



REMARKS

**The MOST HON. DR. HUBERT A. MINNIS
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE**

**OPENING
STANIARD CREEK BRIDGE
STANIARD CREEK, ANDROS,
THURSDAY, 18 MARCH 2021**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good afternoon.

The bridge at Staniard Creek is a vital transportation link for the settlement, as it is currently the only access crossing Staniard Creek.

The existing three-span bridge has an open span of sixty feet with the remaining width of the creek made up with a solid causeway.

The bridge has limited headroom with boats unable to pass underneath the structure.

The existing concrete bridge is in a very poor condition with severe erosion of the supports and concrete spalling to the deck.

Due to the severely poor condition, a load restriction of five tons was imposed.

Accordingly, it was essential that the bridge be replaced as a matter of urgency.

In addition to the poor state of the structure, its position and configuration are resulting in severe environmental damage to the area's ecosystem.

The dam effect of the bridge/causeway caused increased sedimentation, modification to the mangroves and a

decrease of the fish larvae within the creeks.

For these reasons, a decision was taken to relocate the new replacement bridge to a more favorable location, approximately 500 feet north of the existing bridge.

A series of openings are also being constructed on the approach road into the settlement to improve water flow in this area of the creek system.

The Staniard Creek Bridge project includes a number of works.

The new bridge is 180 foot clear span, spanning across the entire water channel. The headroom is twelve feet at high tide.

The construction works also included:

- On the road into the settlement, the construction of five, 50 foot long bridges which will improve the water flow in the

area, allowing for the natural flushing of the creek;

- Construction of a 500 foot long sheet piled wall between the old and new bridge, to stabilize the eroded section of the road embankment between the road and the water's edge;

- The relocation and upgrading of existing utility services in the vicinity of the works;

- Removal of the existing bridge and road causeway adjacent to the existing bridge;

- Dredging of the creek channel to reinstate the flow; and

- The construction of a new boat ramp, gazebo and a timber dock structure.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Following a competitive tender exercise, a contract was signed in November 2019, with Bahamas Marine Construction for the construction works for the amount of Eight

Million, Eight Hundred and Twelve
Thousand, Nine Hundred and Twenty-Nine
Dollars and Forty-Four Cents.

The construction period was fifteen
months.

Despite the restrictions caused by the
COVID-19 pandemic, the contractor
continued to work in order to complete the
project to the agreed contract period of
fifteen months and within the financial
budget allocated for the works.

This project is important for the area as it will regenerate the natural flora and fauna of the creek system.

It will also be a catalyst for eco-tourism in Andros by providing both locals and tourists with the opportunity to have a close at hand experience of the beauty of the natural creeks ecosystems in Andros.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As you are aware, 20,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine arrived in The Bahamas last week Wednesday.

The decision as to the rollout of the vaccine and the various priority groups receiving the 20,000 doses was made by the National Consultative Vaccine Committee, headed by Dr. Merceline Dahl Regis.

On Sunday past, there was a pilot program to test the rollout of the vaccine.

Yesterday, vaccinations began of those eligible to receive the first doses, which includes: healthcare workers in the public sector; private sector healthcare workers involved in the vaccination campaign; residents and staff of eldercare homes, and members of the uniformed branches starting with of the Royal Bahamas Defence Force.

The vaccines we received are approved by the World Health Organization.

They have also received certification from the Caribbean Regulatory System.

They have been scientifically tested.

They have already been given to millions of people.

They are safe.

I took the vaccine last Sunday.

The vaccination was painless and easy to take.

I will urge my family and friends to take the vaccine.

I urge all of you to take the vaccine when you are eligible to do so.

Millions of people around the world have now taken a vaccine.

By vaccinating a large number of Bahamians, we will be able to open up even more.

This will create more jobs and get our economy back on track.

For tourism, visitors will want to travel to places where the virus is under control.

We are seeing that the demand to come to The Bahamas is overwhelming.

If we are disciplined and take the vaccine, our country will be even more attractive to travelers.

If we refuse the vaccine and there is a resurgence of the virus, fewer visitors will come to The Bahamas.

Let us all play our part in the renewal and the revival of our communities and our country.

Please keep following the health measures, including wearing your masks.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me close by thanking all of those involved in this project, including the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Works the Hon. Desmond Bannister.

May God bless all who use this bridge.

May God also bless the residents of this area, the wonderful people of Andros and the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

It is with great pleasure that I declare this bridge officially open and invite you all to join me as we cut the ceremonial ribbon.

Thank you and good afternoon.
