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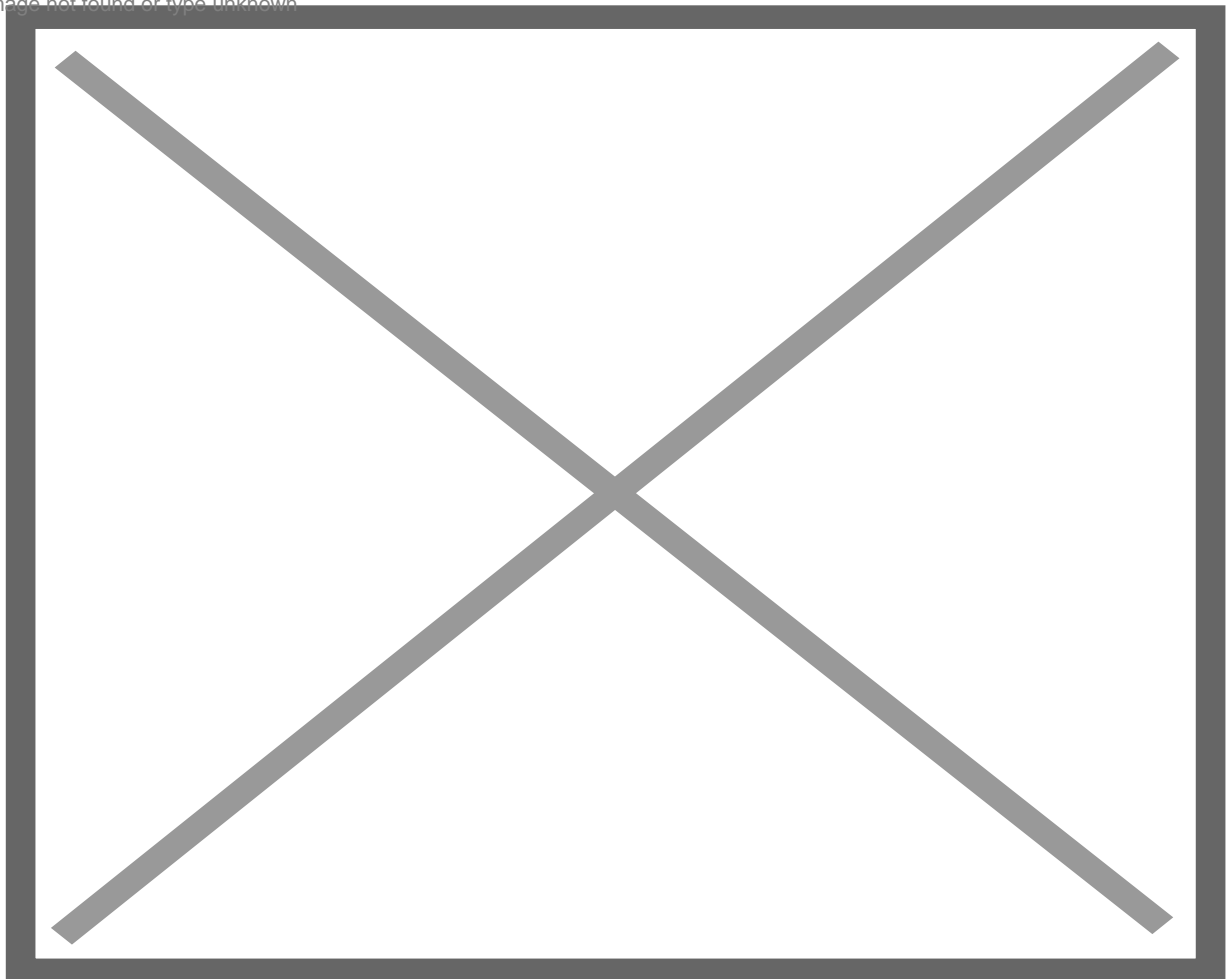
"Jump-Up!" Marred By State of Christiansted Roads: Patron Injured, Vendors Severely Impacted

Local community disappointed by unfulfilled road repair promises

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Jump Up! in Christiansted, St. Croix on Friday, Nov, 24, 2023. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

"There were vendors trying to set up tents in basically gutters." That was Laurie Hiron, owner of Gecko Boutique, speaking to public broadcaster WTJX about the road conditions experienced by those trying to earn a living during the first "Jump-Up!" in Christiansted for the season. "I know at least two vendors who made the decision not to even show up."

The shoddy state of the roadways also led to an injury during the Jump-Up event, according to Matt Ridgeway, chair of the Christiansted Retail & Restaurant Association. "We were disheartened to learn that one person...did fall and sustain injuries to their arm," he noted, adding,

"It's really unfortunate that we don't have a safe environment for ourselves and our visitors."

Sales during the Jump Up! event were lower than usual, said Mr. Ridgeway, reflecting less footfall than in previous years. "I think that people overall, they're reluctant and a little bit discouraged to come out to Christiansted right now."

Both Ms. Hirons and Mr. Ridgeway expressed disappointment that despite a stakeholder meeting a few weeks ago, where road contractor Marco St. Croix [promised a quick turnaround](#) once payment disputes were settled, nothing seems to have happened. "It's all just a crock. None of it's been fixed," Ms. Hirons told WTJX.

"I think that we deserve better," Mr. Ridgeway said, adding that the focus on ensuring tourist comfort and safety overlooked the needs of St. Croix residents and Virgin Islanders overall. He said that the problem wasn't just the roads in Christiansted. "It's lead in the water, it's 6000 gallons of diesel being spilled on St. Thomas destroying our environment. It's our schools, it's our hospitals."

With so much money available for recovery projects currently, Mr. Ridgeway said that it was time for islanders to band together, seeking accountability from one another, and finding ways to complete the myriad territory-building projects successfully and on-time. Otherwise, "our children will never forgive us for missing this opportunity," he declared.

Mr. Ridgeway told WTJX that a meeting had been scheduled for this week between himself and Waste Management Authority officials to discuss the status of the Christiansted road paving project, which has been [frustrating residents and business owners](#) for years.