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RTPark Surpasses FY2026 Tenant Goal as Youth Technology Programs Expand Territorywide

RTPark has surpassed its FY2026 goal with nine tenant agreements and a tenth under consideration, while expanding internships, youth technology programs and its STEM summer camp, which served about 175 students across St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John.

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The University of the Virgin Islands Research and Technology Park has exceeded its FY2026 target for new tenant agreements while expanding student employment opportunities, youth technology education and its presence on St. John, according to an operational update presented to the board Monday.

Executive Director Eric Sonnier told board members that RTPark has completed nine tenant agreements during the current financial year, surpassing its goal of eight. He also presented a proposed tenth agreement that would include an artificial intelligence apprenticeship program.

“This one’s pretty exciting because it includes an AI apprenticeship program for UVI students, recent grads, and other local tech talent,” he said.

Four additional term sheets are being negotiated, Sonnier said.

The organization is also connecting students with internships and jobs through its Professional Pathways program. Sonnier said participants are receiving opportunities with “RTPark clients and workforce partners.”

Nine students have confirmed internships or employment opportunities, while one candidate has an offer pending and another is awaiting placement into the workforce. Three students are waiting for the results of interviews, and five additional employer opportunities are being developed.

Sonnier also reviewed the recently completed STEM summer camp as RTPark prepares for another year of after-school enrichment programming.

“We successfully served approximately 175 students across St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John,” he said.

The program served 120 students last year. Sonnier attributed the increase to expanded capacity on St. Croix and St. Thomas and the introduction of the camp on St. John.

The program provided instruction in web development and social and emotional skills. RTPark also introduced a dashboard and digital learning program to track several areas, including program outcomes, “which we know is important and will become increasingly important over the years to come,” Sonnier said.

Registration for the camp filled within minutes when it opened earlier this year, reflecting strong demand. Sonnier said the response remained positive after the program concluded.

“feedback from the families and community stakeholders was overwhelmingly positive,” Mr. Sonnier said.

Families and community members have requested longer camp sessions, an expanded high school program and additional capacity. Sonnier said those requests are being considered as the organization plans future programming.

“Future planning will focus on expanding capacity, strengthening staffing, and sustaining community and corporate support. The more support we get, the more students we can continue to add to the roster,” he noted.

Board member Henry Smock said he had heard “nothing but rave reviews” about the summer camp and suggested that RTPark may need to provide “triple or quadruple” the number of spaces next year to meet demand.

“I’m serious about that. You’re going to have to make it much bigger,” he remarked.

The launch of the STEM summer camp on St. John coincided with RTPark’s first official community engagement event on the island. The event attracted current and prospective clients,

along with other community stakeholders.

Dr. William DeLone, vice chair of the board, praised the organization's work to build a local technology workforce.

"We've made incredible strides in the last year to two years...creating a local pipeline of talented technology students, starting from elementary school programs all the way through UVI," said Dr. William DeLone.

He described that work as "one of the most challenging aspects" of RTPark's mandate and commended Sonnier and the organization's team for its execution.

Following the executive director's report, the board entered executive session. During the closed portion of the meeting, members approved tenancy extensions and amendments and new tenancy agreements and received updates regarding a pending audit.