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Reconstruction of V.I. National Guard Armory Remains on Schedule Despite Coronavirus Pandemic, Guard Says

Community Center / **Published On April 25, 2020 07:45 AM /**

Staff Consortium **April 25, 2020**

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Maj. Lionel Eddy, project manager, oversees contract workers prepping material for the rooftop on the Leonard B. Francis Readiness Center facility, St. Thomas, April 22, 2020.
By. VI NATIONAL GUARD

Even as the number of Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases identified in the United States and around the world continue to increase, the reconstruction on the Leonard B. Francis Readiness Center in St. Thomas is on target to meet its deadline, November 2020, the V.I. National Guard has announced.

After extensive damage sustained by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers created projects valued at \$22 million to support the restoration of facilities for the Guard.

“The team remains highly encouraged and engaged with finishing this project that started in January 2019,” said Maj. Lionel Eddy, project officer. “With only a few months near the deadline, we have made immense strides in realigning the building structure and are focused on configuring the bathrooms, the Distance Learning Center, and the studio for the 73rd Army Band.”

V.I.N.G. said numerous developments geared toward being ready to stand in any fight were made to the facility. Cement board with Edge Guard was used to decrease mold contamination and increase personnel efficiency. Moreover, a Tactical Operations Center (TOC) was incorporated into the facility to make the 786th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion functional as an Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

V.I.N.G. said safety is the number one priority. Soldiers remain in the frontlines for mission support tasks mandated by the stay-at-home order which started in March. The on-going construction incorporates a system of daily status checks to include the wearing of the proper personal equipment to deter the spread of COVID-19.

The Guard said it continues to offer better conditions for Guardsmen, Veterans, and the community.