

## Trelawny Yam Festival returns to Albert Town

After being away from its original venue since 2008, the Trelawny Yam Festival will find its way back home to Albert Town on Easter Monday (April 25) with telecommunications giant, Digicel, onboard as title sponsor.

Organised by the Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency (STEA), the premier food festival &mdash; which has inspired several other festivals islandwide, and which showcases a variety of cuisine produced from yam &mdash; was first staged in Albert Town in 1997. Albert Town &mdash; Trelawny's yam capital STEA Chairman Hugh Dixon speaking at the Trelawny Yam Festival 2011 press launch in Albert Town last week.

Albert Town is the commercial hub of southern Trelawny which consists of communities renowned for yam production. But, to the anguish of south Trelawny farmers and residents, the much anticipated annual celebration was relocated to the Hague Agricultural Show Ground in north Trelawny in 2008. The show took place at Hague for two years in a row. STEA was unable to stage the festival last year as disgruntled farmers from the "hills", who are relied upon to provide the yams for display, spurned the event in a show of dissent. They argued that the event was being staged on &lsquo;foreign&rsquo; soil. STEA chairman Hugh Dixon told journalists during the Trelawny Yam Festival 2011 press launch at the Albert Town Community Centre last week that current circumstances dictated a revival of the festival. &ldquo;This is 11th staging, which means it has missed a couple years since its inception. But we have been compelled to have it. Compelled by a number of things. Firstly, the interest in the community to stage the event and have it here in Albert Town,&rdquo; he said. Albert Town businessman Hugh &lsquo;Senator&rsquo; Grant pledged the south Trelawny business community's support for the event. &ldquo;On behalf of Albert Town and others (in the business community) I would like to say welcome back to the Trelawny Yam Festival. We the members of the business community wholeheartedly support and stand by the Trelawny Yam Festival, and we will double our support this year and in the years to come,&rdquo; Grant said. &ldquo;You know every morning you wake up now, when you turn on the television or you turn on your radio, if you hear about Trelawny all you hear about is the port (new Falmouth Cruise Pier). I wonder sometimes what happen to southern Trelawny, the hills,&rdquo; Grant added. In expressing gratitude to all those who contributed to the sponsorship of the event, Dixon noted that \$1.5-million of the \$2-million budgeted, is already in place. More support would be welcomed, he said. The Trelawny Yam Festival evolved from a successful small fund-raising event put on by STEA on Labour Day 1997 in Albert Town. &ldquo;As we reviewed what happened that day we came up with what now is a set of goals. The festival seeks to promote the consumption of yams, provide exposure to Trelawny's Cockpit Country and hopefully encourage investments in valuable bi-products of yam that can improve prosperity of the area,&rdquo; Dixon explained. A series of celebratory events will lead up to the grand climax on Easter Monday in Albert Town. The series will kick off with Farmers&rsquo; Field Celebration in Dutch Hill on Tuesday, April 19. That will be followed by Trelawny Yam Queen Pageant inside the Albert Town High School auditorium on Thursday, April 24 and a 50K Cycle Race from Falmouth Square to Albert Town on Sunday, April 24.