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WAPA Completes Feeder 13 Repairs; Rotational Outages Persist Due to Offline Unit 23

Successful restoration efforts on Feeder 13 contrast with ongoing challenges as Unit 23 remains down for maintenance, affecting power supply stability

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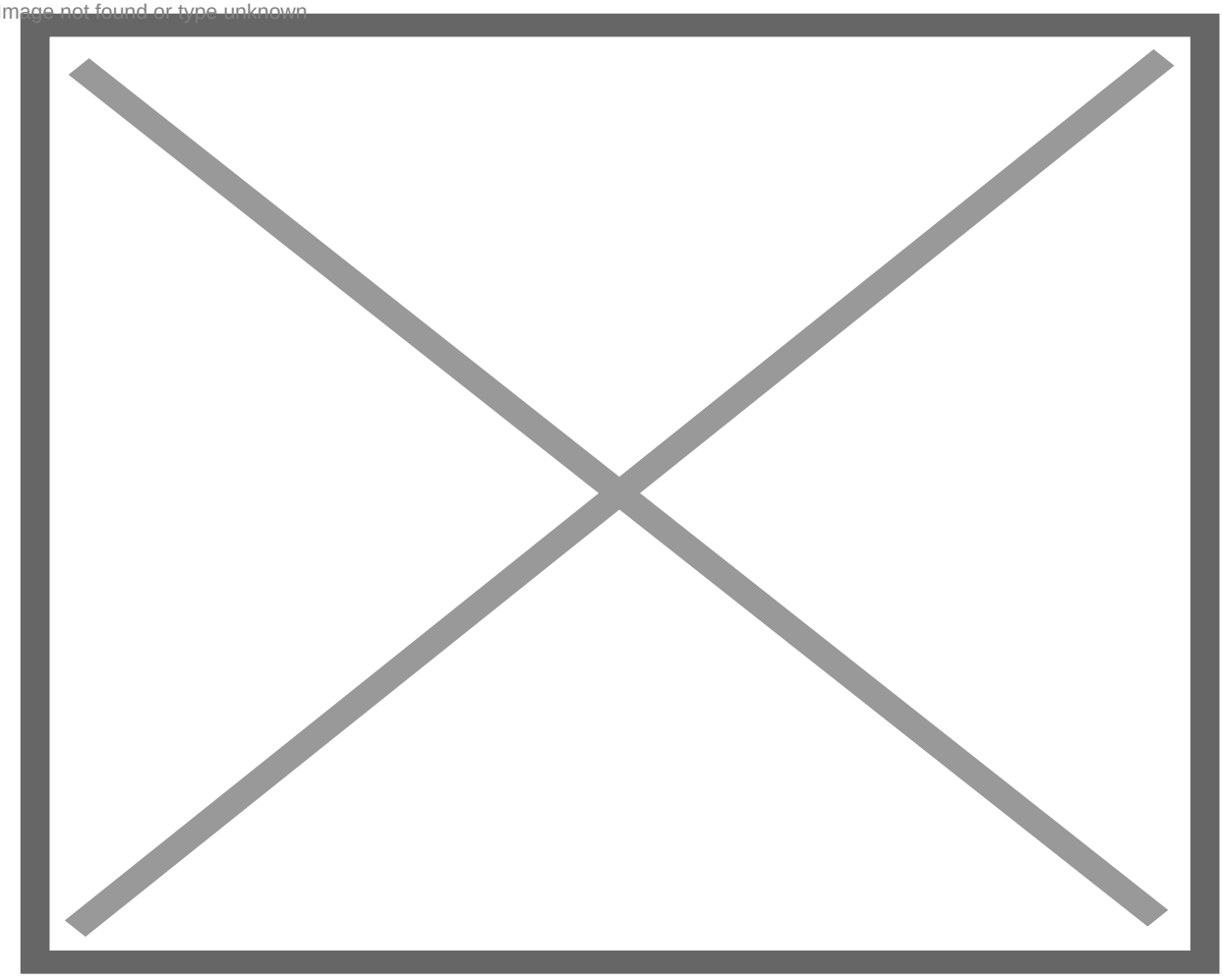

Unit 23 at the Randolph Harley Power Plant in St. Thomas, USVI. By. WAPA

The V.I. Water and Power Authority has announced the successful repair of Feeder 13, resolving issues caused by a damaged underground cable. The extensive repair efforts culminated last Friday evening, bringing relief to numerous affected customers in the St. Thomas-St. John district, WAPA said.

However, the joy of this achievement is tempered by the ongoing challenges posed by Unit 23, which remains offline. This has necessitated the continuation of rotational power outages, affecting various feeders and adding to the region's power instability.

The Feeder 13 repair operation involved WAPA's line department, transmission, and distribution teams, along with contractors Haugland VI and F&R Electric. Together, they undertook a meticulous process to inspect and test the approximately five-mile-long cable, which includes a two-mile underground segment with 29 manholes. This careful examination was essential to pinpoint the exact location of the fault and execute the necessary repairs, according to a release from WAPA.

The process was not without its challenges. As noted in a previous press release from WAPA, the heavy rainfall last week hindered progress by necessitating the pumping of water from the manholes, thereby prolonging the preparatory phase of the operation. However, the WAPA said it utilized a fault indicator system to effectively narrow down potential causes and reduce the scope of the investigation, which facilitated a more focused and efficient repair process.

"We sincerely understand the major inconvenience this situation caused and assure you that crews were committed to quickly and safely restoring power," stated WAPA.

Concurrently with the repairs to Feeder 13, WAPA said it faced additional challenges as Unit 23 at the power plant went offline last week for testing. This resulted in unexpected rotational outages affecting customers on Feeders 6A and 7A, who experienced intermittent two-hour electrical service interruptions due to the temporarily reduced generation capacity.

As of Monday, WAPA has reported that the Wartsila Phase 1 Unit 3 has completed regular maintenance and is back online, which has helped to somewhat alleviate the generation shortfall. However, an updated rotational outage schedule remains in effect for the St. Thomas/St. John district until Unit 23 is fully operational again. WAPA plant personnel are exploring two potential solutions to expedite the return of Unit 23, including the acquisition of a new Megawatt transducer.