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PRESS RELEASE

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

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St. Lucia Jazz Record Best Year.

Monday, May 30, 2005 - Tourism officials in Saint Lucia say that St. Lucia Jazz 2005 has been the best on record in the 14-year history of the event. At a recent press briefing on the statistical review of the just concluded event, top tourism officials announced significant increases in visitor arrivals from the main destination markets, increases in visitor spending and record audiences at various shows like Main Stage Jazz at Pigeon Island Landmark and the opening at the Mindoo Phillip Park.

Minister for Commerce, Tourism, Investment and Consumer Affairs, Honourable Phillip J. Pierre says this year's event far exceeded expectations and realised the goal of the tourism industry to bring tangible benefits to the people of St. Lucia. "There were increases in all source markets with the USA being the main source market followed by the Caribbean region and then the UK," Minister Pierre informed.

He went on, "From exit surveys and other statistical data from the St. Lucia Tourist Board, it was realised that each visitor spent an average of \$160 dollars per-day, meaning that of the record number of 13, 670 visitors who came to the event this year, they spent nearly \$62 million dollars in St. Lucia for the period of St. Lucia Jazz 2005."

Of that \$62 million Minister Pierre says over \$2 million were derived from the local handicraft sector, pointing to the trickle down effects of the event. Other direct benefits of the 2005 event he

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says were the performances by two local acts namely Nicole David and Chronic Heights – who shared the opening night stage with other regional and international artistes, among them Jamaican based Beeniemann.

Tourism Director Hilary Modest says the successes of Saint Lucia Jazz 2005 were attributed to a number of innovative, bold and well calculated approaches, all aimed at improving, expanding and getting St. Lucia Jazz to bring greater benefits to St. Lucians. Although lacking what was described as so-called big name headliners, Mr. Modeste is of the view the St. Lucia Tourist Board, the main organizer of the event, had the right mix. “The St. Lucia tourist board is connected to the market,” says Mr. Modeste.

According to the Director of Tourism, “We do our surveys and we understand very much what our customers want. We understand the connection with the market and we understand that we need to please our patrons, therefore when we designed the line-up last year it was designed on the basis of market information. Therefore while there were criticisms out there, we felt confident that we knew what we were doing and that we would deliver another successful jazz event.”

The tourism industry record a 19.8% increase in visitor arrivals as of April of this year over the same period in 2004. Tourism officials say with a new overseas-based marketing campaign to be released in the fall of this year and new airlift capacity being negotiated, further increases in tourist arrivals are anticipated well before year end.