

The world's first underwater reef camera launched on-line

BONAIRE—The world's first permanent underwater Reef Web Camera (or ReefCam (TM)) has been successfully installed in the life-filled oceans off Bonaire, Caribbean WebCams, LLC in Norfolk, Virginia, USA, announced Wednesday.

Live images from the Reef Camera, along with several live images from above-water WebCams and current Bonaire weather, can be viewed at <http://www.BonaireWebCams.com>.

A Web Camera or "WebCam" is a term applied to any camera of which the video images can be viewed via a Web page on the Internet.

The ReefCam was first installed at the Small Wall dive site in Bonaire's waters during March of this year. The last five months have been spent in testing and development and have resulted in the official launch of the Bonaire WebCams site.

During the test period, the ReefCam captured images of turtles, eagle rays, squid, a myriad of fish, and divers who frequent local waters. Word has already spread among local dive masters, who are now bringing divers to pose in front of the ReefCam so that their friends and family can see them underwater via the Internet.

"Until now, no other company has managed to successfully install a permanent reef WebCam, because of the many technical hurdles involved in installing and maintaining of such a device. After months of hard work, however, we've come up with a solution that works," said Caribbean WebCams Chief Technical Officer Dan Senie.

"We selected Bonaire as the world's first site for an underwater ReefCam installation because we admire and appreciate the efforts of the Bonaire Marine National Park to pre-

serve Bonaire's reefs and marine environment and felt that this effort needed to be shared with the rest of the world through the wonder of the Internet," said Jake Richter, co-founder of Caribbean WebCams.

Images from the ReefCam and the other Bonaire WebCams are updated every two minutes on the Website. As Bonaire's Internet capacity improves, updates of images on the Website will occur more quickly as well.

To complement the WebCam and ReefCam images, Caribbean WebCams has installed a remote weather station and a proprietary underwater temperature sensor so that visitors to the Bonaire Website can get a reading of the current warmth of Bonaire's waters, as well as the current above-water temperature, humidity, wind speed, and wind direction.

New Antigua senator sworn

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua—Colin Derrick, an Antigua and Barbuda lawyer, was sworn in as an opposition senator Wednesday.

Derrick replaced veteran politician Tim Hector, whose appointment was revoked two months ago because he was part of a government delegation to a United Kingdom-Caribbean conference in London.

Derrick narrowly lost to an Antigua Labour Party (ALP) candidate in last year's general elections.

Asked the rationale for replacing Hector, a seasoned politician, with a relative new-comer, United Progressive Party (UPP) leader Baldwin Spencer said:

"Mr Derrick is a seasoned politician as well in the sense that he has been involved politically for a while albeit that he may have contested (an election) for the first time in 1999, but he has always been a very important part of the United Progressive Party.

"As a matter of fact, he was one of the founding members of the United Progressive Party and he has dem-

onstrated over the years his commitment to the ideals and the hopes and aspirations of the party."

Shortly after the decision by the UPP to have Hector's senatorial portfolio revoked, he accused Spencer and the rest of the party executive of not giving him a hearing before making a decision.

Explaining how he ended up on the government delegation, Hector said he was invited by St Lucia's Foreign Minister George Odlum to be an adviser at the May 11-12 meeting and, as a matter of protocol, he asked that the Antigua delegation be informed.

Hector said Antigua and Barbuda's High Commissioner to London, Ron Sanders, contacted him, requesting that he be part of the Antigua and Barbuda delegation while at the same time advising Odlum and so he agreed.

The UPP was officially formed in 1992 out of an amalgamation of the Progressive Labour Movement, the National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement (ACLM) led by Hector.

Hector, a newspaper editor and cricket analyst, has since bowed out of active politics.

Record Venezuelan cocaine haul grows, more arrests:

CARACAS, Venezuela—Venezuelan officials uncovered another two tonnes of cocaine in a remote jungle hideaway, bringing the total seized in back-to-back operations to a record seven tonnes, worth \$600 million on the streets of Europe, officials said on Wednesday.

The National Guard said the two hauls were part of the same Colombian drug operation, connected with Los Mellizos ("Twins") cartel. Officials expected the tally to rise further over the next few days.

"We have found two more tonnes in what we think was the base of this operation, but we are seizing more at this moment so tomorrow the amount will be higher," Gen. Antonio Alizo, head of the National Guard anti-drug unit, told Reuters.

The raid, the biggest in Venezuela's history, is a major coup for the country that the United States accused of becoming a drug-traffickers' sanctuary after it refused to allow North American anti-drug planes to fly over its airspace.

It was the culmination of an eight-month investigation financed by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and involved more than 200 anti-drug agents, three planes, eight boats, three helicopters and telephone bugging equipment.

Authorities said the drugs were destined for markets in Europe and the law enforcement operation, dubbed Orinoco 2000, also involved the governments of Britain, Colombia, France, Greece, Italy and Panama.

Five tonnes of cocaine were discovered last Thursday on a wooden platform built onto the roots of mangrove trees on an islet at the mouth of the Orinoco River delta on Venezuela's eastern Atlantic coast.

The second bust on Tuesday, which turned up two tonnes, was nearby on the mainland in an inaccessible jungle area on the banks of the Orinoco River.

Fourteen people were arrested last week, including one each in France and Italy, but Alizo said several more people were being detained as the investigation spread across Venezuela.

Diplomats in Caracas said the cocaine was probably produced in neighbouring Colombia, dropped in the Orinoco River delta by air and taken to the jungle hideaway by traffickers who had set up a camp nearby.

Venezuela has become a major cocaine trafficking route between the world's top producer, Colombia, and markets in the United States and Europe.

U.S. President Bill Clinton on Tuesday paved the way for the release of a record \$1.3 billion in aid to help Colombia fight drug trafficking.

Clinton is scheduled to visit Colombia on Aug. 30 to discuss Prident Andres Pastrana's "Plan Colombia," which the U.S. aid package will help finance.

The plan is aimed at forcing Marxist guerrillas to end their three decades of struggle by eroding their main source of income: the lucrative drug trade.