



CONNECTING HOMES IMPROVING LIVES

Friday, September 19, 2014

Connecting Homes, Improving Lives Launched

An official launch ceremony was held on Thursday, September 18 for the *Connecting Homes, Improving Lives* project, an initiative geared at improving the quality of life of Belizeans via the installation of 1,000 free service entrance connections for low-income Belizean households. A service entrance is the basic infrastructure required for getting safe and proper connection to power supply from Belize Electricity Limited (BEL).

Connecting Homes, Improving Lives arose out of a tripartite venture in 2011 between the European Union (EU), the Government of Belize (GOB) and BEL with a grant contract funding the electrification of over 40 rural communities in the country through the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of Countries (ACP) – EU Energy Facility II Grant Funds. At the end of the process, more than half of residents were unable to take advantage of the electrification in their community, as they could not afford the cost of installing a service entrance, which normally runs from \$800 to \$1,200 dollars.

The EU has since approved the use of remaining funds from the electrification project for the installation of up to 850 service entrances with BEL financing the additional 150.

At the launch ceremony, Ambassador of the European Union to Belize, Paola Amadei, expressed the EU's satisfaction with the efficiency with which BEL implemented the Energy Facility II electrification project, which resulted in sufficient savings which is now providing additional benefits to low income households.

With the assistance of the Ministry of Rural Development, BEL developed a recipient criteria that will allow for a balanced selection of households to receive these service entrance installations. BEL invites Belizeans who cannot afford a service entrance, to apply for a free installation by visiting any BEL office. Applications will be reviewed to determine those that meet the criteria.

The launch ceremony was held on the morning of Thursday, September 18, in Camalote Village, Cayo District at the home of Mark Andrews and his family of ten.



European Union Ambassador to Belize, Paola Amadei, switching on service connection.



Recipients of service entrance connection with BEL Senior Manager, EU Ambassador and Minister of Rural Development.