

10th January 2016

A PERSONAL OPINION – PUBLIC/MEDIA RELEASE

THE BENEFITS OF DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME OUTWEIGHS ANY INCONVENIENCE

The Cayman Islands Government has taken the long overdue and wise decision to adopt "Daylight Savings Time" in March of 2016. What this means, simply, is that in the Spring and Summer months (beginning in March) we will migrate to an existing Time Zone which will involve moving the "Clock" forward by one Hour, and in November we also will join the other developed countries in this Region and then reverse the "Clock" by an hour. That cycle will continue on a yearly basis thereafter.

It seems however that the discussion on this matter has emerged in recent weeks, with some objectors to Cayman adopting "Daylight Savings Time" (DST) using some arguments and illustrations which are not factual, relevant, or logical.

Below, in simplistic terms, is a list of benefits to be derived from adopting Daylight Savings Time which, in my opinion, far outweighs the slight inconvenience of accommodating a minor change to our long-standing custom. In this case the change to DST is not a matter of policy, heritage, or values, it is a simple sensible idea whose time has come.

Here are my views on the advantages of Cayman adopting DST:

- 1) In the Spring and Summer months, cruise ships are on DST and if Cayman is not on DST, as is the case now, the ships have to simply anchor in George Town harbour and await for the officials and the stores and businesses to open to be able to receive them and conduct business. This is one Hour of loss business and opportunity for Cayman's commerce, which can be substantial in terms of dollars for our hard-pressed businesses that cater to cruise ships;
- 2) In that same period, because the cruise ships are on DST, they leave Cayman an hour earlier, and again the stores, restaurants, tours and taxi's lose business; and the extra stress of the "rush hour" causes our visitors to enjoy their experience abit less;
- 3) Living in the tropics, and with our geographic proximity to the Equator, the divergence in sunlight and other seasonal changes are not significant. Nevertheless, the benefits of gaining an extra hour or not losing an hour are significant to our commercial and social welfare. However, because the changes will not be significant, there will not be the result of "school children waiting for the bus in the dark". That is simply not factual;
- 4) For example, if you look outside in the mornings now in Cayman at 6:00 a.m., it is dark, but by 6:30 - 6:45 a.m. it is Light. For Cayman in the Spring and Summer, those Light dynamics will be as it is now in the "Winter" months. Which school children do you know who are out waiting for the school bus at 6:00 a.m.?? Cayman is safe, and school children are not waiting for school busses with either a mountain side or farm plantations in the background;

5) For the financial services sector, which needs every assistance that it can get to remain the leader against competition, by adopting DST Cayman's financial services professionals will be on par with their counterparts along the Eastern seaboard of North America, and the time differential with London and Europe will be reduced by one hour. This allows for money market and Stock Exchange deals and transactions to be conducted in a timely manner with the leading money and other markets. This makes good sense;

6) For the overnight tourists who arrive and depart by Airlines, DST will mean that our flights do not have to depart Grand Cayman (or Cayman Brac and Little Cayman) so early in the morning to enable our visitors/tourists and other travelers to make their connecting flights in Miami or elsewhere in North America. Remember that in the Spring and Summer months our major air travel hubs are one hour ahead of Cayman (as present), and therefore we have to inconvenience our visitors, especially the honeymooners and young families with travelling at such ungodly hours in the morning....and negatively impacting their final evening/night on our Islands;

7) From a social standpoint, an extra hour of sunlight in the evenings means that parents and families can have extra time in the Spring and Summer evenings to play, go to the beach, work in the yard, walk their pets, or enjoy the neighbourhood or the patio... in beautiful cool sunlight;

8) From a health standpoint, people of all ages will have an extra hour in the evening where they can take a cool walk, jog/run, or cycle on: the roadsides, walking track, or the beach, or elsewhere;

9) For the workers, particularly those in construction, gardening, Farming, etc., they will have an hour of not as hot sun in the morning to work in, and they will get out of the sun in the late afternoon, when we know those hours are still quite hot in the Summer months;

10) And finally, for those school children who are doing after-school activities and may not have their own family transportation to get home, if they have to walk some distance between the bus stop and home, they can do so before it gets dark (which would be approximately 8 p.m. in the Spring and Summer months....if the Legislative Assembly votes to approve Cayman adopting DST).

In my opinion, Daylight Savings Time is a good idea. Let's not debate this to death as well. If you have a better idea, or a credible argument, or an alternative which produces equal positive results with fewer disadvantages, let's hear about it. Otherwise, let's support this simple and sensible change to our way of Life. I commend the Government for proposing the introduction of Daylight Savings Time, and I encourage all Legislators to support the Bill when it comes before the Legislative Assembly.

May God continue to bless, prosper, and protect the “good ship” Cayman, and all those who call it home or visit her.

Sincerely,

Mario E. Ebanks, MBA,