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Hamilton, Bermuda 31 August 2009 - The Economic Empowerment Zone Agency (EEZA) Spreads Knowledge and Celebrates With Business Owners And Residents In The EEZ.

A series of events dedicated to meeting with and educating residents and business owners in N. E. Hamilton's Economic Empowerment Zone about the products and services available to them began with the EEZA hosting a seminar entitled Real Estate and Property Matters in the EEZ. On August 19th EEZ residents and business owners were on hand at the New Testament Church of God to hear presentations from representatives from Coldwell Banker Bermuda Realty who spoke about buying and selling in the EEZ; WJ Seymour Real Estate Ltd. advised on the Value of a Survey; Progressive Realty gave an overview of how to make an offer; HSBC, Bank of Bermuda identified specialized products available to the EEZ and Butterfield Bank reviewed the process to obtain financing and pre-approval for a loan. This 3 hour seminar began with an overview of the EEZ Land use and design plan by EEZA Director, Mrs. Smith.

On August 24th the EEZA Director took the Corporation of Hamilton's Mayor, other members of the Corporation, and area partners on a walking tour of the area for the second event. The tour allowed Mrs. Smith to identify the areas of opportunity in the Zone and reiterate the need for support from the Corporation of Hamilton. Mrs. Smith stated that "this [walk] was an opportunity to point out the disparity that exists between the development on Front Street and N.E. Hamilton and to work towards developing a plan to change it."

The third of the EEZ events saw 50 plus residents and business owners attend a Loan & Grant Seminar at the Bermuda Industrial Union on August 25th. The open event allowed Mrs. Smith and Business Development Officer Ms. Roxanne Christopher to detail the specific products available to the residents and business owners in the EEZ. Mrs. Smith gave an overview of the available products, like the grant and interest free loan programme available in amounts up to \$10,000 each; Customs Duty deferral and Payroll Tax concession. Ms. Christopher followed with a detailed presentation on how to correctly apply for the available products. One attendee and stakeholder remarked that the seminar was very informative and that they were unaware that there were so many opportunities available to them.

The series of events culminated with the official Open House of the EEZA office located at #38 Union Street. Residents, business owners, BSBDC board members, Corporation of Hamilton members and business partners were on hand to celebrate the establishment of the office. The festivities began at 2:00 pm and did not end until after 6:00 pm. EEZA and BSBDC staff welcomed guests and escorted them on a tour of the new offices after which guests were invited to enjoy refreshments and live music played by, Mr. John Burch. BSBDC Board member, George Scott stated that "It is fortunate to be located right in the EEZ as it will better allow the Economic Empowerment Zone Agency team to serve the area's residents and business owners."

The EEZA was created out of the BSBDC social agenda to establish economic empowerment zones as one of its initiatives mandated by the Throne Speech. The first of these zones has been established in North East Hamilton and the EEZA is working to develop Economic Empowerment Zones in the East and West Ends of the Island. **- END -**