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WAPA Warns of Continued Power Rotations in St. Thomas and St. John Due to Repair Complications

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The Randolph Harley Powerplant in St. Thomas, USVI on May 31, 2023. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

The V.I. Water and Power Authority has released an update to the community regarding the recent rotational power outages affecting the St. Thomas and St. John districts. The temporary interruptions in electrical service occurred as a result of complications that arose during repair work conducted over the weekend on a main transmission line, WAPA said Monday afternoon. This line feeds power from the Randolph Harley Power Plant primarily to customers on the eastern side of St. Thomas and St. John.

Background of the Issue

During construction work on Saturday, September 16, a duct bank, a container used for protecting utility lines and cables, was punctured. The electrical cable inside the duct bank was damaged, affecting Feeder 13, a primary cable responsible for delivering power from the Randolph Harley Power Plant to the Tutu Substation, according to WAPA.

WAPA's power generation starts at the Randolph Harley Power Plant (RHPP) on St. Thomas. The electricity is distributed through two major active transmission feeders—Feeder 12 and Feeder 13. Due to the current damage to Feeder 13, WAPA has had to rely solely on Feeder 12 to support the majority of the electrical load in the St. Thomas/St. John District, the authority said.

Current Impact and Rotation Schedule

The damage has led to an inability for Feeder 12 to meet the demands of all customers serviced outside of the Power Plant. As a result, power rotations have been implemented. Only feeders labeled "B, C, and E" are currently being serviced by Feeder 12 while repairs to Feeder 13 are ongoing.

The rotation schedule for Monday, September 18, 2023, for the St. Thomas and St. John districts is as follows:

- Rotation #1 (5am-7am)
 - Outage: 7B & 9E
 - Restored: 10B & 9C
- Rotation #2 (7am-9am)
 - Outage: 7E & 7C
 - Restored: 9E & 7B
- Rotation #3 (9am-11am)
 - Outage: 10B & 9C
 - Restored: 7E & 7C
- Rotation #1 (11am-1pm)
 - Outage: 7B & 9E
 - Restored: 10B & 9C
- Rotation #2 (1pm-3pm)
 - Outage: 7E & 7C
 - Restored: 9E & 7B
- Rotation #3 (3pm-5pm)
 - Outage: 10B & 9C
 - Restored: 7E & 7C

Ongoing Efforts and Community Response

Despite ongoing efforts to repair Feeder 13, the feeder continues to trip, indicating that there is additional, as yet unidentified, damage. The community should anticipate an ongoing power rotation schedule until the issue is fully resolved.

WAPA acknowledged the frustration and inconvenience caused by these outages and appreciates the community's patience during this challenging period.