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## After \$1 Million Ransom Demand, V.I. Lottery Restores Operations Without Paying Hackers

Nearly 90% operational again, V.I. Lottery rebuilt its network from the ground up after refusing to pay a \$1 million ransom in a March cyberattack, re-entering data by hand and now investing in training, security, and a new IT Director position.

Government / **Published On May 31, 2025 06:31 AM /**

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V.I. Lottery Executive Director Raymond Williams at the Legislature on Friday, May 30, 2025. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE.

Virgin Islands Lottery's executive director, Raymond Williams, says the entity is now "90 percent back [to] functionality" after a cybersecurity incident that [halted operations](#) across the territory. The March ransomware attack compromised Lottery's entire network.

Mr. Raymond appeared before the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection on Friday. He reminded Committee members that the “bad actors” responsible for the attack [requested a \\$1 million ransom](#), which V.I. Lottery refused to pay. Instead, a decision was made to “rebuild an entire system from scratch.” V.I. Lottery continues to make “technical tweaks” to “ensure that the protections are there.”

“We had all our servers, computers, and other systems sanitized, loaded with new security measures, and then we began an arduous process of rebuilding,” Mr. Williams explained. “The majority of our staff became computer data entry clerks. We spent almost 10 hours each day re-entering information from hard copies.” That included payment receipts and prize payments from draw number 1027 in February 2024 to draw number 1046 in February 2025. Mr. Williams described it as a “Herculean task.”

It took V.I. Lottery seven weeks to rebuild itself and conduct draw number 1047 in April 2025. Investigations into the attack are ongoing.

Now, V.I. Lottery is turning its attention to preventing future attacks. “Any individual, entity or organization is susceptible to a cyber attack. Bad actors don't sleep and are forever looking for opportunities,” noted Mr. Williams. “We have learned that ensuring multiple backups of all your systems...are the backbone to preventing these attacks.”

Empowering staff is another key goal for V.I. Lottery. “Training, training and more training is one of the guiding principles to ensuring everyone and our staff are competent enough to know and understand that phishing expeditions are always lurking everywhere,” he testified. Investments in technology are also part of the restoration efforts.

V.I. Lottery is also working on filling a critical IT Director position. An amendment to their budget has been made to “hopefully be able to improve that salary so that we can attract not just a competent person, but someone who can manage our entire infrastructure,” Mr. Williams said.

“There still remains work to be done, but we are now able to operate a path forward,” he assured lawmakers. As an extra layer of security, V.I. Lottery “will be migrating to the BIT platform as another resource in ensuring more resilience and secure systems.”

That decision was described as a “step in the right direction” by Senator Novelle Francis. He also urged Mr. Williams not to allow staff’s personal computers to be used to conduct V.I. Lottery business. “You want to make sure that your employees have your Virgin Islands Lottery-issued computers, and that's what's used on your system every single day.”

Mr. Francis was pleased to learn that the cyberattack did not impact V.I. Lottery’s ability to make good on vendor payments. “We never missed a beat...we even did mandatory transfers within that period of time,” affirmed Mr. Williams.

The seven-week cessation of lottery operations undoubtedly affected independent vendors. “Several of them asked if they could collect unemployment. We couldn't provide that to them because they're not an entity within our organization,” Mr. Williams explained. As V.I. Lottery returns to business as usual, he assured lawmakers that dealers are now “back on track with sales.”

Meanwhile, Senator Carla Joseph was interested in understanding what V.I. Lottery plans to do differently moving forward. “You gotta be able to invest in new technology. You got to continue to follow the trends of the new technology,” Mr. Williams responded. “It is a perpetual process. You can't just do two things and be comfortable...It's a costly process, but to protect our bottom

line, that's the direction we're going in.”

Though operations have been restored, V.I. Lottery cannot recover the estimated \$1.4 million in revenue that was lost during the affected period. “You don't recapture that because that's already gone,” Mr. Williams told Senator Alma Francis Heyliger. Nonetheless, he anticipates that V.I. Lottery will remain on solid footing as long as sales remain “consistent” moving forward.

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