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'Don't Stop the Carnival': Organizers Say Preparation (and Hand Sanitizer) is Key to a Safe Carnival Despite the Ongoing Concerns Over Coronavirus

Top Stories / **Published On March 07, 2020 05:50 AM /**

Robert Moore **March 07, 2020**

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Revelers participate in St. Thomas Carnival (VI Carnival) 2019. By. KAREEM ALEXANDER FOR VI CONSORTIUM

ST. THOMAS — The Division of Festivals Director Ian Turnbull said the carnival organizers are introducing a few new measure to ensure the safety of the thousands of revelers who will descend on St. Thomas for Carnival in April.

“One of the things we’ve started to do is we’ve actually bought some hand sanitizers that we can have placed in different events during festival,” said Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Turnbull said public service announcements will be used extensively to advise people on personal safety, hand-washing and other means of protecting yourself from the rapidly spreading virus. The division is relying heavily on its weekly radio program - airing at 2:30 p.m. on Wednesdays on WSTA to spread the word.

"If you want to come out to the events we're going to have hand sanitizers for everybody. We encourage the washing of hands, and put out information about the coronavirus through those PSAs," Mr. Turnbull said.

There were, as of Friday night, no known, confirmed cases of the virus in the territory.

Department of Tourism Commission Joseph Boschulte supplied some further reassurances that the public will be safe. "The government is in constant communications with our federal partners, stakeholders — airlines, cruise ships — to ensure that all of the necessary protocols are being followed," he said.

"From a tourism perspective, of course we are very concerned," Mr. Boschulte added. "But we are definitely diligent in making sure that all our employees and all our team are following the necessary protocols and we definitely have everybody staying aware.

"If — and possibly when — it (coronavirus) does make it into our region, we are doing everything to make sure it doesn't spread," Mr. Boschulte said.