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\$10 Million For Jets Deal? Try Less Than \$1 Million Annually, Bryan Reveals; Says Tourism Slowdown 'Scares Me'

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Governor Albert Bryan Jr. is defending recent partnerships with Major League Baseball teams, which says cost far less than public speculation would have it.

In a recent exclusive interview with the Consortium, Mr. Bryan said that he "listened to people talking pure crap on the radio" regarding a recent marketing partnership with the New York Jets. Rather than the \$10 million price tag that was being bandied about, the real figure is "less than a million dollars" annually, according to the governor, who says he is unable to disclose the exact amount due to confidentiality reasons. The agreement with the Jets is set for a duration of no more than three years, he revealed.

The reason the territory is establishing these partnerships — along with the Jets, marketing deals have been inked with the Chicago Cubs and Boston Red Sox as well — is to try to boost visibility for the USVI in these major cities. More interest from residents in east coast cities means more air connections between the territory and the U.S. eastern seaboard — arrangements Mr. Bryan says that will only benefit Virgin Islanders.

"The only way we can get those flights is if we boost the numbers coming from that area," said the governor. "So of course we're going to put money in that area in our advertising."

Governor Bryan says he is pleased with the deal, which will cost under \$3 million over its 3-year lifespan. These efforts to boost visibility, and ultimately arrivals, are necessary, the governor argued, especially in the face of a nationwide slump. "You go to Miami on a regular weekend, it's not as packed as it used to be during Covid," he said. "Here in the Virgin Islands, we have a Covid hangover as well, too."

Mr. Bryan was particularly concerned about his year's numbers. "This is the first September and October where the place is dead," he remarked, noting a dearth of tourists in downtown Christiansted and on St. Thomas. "We haven't had a slow period in about two years. That scares me," he admitted.

People that may have traveled to the USVI during the pandemic when border closures made international travel more difficult may now want to visit elsewhere, the governor said, noting that the territory is a relatively expensive destination, with average daily rates hovering between \$600 and \$700 a night, the governor said. "Our hoteliers have got to understand that we have got to make some concessions there as well."

The USVI, Governor Bryan says, is considering regional solutions. "We want to set up the Virgin Islands as a hub in the Caribbean. We've been working with the State Department to be part of CARICOM. I've visited several islands talking to dignitaries about it because I truly believe regional business is going to blow us up," he said, before returning to a familiar theme. "And then the other thing is we need the workforce. We need to figure out how do we get more people here from St. Kitts, Antigua, St. Lucia and Dominica."

Watch the entire interview with Governor Bryan [here](#).