

[Work begins on 5,000 home scheme, Antigua, St. Johns](#)



Ground breaking For Bau Panel Manufacturing Plant

Antigua St. John's - The government and Bau Panel Systems Antigua Ltd broke ground on Wednesday for the anticipated Bau Panel Manufacturing Plant in Crabb's.

The facility, which is 25 per cent owned by the government and people of Antigua & Barbuda, will sit on some 12 acres of land and produce state of the art building materials that will see the construction of cost effective and reliable housing in the country.

Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer said he was profoundly delighted at yet another UPP administration development, as his government continues to forge forward in the provision of an adequate stock of housing for Antiguans and Barbadians.

He said the government “eagerly entered” into the relationship with Bau Panel System and anticipates nothing but success to come from the project that will see homes constructed on some three parcels of land across the island made available by the government.

Also present at the sod turning ceremony were the Governor General, Members of Parliament and the Senate and Opposition officials, as well as prominent members of the local business community.

Manufacturing plant ‘will boost exports’

In the early phase of the project it is expected that some 80 immediate jobs will be created while another 1,000 will come on stream throughout the process.

PM Spencer said the decision to enter into the agreement was based on the proposal of flexibility and ease of home assembly.

“Housing is a profoundly ideological issue. It is a human rights issue. Housing is as basic a need as food and water. Those who need homes can afford homes,” the PM said.

In the meantime David Kendrick, Chairman of Bau Panel Systems Ltd, said he initially chose to do business in Antigua simply because of his love for the country.

He added that after subsequent meetings with the Prime Minister and other government officials and hearing their plans for housing development and affordability in the country, he was convinced that his decision to invest here, and to partner with Ken Hurst, was indeed a good one.

“They inspired me to want to invest and invest heavily in this country. I know I had the solution... to build the homes needed.

“I don’t build houses, I build communities. That is my MO for coming and investing in your country,” Kendrick said.

The Bau Panel Factory is said to mark the foundation of not only Bau Panel homes in Antigua & Barbuda but rather the foundation for putting the twin-island state on the regional and international export map.

And the prime minister is particularly fond of this aspect of the development, as he notes that the move creates an industry locally with the potential to develop tremendous export potential and ultimately put Antigua & Barbuda in a pivotal position regarding trading arrangements of CARICOM and Latin America.

With that, he urged that the Central Housing & Planning Authority (CHAPA), the Mortgage Company, the Ministry of Agriculture, and even the Ministry of Legal Affairs all to stand ready to foster the partnership and make it work in a “smooth and transparent” manner.

In the meantime, mortgage initiatives from Bau Panel Systems Ltd will be available for hopeful homeowners, eliminating the need in some instances for commercial bank red tape. The houses will range in cost from \$50,000 up to around \$150,000. The company will also provide financing, primarily for low-income clients in the first instance

Ken Hurst is Bau Panel Systems Antigua Ltd's Managing Director and, according to him, the combination of foam, steel and specially compounded concrete will undoubtedly produce a "living product" for Antiguan and Barbudans to be proud of.

"It will be a world-class factory with everything. There will be nothing spared," Hurst said.

The move is said to open the door for other construction companies from around the world to capitalize on investment opportunities in Antigua & Barbuda.