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Governor Bryan's 2024 State of the Territory Address: Key Highlights and Future Plans

Governor Bryan's vision for USVI includes ongoing major infrastructure and recovery efforts

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Governor Albert Bryan, Jr. delivers his sixth State of the Territory Address as the 9th Elected Governor of the USVI. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

Governor Albert Bryan Jr.'s sixth State of the Territory Address was delivered on Monday evening before the 35th Legislature at the Earle B. Otley Legislative Building.

The governor covered a lot of familiar ground, mentioning various projects and programs in progress and eagerly anticipated, and also made some new pronouncements of particular interest to residents of the territory. Here are some of the highlights from his 2024 address.

- The national emergency declaration for St. Croix will expire on Tuesday, and along with it the “do not drink” advisory that was issued in October when alarming levels of lead and copper were found as part of an investigation into discolored drinking water. It has now been concluded that the initial results were borne out of improper testing methodology, as subsequent sampling yielded results in line with previous compliance testing that was done by WAPA.
- On the power side, HUD’s approval of WAPA’s application to acquire VITOL’s propane infrastructure, and completion of the transaction, is expected in the first quarter of this year. “I am fully committed to fixing WAPA and restoring its viability as a government agency,” Governor Bryan vowed.
- With WAPA’s Wartsila generators now running on diesel, the propane switchover is anticipated “later this year”, as is the attached 9 MW battery storage to smooth demand spikes.
- Disaster recovery projects will be grouped into billion-dollar bundles for procurement in order to firstly “attract some of the largest general contractors in the nation who can secure the necessary performance bonds on projects worth hundreds of millions of dollars,” according to the governor, while also resolving logistical and supply chain challenges and mitigating manpower and capacity issues. This initiative is called Rebuild USVI, and is expected to “create an ecosystem of economic activity from the resulting construction boom,” said Governor Bryan.
- The Clinton Phipps racetrack is set to host horse racing events as early as Carnival. “I will be giving out the Governor’s Cup at the Carnival Races this year,” promised Governor Bryan.
- Contractors are working to complete all 6 Head Start sites – Anna’s Hope, Concordia, Bolongo, Lindbergh Bay, Minettal Mitchell, and Cruz Bay – this year, having begun in August 2023. Funds are coming from a \$42 million disaster recovery grant.
- Several storm-damaged libraries will be reopening their doors this year – the Florence Williams facility in Christiansted as early as February, while the Athalie McFarlane Petersen Library in Frederiksted and the Charles W. Turnbull Library on St. Thomas will reopen later this year.
- Superior Court judge Harold Willocks [has been nominated](#) to the bench of the territory’s Supreme Court.

These key highlights, as well as other developments touched on by the governor during the 2024 State of the Territory Address, Governor Bryan says, are part of a comprehensive development plan to secure the territory’s future. In closing, he urged listening lawmakers to “work together to

connect our people with opportunities that are being produced right here at home.”

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