

# The West Indian American

Serving the Caribbean/American  
Communities of Connecticut

www.wianews.com

Volume XXXI

JANUARY 2023

## Dream Becomes Reality: Direct Flight From Bradley To Montego Bay



Inaugural flight of Spirit Airlines: From Bradley International Airport to Montego Bay, Jamaica. Passengers in exuberant mood with feeling of pride, promise, and excitement

By Charmaine Waul

Now that the fanfare is over, let's sit down to some serious discussions about the Spirit Airlines direct flight between Bradley International Airport and Montego Bay, Jamaica. Totally by happenstance, I found myself on the inaugural flight on December 15, 2022.

I arrived at the boarding gate to much fanfare, giveaways, and freebies as well as live music. It was a pleasant surprise. The historical and potential economic significance of this venture is exceedingly timely.

Whether by coincidence or plan, the trip came at the opening of the 2022-23 Jamaican tourist season with many travelers leaving what was forecasted to be the first significant snowstorm of the season to escape to the warmth of Jamaica. Historically, it is momentous and long overdue that a direct flight that connects the second largest Jamaican diasporic community in the United States to its homeland has finally come to fruition.

The flight itself was reasonably comfortable for passengers in the big front seats.

Passengers were in an exuberant mood and there was an overall feeling of pride, promise and excitement. During the flight, in talking to the Jamaican Ambassador to the United States, Audrey Marks, she highlighted that the convenience of the flight could open numerous possibilities for travelers, as well as host and home country alike. Marks also spoke of how exciting and rewarding it is for her to see a direct flight going to Jamaica from New England.

In Jamaica, the flight was met with equal or greater fanfare. There was the customary "water cannon salute." The hosing down of the aircraft by the fire department is done to all inaugural flights, much to the horror of many passengers, myself included, not aware of this custom. Also on hand to meet the flight was the lineup of all the necessary agencies and stakeholders and more good music.

On my return leg of the flight a few weeks later, the service at the front desk at the Montego Bay Airport, left much to be desired. One of the main confusions was the lack of knowledge on international standards for luggage weight for checked bags. This caused very

upset and even irate customers. The return into Bradley Airport, however, I must applaud, was unlike any other port of entry that receives flights coming from Jamaica. Passport check was seamless and without hassle. Similarly, luggage pickup and exit were equally smooth. But for a few minor hiccups, I personally would take the trip again.

But now that all the novelty and fanfare are over, what are our expectations, what are our expectations of Spirit Airlines and what of its own expectations for this venture? I personally hope for reliability, and the dynamic and viable movement of not only people, but also commerce, business opportunities, and continued cultural exchange between the two points. Every new venture, I'm aware, has growing pains and kinks to work out. It is my hope that these kinks can be worked out in a timely manner. This route just opened, and while most Jamaicans are excited, hopeful and optimistic, it would be unfortunate to see a breakdown in this relationship. I personally would love to see continued support for the longevity of this route.

I believe it is possible



Audrey Marks (left), Jamaica's Ambassador to the United States, commenting on the convenience of the flight

through dedicated dialogue. This route is full of promise, but it is incumbent on us to deliver a product that will stand the test of time, with the highest quality to live up to the potential of what we can become. Let's talk! For starters here are a few recommendations: more big front

seats; at minimum industry standard for check luggage weight; and in-flight concessions for a flight of this length.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the writer and not necessarily the same held by this publication.

# CT Dept. Of Labor Commissioner Ordered Unemployment Appeals Filing Shut Down To Address System Error

(Wethersfield, CT) – On Tuesday, Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) Commissioner Danté Bartolomeo ordered Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) to shut down the unemployment appeals filing feature in ReEmployCT after Connecticut Appeals Division staff identified instances of the system issuing the same docket number to two separate claimants.

The problem, related to a technical error, impacted some of the appeals that were filed Friday, January 20, 2023, through Tuesday, January 24, 2023. CTDOL has contacted the impacted filers.

The assignment of identical appeals docket numbers impacted 54 appeals filers whose data was available to the one other filer who was erroneously issued the same

docket number. Filers had to be logged into a specific screen in the ReEmployCT system to have viewed the information; TCS cannot confirm that any claimant information was viewed by the unauthorized filer.

The agency has contacted the 54 claimants with guidance and offered credit monitoring for two years.

Commissioner Bartolomeo said, “On behalf of CTDOL, I sincerely apologize to these 54 claimants whose information was potentially exposed. This is a wholly unacceptable situation. We expect ReEmployCT to be a robust, high-quality, high-functioning system. While we anticipate service interruptions for updates and maintenance, CTDOL will not tolerate lapses that risk information or interfere with the unemployment system. Unemployment benefits are part of the social safety net; Connecticut’s workforce and our employers depend on it.”

Docket numbers are uniquely assigned so claimants and employers can track their cases through the appeals process. An appeals docket includes personal information such as name, address, Social Security number, and may include other documents specific to their unemployment application.

On Monday, January 23, 2023, CTDOL Appeals Division staff identified and reported an instance of docket number duplication to TCS, the vendor that built and maintains ReEmployCT for Connecticut and the consortium states.

On Tuesday, as a system

inquiry was already underway related to the Monday instance, Appeals staff noted additional instances occurring of duplicate docket numbers. Commissioner Bartolomeo ordered TCS to shut down the appeals filing feature for examination and report.

Appeals filing and regular unemployment benefits inquiry features remain closed. Unemployment benefit filing and other services are open to claimants and employers. The agency will assist any claimants and employers who may have missed an appeals filing deadline due to the service interruption.

As is required under [state law](#), CTDOL has [filed notice](#) of a potential unauthorized access/breach of security with the Connecticut State Auditors, the Office of the State Comptroller, and the Attorney General’s Office.

While ReEmployCT currently has just under 30,000 weekly unemployment benefits filers, they were not impacted by duplicate docket numbers. Additionally, filers with a scheduled appeals hearing are not impacted. The 54 appeals filers who were impacted have been contacted; appeals filers do not need to call CTDOL to follow up.

## THE WEST INDIAN AMERICAN ONLINE

As people consume news online, the trend is clear for The West Indian American. The WIA can be accessed anytime, anywhere--available to you at your home, work, school, and can be downloaded from our website.

Visit: [www.wianews.com](http://www.wianews.com)

## Connecticut Podiatry Associates

*Dr. Todd A. Bell, DPM*

Offering comprehensive treatment for all foot conditions.  
Specialize in diabetic foot care

Medicare and Medicaid insurances accepted

**57 Jolley Drive, Bloomfield, CT 06002**  
**860-286-9161**

Saturday appointments available

## At CURET Classes Are Available On Site and Remotely:

- Adult Education
- Citizenship/Civic Education
- Youth Services

### Inquiries:

### CURET, Caribbean Resource Center:

Call: 860-985-5172  
Send Email To: [cjohnson@curet.org](mailto:cjohnson@curet.org)  
Visit Websites: [curet.org](http://curet.org) o [curet.info](http://curet.info)

### The West Indian American:

Call: 860:-985-5172  
Send Email: [info@wianews.com](mailto:info@wianews.com)

## Law Office Of Gregory C. Osakwe

### IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY

*New Address:*

**83 Oak Street**  
**Hartford, CT 06106**

**Telephone: (860) 524-0562**

**FREE CONSULTATION**

## We Are Here To Serve You

**THE WEST INDIAN AMERICAN** is published on the second Thursday of each month, except the special holiday editions during the months of December and January. Although efforts are made to ensure accurate and discriminating judgment, the opinion or statements of fact are the responsibility of contributors and columnists and not necessarily those of the editorial team or publisher. **ADVERTISING:** Place your ad by calling: (860) 293-1118. **Email:** [ads@wianews.com](mailto:ads@wianews.com). **Classified Deadline:** Monday before publication. **Executive PUBLISHER/EDITOR,** Edgar Johnson, Ph.D., **Associate Editors,** Stanford Walker; Carol Johnson, Ed.D; Contributing writers/reporters, Vjange Hazle., Joette Johnson, James Z. Daniels, Atty. Syd Schulman, Christopher Service, Gretchen Johnson, Thomas Aldridge, Ph.D, Leon Fraser, Mark Milward, MBA, Dr. Paulette Blythe. **Advertising/Circulation,** Ed Griffith, Marion Welch/Don Peterkin. **PRESS RELEASES:** All submissions must be **Emailed to: info@wianews.com by the 25th of the month preceding publication. We do not accept press releases by fax only by email:** Direct all correspondence, letter to the editor. Please include your name, address and telephone number for verification. The *WIA* will not be liable for inadvertent failure to publish an ad, typographical errors, or errors in publication except to the extent of the cost of the space in which the actual error appears in its first insertion. When this occurs, the *WIA* will reprint only the correction under “corrections.” Clients who request the repeat run of the ad info with the correction under “corrections” in the next publication, must inform the *WIA* at least 10 days before the next publication. The client who wishes the entire ad to re-run with the “corrections” within the display ad must pay for the new ad. Otherwise, all corrections will be put under “Corrections.” The publisher reserves the right to refuse at discretion, and to alter advertising copy or graphics deemed unacceptable for publication. Publication of advertising contained herein does not necessarily constitute an endorsement. Opinions expressed in columns are not necessarily the opinion of the publisher. The entire contents of the *WIA* are copyright © 2023 by The publisher. No portion may be reproduced in whole or in part by any means without the specific written permission, of the publisher. All rights reserved.



## When should you take a look at your health coverage options? Right now is good.

It's time to discover better health coverage options. To compare deductibles, co-pays, and more so you can make the choice that works best for you. To get help enrolling in coverage. And to see if you qualify for financial assistance.

Where can you do all this? Only at Access Health CT. If you've looked at us before, look again. And if you've enrolled before but need new options, it's definitely time to take a second look. We have coverage (including dental options) for individuals, families, and small businesses.

We're here for you – at [AccessHealthCT.com](https://AccessHealthCT.com).

Enroll by December 15 for coverage starting January 1  
Enroll between December 16 and January 15 for coverage starting February 1



Learn how to get free help.

access health CT



# CURET

Center For Urban Research,  
Education and Training, Inc.

1443 Albany Ave., Hartford, CT 06112

- **Adult Education to Improve Basic/Core Academic Skills: Reading, Writing, Math in Preparation for: ABE, NEDP, GED, Vocational Skills**
- **Technology: Digital Literacy**
- **Citizenship/Civic Education**
- **Youth Services:**
- **Tutoring**
- **Mentoring**

*Youth Tutoring & Mentoring: Monday - Thursday, 4 - 6 PM*

*Adult Classes: Monday - Thursday, 6 - 8 PM*

*Held remotely or on-site depending on virus concerns/guidelines.*

Info: Phone: 860-985-5172 • Email: [info@curet.org](mailto:info@curet.org)  
Website: [curet.info](http://curet.info) or [curet.org](http://curet.org)

## Dr. Bailey's Key Ingredients For Success: Face Adversities With Grit, Perseverance, Offer Service To Others

By Mark D. Milward

Dr. Trisha Bailey, CEO of Bailey Medical Equipment and Supplies was in Hartford in early January 2023 and stopped in at the HPATV (Hartford Public Access TV) studio and shared her experiences growing up in Hartford, her careers in business, her continued real estate development projects in Jamaica and the US, and also to discussed her soon-to-be-released book, *UNBROKEN*, which has a release date of July 2023.

A Weaver High and University of Connecticut (UConn) graduate, Dr. Bailey was recently recognized at her alma mater, on the occasion where she made headlines for making the largest donation in UConn history to the college to establish the Bailey Student Athlete Success Center at the Storrs campus.

Her most recent visit to Hartford included exploring market opportunities in Connecticut at Hartford Healthcare, UConn and surrounding areas for her medical

equipment supplies businesses.

Dr. Bailey appeared on "The Jamaica Diaspora Show" in Hartford for an exclusive interview. The show's audience includes viewers from the US, UK, and Canada Diasporas in addition to Jamaica.

Dr. Bailey was very candid in her discussion about her new book. She shared how the challenges that she overcame, and which are reflected in her book can inspire others to do the same.

When asked about her many successful accomplishments in athletics, and business, this multi-millionaire and soon-to-be billionaire responded by referring to a popular phrase, "You see the glory, but you don't know the story," and then shared insights on the pressures and challenges that she had to be overcome on the road to success. Dr. Bailey also described a mentoring program that she personally facilitates for her staff and employees. She

meets regularly with her mentees, offering them guidance and suggestions for them to achieve their own goals and aspirations. As Dr. Bailey stated in the interview, her aim for the book is to encourage readers facing adversities and to provide encouragement when facing challenges, obstacles apesures; having a resolve and perseverance are vital, and offer service to others. These are key ingredients for success.

Dr. Bailey's businesses include a location in East Hartford at the Bailey Medical Plaza Office Building, 1137 Main St. The space provides office space for businesses and a retail establishment for Bailey's medical equipment and supplies. Bailey's near-term plans include establishing a Pharmacy at this location.

Future visits to the Greater Hartford area by Dr. Bailey and her team are expected soon and her new book *'UNBROKEN'* can be obtained as a signed copy by going to <https://www.creatingmyownyes.com>. Watch her interview on "The Jamaica Diaspora Show" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3YN YWPLlqw>.



Dr. Trisha Bailey, CEO Bailey's Medical Equipment & Supplies, Mark Milward, executive producer, "The Jamaica Diaspora Show" at HPATV studio in Hartford, Connecticut.



Bailey's Equipment and Supplies. East Hartford, Connecticut

## Jamaica On Course To Generate Over US\$4B In Record Tourism Earnings

By Latonya Linton

Jamaica's tourism sector continues to rebound strongly from the COVID-19 pandemic-induced economic fallout, generating earnings of US\$3.64 billion in 2022. Tourism Minister, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, made this disclosure during Tuesday's (January 10) sitting of the House of Representatives.

"We ended the year equalling the record-breaking earn-

ings of tourism of US\$3.64 billion, and the [2022/23] fiscal year, which I will report on when we make our [2023/24] budget presentation, is going to show US\$4.2 billion earnings in tourism, which would be US\$500 million more than 2019, which is the best year in our history," Mr. Bartlett said. He added that the 2022/23 winter season has, so far, "started with a bang", with January's figures, to

date, showing a 463 per cent increase over last year and 29 percentage points growth over 2019.

Regarding the tourism pension scheme, Mr. Bartlett said nearly 8,000 workers are now contributing to the plan, generating savings of \$350 million. He indicated that the scheme is on track to reach 10,000 members during the current winter season. "The potential for this

pension program is to have over 350,000 members, and that savings will bring billions of dollars, which will now become a pool of affordable funds for capital development and on-lending for various other investment projects," Mr. Bartlett said.

"And we know in economics that one of the bases on which solid growth is predicated is when the domestic savings of a country [are] converted into invest-

ment," he added.

The pension scheme is designed to cover all tourism workers, aged 18 to 59, whether permanent, contract or self-employed.

They include hotel workers as well as persons employed in related industries, such as craft vendors, tour operators, red cap porters, contract carriage operators and workers at attractions. The benefits will be payable at age 65 years or older.

## Two Caribbean Islands Listed Amongst 10 Best Places For Digital Nomads In 2023

Cities in Curaçao and Barbados have made the list of the 10 best places for digital nomads in 2023 as compiled by [kiwi.com](https://www.kiwi.com), a travel solutions website. When considering a place to live and work as a digital nomad, some of the most important factors include internet speed, co-working options, cost of living, safety, local culture, and quality of life.

Willemstad is the capital city of [Curaçao](https://www.kiwi.com), a Caribbean island with a population of about 150,000. It is a constituent country of the Netherlands and features excellent beaches, clear seawaters, and coral reefs. The architectural options offer a fascinating combination of Dutch-style buildings with a Caribbean-inspired color scheme of yellow and pink. There are also European-style bars and pubs providing Caribbean cuisine, and the people speak at least two of the four languages that are common on the island: Dutch, English, Spanish, and a Portuguese Creole language called Papiamentu. It has been described by those familiar with the culture as an open, receptive, friendly, and fun place. Its historic center comprises four quarters and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Caribbean is the desti-

nation of choice for many travelers, and for digital nomads, the city of Bridgetown in Barbados offers the best of the Caribbean lifestyle. It has wonderful weather, excellent beaches and food options, and a relaxed lifestyle. [Barbados](https://www.kiwi.com) is one of several Caribbean countries that offer digital nomad visas, including Dominica, the Cayman Islands, Bermuda, and Antigua and Barbuda. Barbados provides a 12-month work permit known as the Barbados Welcome Stamp that allows individuals to make their homes anywhere on the island. Bridgetown offers many of the features sought after by digital nomads as it is the capital city, but since the island can be crossed in three hours, anywhere is feasible. One of the best features is that the island's beaches now have WiFi connectivity.

The other cities included on [kiwi.com](https://www.kiwi.com)'s list include [Toronto, Canada](https://www.kiwi.com); Chiang Mai, Thailand; Auckland, New Zealand; Svalbard, Norway; Salt Lake City, Utah, in the United States; Madeira, Portugal; Mishima, Japan; and Panama City, Panama.

(Staff Writer, [Jamaicans.com](https://www.kiwi.com)  
Photo by [Tom Jur](https://www.kiwi.com) on [Unsplash](https://www.kiwi.com))

