

# JNBS to foster revival in rural parishes

**T**HE JAMAICA National Building Society (JNBS), through its Foundation, is seeking to create an environment where economic opportunities for persons living in the rural parishes can be realised.

In outlining the plan, Earl Jarrett, general manager of JNBS, identified Westmoreland as the parish where the building society's planned process of 'regeneration' will begin.

"Based on the last population census in 2001, Westmoreland showed a negative population growth," Mr. Jarrett said. "People are migrating from the parish and as a result, there are less women than men and there is now a shift towards a male-based population in the parish."

Mr. Jarrett was speaking recently at an investment forum hosted by JN Fund Managers Limited at the Negril Hills Golf Club in Sheffield,

Westmoreland. He also noted that in light of the migration problem, which was just one of many problems in rural parishes, the JNBS Foundation was committed to doing three things.

Firstly, he advised that the foundation would create an opportunity for the parish by advocating for the things that are necessary to create jobs that can support healthy and

productive livelihood within the parish.

Secondly, Mr. Jarrett disclosed that the Foundation would be putting forward a Challenge Grant to enable community-based organisations, which come up with sustainable economic projects "which can create new jobs and influence growth and development within communities to be given a push start."

In the parish of Westmoreland, two projects have been selected for this grant. They are the Westmoreland Street People's Association (WASP) Skills Training and Craft Manufacturing Project, which provide skills training and occupational therapy for residents. The grant will be used to develop a craft centre at the shelter, which would generate funds for maintenance of the shelter.

The second project is the

Savanna-la-Mar Communities Youth Courier Service, a project of the Jamaica Constabulary Force Community Relations Department, Westmoreland Division, and the Police Youth Clubs, which will provide income for 10-15 'youth at risk' through a bicycle courier express delivery service, which will be expanded.

## RESEARCH

Additionally, annual post-graduate scholarships will be provided for students to do solutions-oriented research on rural-related activities such as farming, tourism or agriculture. The first awardees under this programme are Dwayne Vernon of the University of the West Indies and Elvis Byfield of the University of Technology.

Within the context of advocacy, Mr. Jarrett said the JNBS Foundation had spearheaded the launch of the 'Youth Zoom' High School Photographic Competition in association with the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC). "This will ensure the input of young people in identifying and highlighting achievement and problems in the parish," Mr. Jarrett noted.

The first set of awardees were Shawnette Linton of the Godfrey Stewart High School for 'Best Impression of the Problem Chosen' award with her entry "Garbage Pollution"; Shauna-Lee Burgess of Manning's High for 'Most Creative and Original Photograph' for 'Writing on the Wall, Graffiti in My School' and Cassandra Stephenson of Knockalva Technical High School in Hanover for 'The Best Presentation' for her depiction of 'Improper Garbage Disposal on My Community'.

The JNBS Foundation was established in July 1990 to complement the activities of the Society.