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Governor Bryan Initiates Annual Tourism Summit for USVI Industry Feedback

A post-season review aims to unite tourism stakeholders for a candid discussion on the territory's visitor experience

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Tourists at Coki Point Beach in St. Thomas, USVI. By. GETTY IMAGES

During Monday's press briefing, Governor Albert Bryan announced that the Department of Tourism will host a one-day summit that would serve as a debrief of sorts after the territory's tourism season. "We're looking at trying to create an annual tradition," said the governor.

"Any time you have a major event, you have a debrief – what you did, what was wrong, what was right, what could be better, how do we make things work more cohesively," he said, explaining that the idea was to bring together various industry stakeholders – transportation, lodging, food &

beverage, and excursion providers among them – to get feedback “from the proverbial horse’s mouth” about what visitors, on land and sea alike, have to say about the territory’s tourism product.

“For the most part, most of our industry leaders were talking about how great the Virgin Islands is doing and how great our tourism product is looking,” Governor Bryan said, contextualizing the tone of the discussions at the recently-concluded Seatrade convention at the Miami Beach Convention Center in Miami, Florida. However, he believes that a local summit would shape the feedback to directly address the USVI’s unique successes and challenges.

“I’m really putting the pressure on the Department of Tourism – Joe [Boschulte] and his team – to make this happen,” Governor Bryan said, adding that one outcome of the summit would be a list of action items for the executive branch, legislature, and the private sector to complete so that the next tourist season can build upon the successes of this year.

He noted that continuous improvement of the territory’s tourism product was a necessity, as the industry comprises 70 percent of the USVI’s economy.

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