherd Center and serves on the Board of the Wilmington Chinese American Cultural Association.

The nominees for the class of 2018 included two returning board members, Qian (Chad) Fan and Tony Ventimiglia and one new nomination, Charles Blanton. Charles received his BA in Communications Studies from UNCW; and a law degree from North Carolina State. He later completed a master's in Public Administration at UNCW. Charles is currently employed with Brock & Scott in Wilmington; and serves on Wilmington's Parking Advisory Committee, the Sister City Commission, and is a Guardian Ad Litem.

Officers for the upcoming year included: Fenton Maxwell (president), and Qian Fan (treasurer). The secretary position vacated by Dr. Nichols will be voted on at the June board meeting.



## North Carolina: Where Ocean Meets Innovation - Oct 12-14, 2015

This October, several hundred business leaders and government officials from around the world will converge in Wilmington for the international **2015 BioMarine Business Convention**. Hosted by the Marine Bio-Technologies Center of Innovation and the North Carolina Biotechnology Center Southeastern Office, the deal-making convention will offer North

Carolina an opportunity to build global business relationships and to showcase our state's wealth of marine biotech assets and commercial potential to an international audience.

BioMarine started in France, and then moved to England, Canada, Portugal, and will have its first meeting in the US in Wilmington, NC for 2015 before heading off to Norway next year.

**Biotechnology**, including the **marine biotechnology** subsector, is one of North Carolina's strongest industry sectors with a \$73 billion annual impact in the state. The industry is critical to North Carolina's future, and the existing marine biotech strengths across North Carolina offer enormous potential to grow the sector in our region and state.

The marine biotech industry sector, or the Blue Economy, has broad implications for and applications in the following areas, just to name a few: Healthcare/pharma; bioenergy/fuel; food from the sea, with connections to agricultural biotech; industrial uses (wastewater remediation, agricultural waste remediation, etc.); advanced materials.

To capitalize on the BioMarine Business Convention here in Wilmington and help realize the full potential of this sector in our state, **we are recruiting support from the highest levels of leadership in the state and the country**, to showcase North Carolina's marine biotech assets and the immense potential of marine biotech commercialization here to the BioMarine Business Convention's international audience of company CEOs and government leaders.

As part of the BioMarine endeavor, the local BioMarine team is working with the event coordinators to host the Mayors of previous and future BioMarine conventions (Nantes, London, Halifax, Cascais, Wilmington, Oslo) for a **Blue Sister City initiative**, to explore ways the cities and countries may work together to promote and grow the Blue Economy globally.

The BioMarine team welcomes you to join the 2015 Convention in Wilmington. For more information on the event and how you might play a role, please contact the Co-hosts: Deborah A. Mosca, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer • Marine Bio-Technologies Center of Innovation Wilmington, NC • [dmosca@mbcoi.net](mailto:dmosca@mbcoi.net) • [www.mbcoi.net](http://www.mbcoi.net) or Randall Johnson, MBA, Executive Director, Southeastern Office • North Carolina Biotechnology Center Wilmington, NC • [Randall\\_Johnson@NCBiotech.org](mailto:Randall_Johnson@NCBiotech.org) • [www.ncbiotech.org](http://www.ncbiotech.org)

## Citizen to Citizen Diplomacy Honor Roll

SCAW attempts to involve as many people and institutions as possible to achieve its mission in Wilmington and the international community. We want to recognize the individuals and groups that have made

a contribution in the past calendar quarter through their active participation or support of a Sister City program activity.

Fenton Maxwell  
Marilyn Cantarella  
Scott Czechlewski  
Qian (Chad) Fan  
Li Tan Nichols  
Szechuan 132

Dr. Jim Leutze  
Maria Goudiss  
George Schell  
Charles Blanton  
Chen Deyuan  
Eric A. Wade

## Upcoming Events

**April 26** – 3K Walk to Prevent Violence Against Women organized by the area chapter of the United Nations in partnership with NCUSNC-UN Women will be at Hugh Mc Rae Park. Register at 12:30 PM – race & activities will be from 1-4 PM. Registration is \$25 on site/\$10 youth. For more information contact [rachelfox.onewilmington@gmail.com](mailto:rachelfox.onewilmington@gmail.com)

**May 1- 5** West Indies Cricket takes top ranked England in a series of three test matches, the third of which will be played in Barbados at the Historic Kensington Oval (St. Michael's Parish). The start time is 10 AM each day and tickets can be purchased at the Kensington Oval Box Office (phone: 246-274-1109)

**August 6-8** Belize's largest international event is held on Ambergris Caye – the International Costa Maya Festival. The main stage features both local and international artists from throughout the Americas (Belize, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama)

**Aug 24** "Landscapes of Belize: Exploration of the Sibun River Watershed". Join Dr. Andrea Hawkes as discusses Belize from the Maya mountains to the Caribbean following the Macai/Sibun Watershed. The lecture will be held at the New Hanover County Main Library starting at 6 PM.

**Sept 1** International Student Reception - Join Mayor Saffo, City & County elected officials for a reception at City Hall to formally welcome the 2015-16 international students to the University of North Carolina and Wilmington. The reception will be from 5:30 – 6:30 PM after which you can join the students for the Council meeting in the upstairs Chambers or a walking tour of the Historic District in Downtown. \*Members only event  
**Sept 9** "Daylight Come: Life after Rape in the Congo" - film documenting the story of the ongoing conflict in the region through the eyes of two American missionaries. The screening will be at Lumina Theater in the Fisher Student Center at UNCW beginning at 7 PM. There will be a Q&A with the producers following the film. This is a joint program with the Coastal Carolina Chapter of the United Nations Association.