



Archaeologist Jay Haviser and Chris Velasquez visited several heritage sites in Puerto Rico, including Fort El Morro in Old San Juan.

Archaeology Congress to be hosted by St. Maarten and Anguilla in 2015

SAN JUAN--St. Maarten, St. Martin and Anguilla are to be the multinational venue for the largest gathering of Caribbean archaeologists in the region in 2015.

St. Maarten Archaeological Centre Simarc representatives archaeologist Jay Haviser and archaeologist-in-training Chris Velasquez attended the 25th International Congress for Caribbean Archaeology IACA in Puerto Rico last week and finalised the confirmation for the 2015 IACA Congress to be held here.

IACA is the primary organisation for specific Caribbean archaeological specialists to share new research information and network on regional projects and developments in archaeology.

Generally at about 250-300 professionals attend these IACA Congresses, representing more than 20 countries. All 100 papers presented at the IACA Congresses are translated simultaneously into English, French and Spanish.

The 2015 congress will be the first ever multinational one for IACA. The secretariat office for the 2015 IACA will be the Simarc office in Madame Estate with Haviser as chairman. Staff for the organisational committee includes Velas-

quez and Elsie Bosch of St. Maarten National Museum.

Velasquez is a St. Maarten and former Simarc student who currently is studying archaeology at City University of New York (Brooklyn College). He is expected to complete his studies around 2015, when he will come back and work at Simarc.

The 2015 IACA Congress is to be held at Sonesta Maho Beach Resort and Casino, and will have five days of professional paper presentations during the week of July 19-25.

Dr. Dominique Bonnisent of INRAP will guide a full-day excursion on the French side to see archaeological sites as part of the programme. Dr. John Crook of Vermont University will guide a full-day excursion to Anguilla to see important archaeological sites there. Various cultural events also are scheduled during the week.

The 2015 IACA Congress has acquired the support and/or financial commitment of the Dutch side, French side and Anguilla governments, University of St. Martin, Leiden University, Prins Bernhard Culture Funds, and the Anguilla Tourism Bureau thus far. It is hoping for a committee

ment from the St. Maarten Tourism Bureau as well.

Partial sponsorship of this recent trip to IACA Puerto Rico was contributed by the Lions Club of St. Maarten.

In direct positive response to the recent call from Prime Minister Sarah Wescot-Williams for more international congresses in St. Maarten, Simarc actively is making this a reality, Haviser said on Monday.

"Hosting the internationally renowned IACA Congress on our islands not only provides significant economic benefits to tourism, but more importantly it shows the world that we are at the cutting edge of new research and advancement in heritage studies of our islands and the broader Caribbean," he said.

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