

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Educational Complex Powers Up New Micro-Grid Solar Farm

New micro-grid project enhances energy independence with a capacity to save the school thousands in utility bills

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The new micro grid at the St. Croix Educational Complex. By. V.I. DEPT. OF EDUCATION

A micro-grid solar farm [begun last year](#) at the St. Croix Educational Complex is now complete, the V.I. Energy Office on Tuesday.

The occasion was marked with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, where Governor Albert Bryan Jr. hailed the micro-grid as a major achievement for territorial sustainability ambitions.

"This marks a big step toward continued leadership in energy efficiency throughout the Caribbean," the governor said. "This project paves the way for other micro-grids to be established across critical areas in the Virgin Islands, ensuring that education will not be disrupted by power outages. We are building a better tomorrow for future generations."

According to VI Energy Director Kyle Fleming, the micro-grid has a generation capacity of 150kW, with the ability to store 220kWh in its solar battery system. The aim is to provide backup energy generation to ensure that the emergency shelter sections of SCEC are all able to operate in the event of an outage.

"Systems like these are going to represent, more and more, critical infrastructure across the territory," Mr. Fleming said. "These will become normal at government facilities and critical community centers as we develop renewable energy and energy resiliency at our most critical facilities across the USVI."

Not only will the micro-grid farm provide backup energy for power interruptions, but it should provide ongoing savings by reducing the facility's reliance on power from the grid on a daily basis.

The solar power offsets the utility costs of the school every single day when the sun shines," said Mr. Fleming, referencing savings of between \$6000 to \$10,000 per month in utility costs.

Partial funding from the project came from a \$650,000 grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, earmarked for energizing insular communities. Similar projects to build out solar generation and storage capacity in communities will follow across the territory, after VIEO was awarded over \$60 million by the EPA this week to further its objectives under the "Solar for All" initiative.