

# MARATHON BAHAMAS EYEING \$2.6M IMPACT

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• Organisers anticipate 1,900 room nights generated  
• Marathon, Susan G. Komen participants up 13% and  
100% respectively

**MARATHON** Bahamas organisers yesterday projected that visiting runners and their relatives will generate roughly 1,900 room nights, and inject \$2.6 million into the economy.

Shelly Wilson, the Sunshine Insurance vice-president of operations, and a Marathon Bahamas director, said the number of registrants for the marathon events at December 31, 2014, was 13 per cent up year-over-year.

"That's been predominantly driven by international participants. We are happy to say that the largest growth

area of international participants this year is the marathon, which is the full 26.2 mile event. That speaks to the international community seeing this as a real race," Mrs Wilson said.

"Normally we have about 40-45 per cent international participation in that event. Our international participants are predominately from the US, and then Canada. The US participants are usually from the eastern seaboard where direct flights make the Bahamas an ideal choice

"It is also the Martin Luther King holiday in the United States, which is an added benefit to the US participants and, of course, with Canada there are several direct flights on a weekly basis from Toronto.

"We still have participation from other countries such as Turks & Caicos, Germany - which we have consistently seen participation from - and countries like Brazil, France, Finland, Great Britain and this year, even as far as Qatar. There are roughly 20 different countries so far who

will be represented, including the Bahamas."

Mrs Wilson said organisers were projecting roughly 1,900 room nights. "We are anticipating revenues of about \$2.6 million that these persons will be injecting into the Bahamian economy during that weekend, and we know that January is usually a very challenging month for us," she added.

Marathon Bahamas is in its sixth year, while the Susan G. Komen Bahamas Race for the Cure is now in its fifth year. Mrs Wilson said that at December 31, registered participants for that event were up 100 per cent year-over-year.

The 3.1 mile run/walk is scheduled for January 17 at

Jam, beginning at Montagu Beach. "The 5 kilometre race is predominately a race made up of local participants," Mrs Wilson explained. "We are projecting, and hoping to have, more than 2,500 participants for the Susan G Komen Race for the Cure this year.

"Registration for that race tends to peak during the three days before the race. It is a professionally-timed race for those interested in getting their time, but we tend to focus more on it as a family event where corporate entities, church groups form teams really to walk or run to commemorate someone who has either lost their battle with breast cancer, is in remission or is a survivor."

Marathon Bahamas con-

sist of three events - the 26.2 mile marathon, the 13.1 mile half marathon and the four person relay marathon, with each of the four persons covering six to seven miles of the entire 26.2 mile course, which will begin at Junkanoo Beach.

Right now it is the banner running event. Sunshine Insurance, Marathon Bahamas is in a partnership with the Ministry of Tourism. We could not do what we do and have that reach without the Ministry of Tourism. With that ongoing partnership we are very hopeful that this will continue to be the banner running/sports tourism event. Would we would like to see the event doubled? Absolutely," said Mrs Wilson.