

May 24, 2008

Photo: Ribbon cutting at the new Tennis Centre. L to R Millie Hodge (ATA Board), Minister Neil Rogers, Valentine Banks, Mitchelle Lake, Cherecia Lewis and Sutcliffe Hodge (CEO Cable and Wireless).

#### State-of-the-art tennis facility opens at Blowing Point

ANGUILLA—Described as a ‘significant milestone’ and a ‘dream come true’ by President and founder of the Anguilla Tennis Academy (ATA) Mitchelle Lake, the new tennis facility at Blowing Point was officially opened on Friday May 23.

The ATA Tennis Complex was designed by Myron Goldfinger and Taylor Associates of White Plains New York. It includes a main building with male and female locker rooms, a pro shop, conference room, offices and a palm court. There are six adjacent tennis courts, three on each side of the building, all of which are gated and lit. In phase 2 of the project, estimated to be completed in December 2009, there will be a Grand Stand Court with seating for approximately 2000 spectators that will attract many professional matches.

Minister of Sport, Evans McNeil Rogers congratulated the ATA for a magnificent job and wished them continued success for the ‘world class tennis facility’. He specially commended Mitch Lake and his team for all their hard work saying that Anguilla is proud of them and their achievements.

The Opening Ceremony was chaired by Jason Allen, the ATA Executive Director who described the centre as a culmination of diligent work and many people. He said the aim of the ATA is to expose children to the joys, discipline and rigour of tennis and to develop healthy minds and provide education opportunities through the sport of tennis. The Academy provides high quality affordable programmes and ensures that no child is denied access or the opportunity to participate. Since its inception in 1996 some 2,500 children have learned to play tennis on courts all over the island.

The four major sponsors of the Academy are Cable and Wireless, National Bank of Anguilla (NBA), Caribbean Commercial Bank, (CCB), and Social Security. A representative from each business spoke at the opening. Avon Carty, Corporate Communications Manager for Cable and Wireless stressed the company’s commitment to sport saying that they have supported the tennis programme for many years. Valentine Banks of CEO of NBA said the Bank is extremely proud to be involved in the facility and pledged to sponsor the NBA Invitational Tournament for the foreseeable future. Aiden Harrigan, speaking on behalf of the Social Security Board which he chairs, pointed out that the strength of Social Security is healthy people and sports and tennis will ensure that the young people develop good healthy habits. Cherecia Lewis, Public Relations Officer of CCB, described the opening of the Tennis Centre as a turning point for tennis in Anguilla and an investment in Anguilla’s youth. She commended Lake and Allen for their devotion to tennis and congratulated all the ATA members.

Lake said that his dream of building a world class tennis facility for children has now become a reality but that without the dedicated and committed support of the government, the businesses and the community, international friends and local Anguillians it would not have been possible. He expressed sincere gratitude to all those who have given their time and financial resources to make it possible. “Your efforts and contributions have helped to build a tennis centre that will undoubtedly be a land mark of the Caribbean and a symbol of national pride,” he said. He also

praised the contractor, Jeff Richardson and the Project Manager, Hugo Rey and the other workmen who have all been committed to the project.

A special presentation was made to Eric Martineau who was described as the Pioneer of Tennis in Anguilla and a plaque was presented that will be displayed at the facility.

Lake concluded, "The Anguilla Tennis Academy was built for Anguillians and by Anguillians and I am happy to declare its doors are open to the public."

The Opening was attended by the Governor Andrew George, Deputy Governor Stanley Reid, former Deputy Governor Mark Capes, Minister of Finance and Tourism, Victor Banks and officials from the various sponsors and other organizations.