

The Virgin Islands Consortium

\$20 Million Contract Signed For Demolition, Re-Construction Of Frederiksted Stadium

Business / **Published On November 24, 2014 01:24 AM /**

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After years of legislative wrangling, compounded by funding and contractor setbacks, Gov. John P. de Jongh, Jr. recently signed a \$20 million contract with St. Croix-based GEC, LLC for the revitalization of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium in Frederiksted.

The funds--which have been made available by bonding authorization approved by the Legislature in Act No. 7453 in 2012 and amended by Act No. 7663 in 2014, and is being overseen by the Public Finance Authority--will pay for the demolition of the current structure, as well as the design and construction of a state-of-the-art sports complex, featuring a new stadium, Little League field, and permanent Carnival Village in Frederiksted.

Of the development, de Jongh said, "The reconstruction of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium will have a lasting effect on St. Croix and particularly Frederiksted. I believe that the sports complex will have a major economic impact on the island, as it is estimated that the new facility could attract up to 80 sanctioned events each year. I am so pleased that this project is finally going forward and it has been an initiative high on my agenda for several years now."

Commissioner of Sports, Parks and Recreation St. Claire Williams also praised the forward movement of the long-awaited project.

"I am extremely pleased that our efforts over the past several years to put the mechanism in place for the reconstruction of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium and the Terrence Martin Ball Field into a sports complex has finally come to fruition," he said, "and I look forward to the construction of the state-of-art multi-purpose sports facility and carnival village that our residents, our visitors, and particularly our young people can enjoy."

The contract states that GEC will supply all labor, materials and equipment necessary to complete the project, which is expected to last for about two-and-a-half years. The amendment to the project's financing stipulates that "unemployed qualified residents" of the Virgin Islands must have first preference in hiring.

The road to revitalizing the dilapidated stadium has been a long one.

In a separate proposal in 2012, which was eventually killed by Governor de Jongh, it was found that some of the stateside contractors with whom the Virgin Islands Government intended to do business had misrepresented their financial histories, business credentials, and industry connections, among other falsifications. A top executive at one of the companies is currently serving a three-and-a-half-year prison term in Texas for conspiracy to commit bank fraud in an unrelated project to the Paul E. Joseph Stadium.

In addition to the Governor's signature, the agreement was signed by the managing partner of General Engineering Corporation; Commissioner St. Claire Williams; and Commissioner of Property and Procurement, Lynn Millin Maduro. It was approved by Attorney General Vincent Frazer.

The stadium bears the name of St. Croix legislator, editor, publisher, and civil rights activist, Paul E. Joseph who died in 1966. It was named after Joseph in 1964 and will continue to bear the name after the reconstruction is complete.

CORRECTION: An earlier version of this story reported that the Paul E. Joseph Stadium contract was given to Portage, Wisconsin-based General Engineering Corporation. St. Croix's GEC, LLC has no affiliation with General Engineering Corporation in Wisconsin.

