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Alliance forming to aid Bahamian businesses with saving energy

■ **By NEIL HARTNELL**
Tribune Business Editor

A US consultant who works with Kerzner International and Bacardi on reducing energy costs yesterday said his company was seeking a distributor in this nation, having already formed an alliance with contractors and Scotia-bank (Bahamas) to provide a one-stop shop for the auditing, financing and installation

of energy-saving systems.

Bob Granger, of IMC Northeast, told a Bahamas Hotel Association (BHA) workshop on energy conservation that the company was "very close" to signing up a distributor for its products and services in this nation.

He added: "We're working with some local companies to

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become our distributor, we have some contractors and have a local bank working with us."

Mr Granger said Bahamian hotels and businesses "have to start easing the pain" caused by spiralling global oil prices, which have prompted high gasoline and electricity costs, by generating savings through being more energy efficient.

He pointed out that electricity rates in the Bahamas were, on average, twice as high as those in the US state of New York.

Mr Granger suggested that the Bahamas consider adopting a similar programme to that state, which financed a New York State Energy Research and Development Authority through a 0.01 per cent charge levied on every kilowatt of electricity purchased.

This Authority then provided financing, through grants, loans and rebates, to enable companies to upgrade their systems, become energy efficient and relieve the pressure on the electricity grid.

When it was engaged on a project, IMC Northeast first conducted an energy audit, assessing a facility's total running load, including motor

load, lighting and hot water.

Mr Granger detailed a project IMC Northeast had performed for a nursing home, which wanted to reduce the \$47,000 per year electricity costs it was incurring from its

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— Bob Granger

common areas. When the IMC upgrade was completed, those costs had come down to \$19,000 per year.

Meanwhile, Robert Farmer, president of Third Planet, a non-profit private operating foundation that specialises in

education, training and public awareness outreach on the world's energy and climate future, urged Bahamian hoteliers to develop a collective voice on issues such as energy policies, global warming and rising sea levels.

He told the BHA seminar: "The owners [of hotels] have to buy into the concept of sustainability."

To reduce their energy costs, Bahamian businesses had to first focus on energy conservation and eliminating waste from their existing systems, before moving on to energy efficiency and, finally, to renewable and alternative sources of energy.

Mr Farmer pointed out that the current level of oil prices, and the likelihood they would increase further, had created an opportunity for hoteliers to develop a collective voice, with a criteria and action plan.

Mr Farmer also suggested that the Bahamas amend legislation governing electricity in this nation, and pointed out that organisations such as the European Union (EU) were insisting that Caribbean nations develop national energy policies in return for aid.