INFORMATION SERVICES AND THE MEDIA

GIS’ government newsletter, CaymanSpirit, memorably became the voice of the post-Ivan national recovery effort. It provided updates on schools, utilities and other infrastructure, as well as important health and safety information.

In 2005 Grand Cayman’s twelve radio stations gave the island a vibrant music community, sponsoring concerts and events. Many of the stations keep costs low by being partially automated, using satellite network feeds during part of the day. Almost all also have websites and some webcast.

Government Information Services (GIS)
The official public relations and information office of the Cayman Islands Government, GIS disseminates information on government policies, programmes, services, regulations, laws and protocol. Several avenues are utilized for this purpose, both locally and overseas.

Liaison between Government Information Services and the local press is close, with GIS releases usually being carried by both print and electronic media. Releases are sometimes also picked up regionally and internationally. GIS’ work falls into three major categories: provision of public information, communications support for government, and press facilitation.

Responding to Information Requests
General information on every aspect of the Islands, from history to demography, to economic and commercial affairs, is researched and circulated on request. This service is offered to the public, the media and to other government bodies.

GIS responded to hundreds of telephone, fax, e-mail and in-person enquiries between January 2004 and June 2005. The unit’s information booklets are available on government’s portal at www.gov.ky thereby bringing frequently requested information into easy public reach.

The unit continues to assist several North American, European and Caribbean publishers by updating Cayman Islands data carried in their publications.

Press Releases and Public Service Announcements
GIS prepares and issues press releases for government ministries, departments and statutory bodies daily – over 1000 between January 2004 and June 2005. Releases cover events, accomplishments, developments, policies, programmes and other topics. All appear on the home page of the government portal at www.gov.ky. GIS also produces public service announcements and advertisements that feature government policies and programmes. Broadcast media frequently assist by carrying these free of cost.

Publications
Another GIS function is to produce government publications, doing research, copy writing, photography, editing and design, right through to “camera-ready” layout.

Publications include the:
• Cayman Islands Annual Report which, for the first time in 2003, was also made available on CD;
• Cayman Islands Gazette and its supplements, the fortnightly official publication of government that includes laws, bills and regulations, as well as private legal notices. In 2004, 26 regular and 34 extraordinary issues were published, while between January and June 2005, 13 regular and 22 extraordinary issues of the Gazette were published;
• “… in the Cayman Islands” a series of information booklets, primarily geared to persons overseas. These include:
  - Opening a Business…,
  - Regulations for Entry…,
  - Living…,
  - Acquisition of Permanent Residency Status…,
  - Immigration Controls Governing Work…,
  - Getting Married…;
• Government and Community Calendar, outlining public happenings and giving details of religious, service club, sports and social activities, was maintained during the reporting period via weekly updates posted on the government portal.

Graphics
GIS further assists government departments in producing brochures, pamphlets, posters, and other material. Between January 2004 and June 2005, the unit designed and produced graphic material for such agencies as Health Services (Blood Drive); Vehicle Licensing (new driver’s licence design); the Attorney General (Annual Report); the Women’s Resource Centre (Women’s Day promotions); the National Hurricane Committee (Cayman Prepared material, including its website and Hurricane Information Kit); and the Ministry of Education (Education Conference 2005). The art director was also responsible for the layout of the interim newsletter, CaymanSpirit, which served as a vital civil service communication nucleus in the difficult post-Hurricane Ivan months.

On the Web
GIS collects, enters and maintains information on the government’s portal, www.gov.ky. Press releases produced by GIS take centre stage on the home page of the portal and over 1,000 were entered between January 2004 and June 2005. The unit also entered over 300 releases generated by other departments (the RCIPS being the largest contributor) as well as speeches and coverage of local issues that appeared on a section of the portal programmed to allow documents more time on the home page.

“Local Issues” housed weekly updates of the Government and Community Calendar and monthly updates of the Cayman Brac and Little Cayman Community Calendar and again contained the latest documents on Constitutional modernisation and human rights in the Overseas Territories, as well as the Schools’ Inspectorate’s summary reports.

The most important item, post-Ivan, was the Government Directory. Many government offices moved to temporary locations, some more than once; personnel used cell phones until land lines were restored, and office hours were frequently reduced to achieve balance in home and office recovery. The directory was updated several times weekly, keeping the public apprised of locations, government offices’ hours, and contact information.

GIS’ internet, graphics and news and features sections collaborated on an e-newsletter, CaymanSpirit. This post-Ivan publication carried all the week’s government news, and it was printed, emailed, and posted on its own website. Hard copies were provided free and were distributed to shelters, grocery stores, and to members of the Cayman Islands Ministers Association for distribution to their congregants. On the website, users could subscribe to the email version. Although CaymanSpirit is currently not being published, all 24 issues remain available at www.caymanspirit.gov.ky.

During hurricane season, GIS enters severe weather bulletins on government’s weather site, accessed through gov.ky. In 2004, the National Hurricane Committee and GIS issued 27 advisories for Hurricane Charley and another 27 for Hurricane Ivan, all of which were placed on www.gov.ky/weather (in the case of Ivan, prior to the hurricane impacting Grand Cayman).

Electronic Media Service
During 2004, GIS’ video unit completed the hour-long Official Quincentennial Celebrations video The Year of Our Celebration and oversaw its release on VHS video and DVD—the unit’s first major release on DVD format.

Throughout the review period, staff continued to provide video news releases (VNRS), as well as additional footage for airing during local and overseas TV broadcasts. Television and radio products were created for clients, including the National Parenting Program, Cay-
man Airways, the Department of Agriculture, CINICO, Vote 2004 and the Hon. Leader of Government Business (footage incorporated into his televised Hong Kong interview).

Electronic media staff also worked on several long-form presentations during the period. One such, The Changing of the Watch for the Cayman Islands Shipping Registry/MACI, saw them traveling to several European locations to videotape activities and interviews. Other video projects included a marketing presentation featuring the Sister Islands, the Queen’s Birthday Honors, and live video support for the Department of Lands & Survey’s launch of its new web site.

Public Information Campaigns
GIS devises, develops and executes educational, informational and publicity campaigns to promote government programmes, with staff utilizing audio-visual and print resources to produce a range of support material. The unit also produces and disseminates press releases, arranges press conferences, co-ordinates public gatherings and arranges media coverage.

In the review period (January 2004 to June 2005), publicity and information campaigns were undertaken to support several initiatives including the National Parenting Programme; post-Hurricane Ivan communication initiatives, such as His Royal Highness the Earl of Wessex’s special post-Ivan visit (initiated by Prince Edward himself); NHC’s hurricane preparedness, and the National Roads Authority’s roundabouts and traffic calming devices. In addition, the unit continued to promote such annual events as the Week of Older Persons, Child Month, the Week of the Young Child, National Children’s Festival of the Arts (modified in 2005 due to the effects of Ivan), Schools Mathematics Fair, Earth Week, World AIDS Day and STD Awareness Week.

Several community organizations, including the Scouts Association, CASA, the Agricultural Society and the Red Cross, also continued to benefit from GIS’ publicity assistance.

In June 2004 GIS again organised the National Hurricane Committee’s exhibit at the CITN Home and Garden showcase. Visual displays from the Meteorological Office stimulated lively interaction with visitors, as did contributions from the PWD (building models), the private sector (hurricane shutters) and the Red Cross (emergency first aid kits).

Press Facilitation and Communication Support for Government
In addition to providing direct information to the public, GIS liaises between government and local or overseas media. Facilitating communication between the two during national events or emergencies remains a pivotal role. Such liaison includes:
- briefing the press on arrangements and procedures;
- responding to press requests for information and for contact with government officials;
- issuing press advisories on imminent government functions and events;
- arranging press conferences and briefings;
- arranging photo opportunities; and,
- organizing and manning press stations at national events or scenes of large-scale emergencies.

The department issued over 100 advisories during the review period, inviting the press to cover government meetings and events. In June 2004, an alert for Tropical Storm Arlene enabled GIS to put in practice the emergency response procedures that the unit developed for the Education & Warning Committee of the National Hurricane Committee.

GIS continued to counsel government departments on press relations and to provide other forms of support, including:
- advising senior government personnel on effective media communication;
- writing speeches for senior government officials;
- providing advance publicity for government programmes and events;
- recording national events and taking photographs of government and other public officials; and
- providing media and related communications training.

Hurricane Ivan
For GIS, Hurricane Ivan meant previously unimaginable challenges—as well as opportunities. As the storm approached, videographers were assigned to the National Hurricane Committee (NHC) headquarters and the NHC granted complete access to its activities. As a result remarkable behind-the-scenes video coverage of the committee coming to grips with a worst-case hurricane scenario was obtained. Throughout the storm, its effects
on those sheltered and working in the fire station were documented, as well as efforts to provide for the safety of island residents. As Ivan began to move away, video staff rode with first-response police and fire teams, documenting scenes of devastation.

Staff also accompanied United Nations, International Red Cross and Cayman Islands Government officials on an aerial survey of Grand Cayman; the videotapes would later be analyzed by damage assessment experts. Footage of damage and recovery efforts also went to the James Lee Witt Company and to ministries and agencies in the UK. Staff also acted as liaison for international media such as the Associated Press, TV Martinique and CHTV (Canada). Much of the footage shot during and after Ivan was later used in the GIS/CITN television production 36 Hours in September: The Hurricane Ivan Story.

Events were equally hectic and dramatic for the remainder of GIS staff—the unit operated out of NHC headquarters throughout the storm, with a skeleton staff of two writers and a videographer attending NHC meetings and writing releases containing the most accurate local information for both local and overseas media.

Post-Ivan responsibilities escalated and GIS became the information hub for the NHC and for government. Officers continued to attend official meetings and provide updates as well as to write messages for the Governor and government departments. Staff provided liaison services for the NHC and other officials and arranged media interviews and assisted the airlines and Immigration Department by gathering data from would-be visitors, in keeping with emergency travel restrictions.

For weeks post-Ivan, GIS continued to update the media on recovery efforts, particularly via CaymanSpirit (which went online on 24 October 2004). The newsletter became the voice of the national recovery effort and provided updates on schools, utilities and other infrastructure, as well as important health and safety information.

Radio Cayman
Radio Cayman has been providing quality broadcast services to the Cayman Islands community for the past 30 years. Established in 1976, the station operates 24 hours, seven days weekly, from studios at Broadcasting House in George Town. There are two broadcast services: Radio Cayman I, which airs mainly news, information, community, religious and cultural affairs, in addition to music, and Radio Cayman II, with a format of mostly music and news.

Although Hurricane Ivan destroyed part of Radio Cayman’s broadcast infrastructure, the station was able to return to the air within some 32 hours. Radio Cayman was the only broadcast entity among eight stations that was able to service the communications needs of the community during that period. Future plans are to enhance the operations facilities.

Newscasts are aired 12 times daily on weekdays and seven times per day on weekends. Other programming includes audience participation features and live remote broadcasts of significant events occurring in the Islands. Examples include the State Opening of the Legislative Assembly and HM Queen Elizabeth II’s Birthday Parade. Delayed broadcasts of legislative proceedings on the evening of each sitting provide an important means of keeping residents in touch with government.

Radio Cayman I broadcasts on Grand Cayman on 89.9FM 3KW and on Cayman Brac and Little Cayman on 93.9FM 3KW. Radio Cayman II broadcasts on 105.3FM 5KW on Grand Cayman and on 91.9FM 3KW on the Sister Islands.

Email radio@radiocayman.gov.ky
Stream on the web: www.radiocayman.gov.ky (click RC1 listen live)
Tel: (345) 949-7799 Fax: (345) 949-6536

Other Government Communications Activities
The Department of Tourism (DOT) and Government-owned Cayman Airways (CAL) meet their own public relations and press needs through internal PR units and through firms in North America and the UK. The Cayman Islands Investment Bureau administers marketing initiatives which serve to heighten international awareness of Cayman’s financial services. The Royal Cayman Islands Police Service press office issues daily police reports and releases on other police activities. The Health Services and Civil Aviation authorities and the Portfolio of Economics and Finance employ public relations officers to handle media relations, write and issue press releases and make other media arrangements.
Independent Media

Newspapers

The Caymanian Compass, launched in 1965 as the Caymanian Weekly, is published Monday to Friday by Cayman Free Press Ltd. (CFP) It is also available online at www.caycompass.com.

CFP Magazines and Periodicals: Cayman Free Press also publishes the Cayman Islands Journal, Key to Cayman, Map and Visitors Guide, and InsideOut, as well as other regular colour supplements. The Cayman Islands Journal is a monthly business broadsheet and CFP also operates the newly-launched www.cayjournal.com providing an online version of the broadsheet and further acting as a portal for business, finance and tourism-related information for the Cayman Islands. Key to Cayman, now in its 16th year of publication, vividly portrays Cayman as both a tourist resort and an international financial centre. Issued biannually, it is distributed free, as is the annually-issued Map and Visitors Guide. InsideOut, a biannual publication and Cayman’s only home and living magazine, is in its fifth year of publication. It also is distributed free on-island.

Tourist Publications (Cayman) Ltd., also owned by CFP, describes What’s Hot magazine as a “free monthly events information” publication that appeals to both tourists and residents. The company also annually publishes What to Do in Cayman, and Cayman Ashore.

Cayman Net News, now in its sixth year of publication, is a colour tabloid published six days a week. In addition it is posted on the web at www.caymannetnews.com.

The Cayman Observer is the first weekly business newspaper to be published in the Cayman Islands, bringing together news coverage and feature stories on issues relevant to businesses and the Cayman Islands community at large. The Cayman Observer also provides ‘Observer Newsflash’ which provides daily breaking news stories delivered via email. The newspaper is also available online at www.caymanobserver.com.

Other Magazines and Periodicals

Appearing six times yearly, Cayman Horizons, the official in-flight magazine of Cayman Airways, has been published by Progressive Publications Ltd. since 1983.

Destination Cayman is produced annually by the UK-based Ralston Publications Ltd., working in conjunction with a local marketing firm.

Broadcast Media

Radio

ICCI-FM, the first radio station in the Cayman Islands, went on the air in 1973. Non-commercial, it serves as a training site for broadcasting students of the International College of the Cayman Islands. The studio and the college campus in Newlands suffered severe damage from Hurricane Ivan. Classrooms and administrative offices are once again open, but fans are still waiting for 101.1 to reappear on their radio dials.

Z99.9FM began broadcasting in 1992. The station offers 24-hour music programming -- current and classic popular rock, Caribbean, rap, and hip-hop — to listeners on Grand Cayman, plus local and international news.

Heaven 97 began broadcasting during 1997. A commercial station airing on 97.7FM, “Heaven” offers round-the-clock contemporary Christian music, spiritual and local information and news. Recently the same company put Gospel 88.7 on the air for listeners that favour the classics.

Vibe 98.9FM follows an urban Caribbean music format and strives to appeal to the 25-45 age group by airing specialty shows comprising jazz, Latin, oldies/retro, gospel and club formats. Vibe prides itself on being a community-oriented station and makes every effort to support community events.

Ocean 95.5 started broadcasting in late December 2001. The automated station is on the air 24x7x365 and targets the stay-over tourist audience with hit music from the past 40 years.

Rooster 101 premiered in 2002, feeds Cayman’s love of country music and is home to a popular morning call-in show.

Style 96.5FM started broadcasting in July 2004. The station is heard on Grand Cayman and broadcasts around the clock. It features a wide range of music and focuses on promoting local issues.

dms Broadcasting Ltd. burst onto Cayman’s air waves on 11 April 2005 with the launch of its three radio stations: KISS 106.1 FM, HOT 104.1 FM, and X 107.1 FM. KISS 106.1, a VH1 affiliate, showcases current adult music and the most requested gold tracks from the ‘70s, ‘80s,
‘90s, and today. HOT 104.1, a BET affiliate, plays an eclectic mix of Reggae, Soca, and Calypso music. X 107.1, an MTV affiliate, airs contemporary hit music, featuring artists like Beyoncé, Gwen Stefani, 50 Cent, Eminem and Usher.

The National Weather Service in cooperation with the National Hurricane Committee operates a dedicated weather channel on 107.9 FM. This station provides a continuous feed of the weather forecast for the Cayman Islands and when necessary public weather warnings, specifically those concerning hurricanes.

Television
There are six broadcast television channels received by residents of Grand Cayman.

Entertainment, news and sports can be found on Cayman 27, owned by CITN (Cayman International Television Network), and Island 24, owned by CTS (Cayman Television Service). CITN went on the air in 1992, and CTS in 1993.

Three channels provide religious programming; one transmits programming from the U.S.-based Trinity Broadcasting Network, the second is administered by the Cayman Islands Mission of Seventh-day Adventists and the third by the Roman Catholic Church.

The sixth channel, Discover Cayman, is an entertainment and activity guide for both visitors and residents.

Weststar TV Ltd. operates a microwave relay cable TV subscription service. The company offers a basic 36-channel package of U.S. network entertainment, news (including the BBC), movie, cartoon, music, information, and sports channels that also includes the six local channels. Dedicated TV viewers may select, and pay more for, several different packages that offer, for example, more sports or more movies or more family channels. Satellite dishes and tape clubs also provide viewing fare.