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Governor Bryan to Announce Decision on Carnival, St. Patrick's Day Parade Friday Morning During Coronavirus Press Conference

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ST. CROIX — Governor Albert Bryan will announce his administration's decision on the upcoming St. Patrick's Day Parade, scheduled for Saturday on St. Croix, and Carnival VI activities, which consume most of April in St. Thomas, during a press conference on coronavirus scheduled for 9:00 a.m. Friday morning at Government House on St. Croix.

The Consortium will carry the press event live on its website and [Facebook platform](#).

The territory's leader — fresh from a trip to Florida where discussions were held with cruise ship executives relative to the coronavirus pandemic — made known his plans to the Consortium Thursday evening.

Concerns have been mounting in the community as the coronavirus has [penetrated the Caribbean](#), with Jamaica reporting its second case, Guyana reporting its first death, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines reporting its first case Wednesday. On Thursday, [Trinidad and Tobago reported its first case of the virus](#).

All across America, local officials are banning large public gatherings. Sports leagues — from the N.C.A.A., NBA, MLB and NHL — have suspended competition. Even Broadway in New York has gone dark.

Closer to home, neighboring Puerto Rico, which doesn't have a confirmed case as yet, banned large gatherings as well. This means the highly anticipated Afro Nation event that was scheduled for March 18-21, [won't happen](#). Puerto Rico's action is strategic: By banning large gatherings, the island's leaders seek to prevent the possible spread of the virus by persons who may have the disease but have yet to be detected.

Puerto Rico Governor Wanda Vazquez declared a state of emergency on Thursday and activated its National Guard in response to the coronavirus. Guard units will be stationed at the island's airports to screen all arriving passengers, the governor made known during the press conference.

St. Maarten Carnival [just announced the postponement of their event](#). In a post published on Facebook, the organization said, "The SCDF [St. Maarten Carnival Development Association] hereby informs the general public that the Government of St. Maarten has decided to postpone Carnival 2020 in response to the rapid spreading of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The foundation was informed of this in a meeting called by Government on Thursday, March 12 and agrees that public safety comes first. The SCDF will issue a series of notices to the public and all Carnival stakeholders in the coming days. Please monitor the media for updates."

The number of confirmed cases in the U.S. has risen to more than 1,300, with at least 38 deaths. The pathogen has spread to 116 countries, has infected over 127,000 people, and has killed over 4,700. In Italy, where the virus has been the most devastating outside of China, nearly 200 people died in 24hrs (Tuesday-Wednesday). So far, more than 900 people have died from the virus in Italy, and over 12,400 infected.

Currently there are no confirmed cases in the U.S. Virgin Islands, though health officials expect the pandemic to eventually reach the territory's shores. So far, out of four suspected cases sent to be tested, three have returned negative. The status of the fourth case is expected to be revealed during the Friday morning press conference.