

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Residents React To New Mapp-Potter Administration

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During Post Inaugural events in St. Croix on Tuesday, where Governor Kenneth Mapp and Lieutenant Governor Osbert Potter were celebrated and where the two men also [addressed the crowd](#), *VI Consortium* spoke to locals who were there to witness the ceremony, held in downtown Frederiksted, to learn their thoughts and expectations for the new administration.

Merlisa George-Plante, a federal contractor who came to witness the festivities and to support the National Guard, said she was "hopeful" for what Mapp could bring to the territory.



Soraya Diase-Coffelt, U.S. Virgin Islands

#### Attorney General

"I do feel hopeful. I am a Democrat, but I am also a respecer of whoever the people have chosen -- we are in a democracy, so I am hopeful for whatever the new governor is able to bring to the people," Plante said.

She continued: "He is a citizen of the Virgin Islands and I know he recognizes all of the issues that we have--our roads, the corruption, infrastructure, our education [and] even things in customer service, DMV and other areas--so he is aware of those things, and I'm hoping that he works on them, and that he works on jolting the economy through EDC or other avenues he outlined in his platform."

In reference to the depressed economy, Plante said that while her career is stable, it has been painful to watch people leave St. Croix in high numbers to make a living elsewhere.

"I've been here for 15 years, I'm a staunch Crucian, and I'm staying, I'm sticking it through, but at the same time, I don't want to be the last man standing here in the territory," she said. "So, I know that [Mann] recognizes the deficiencies, so I hope that he



Commissioner of Tourism Beverly Nicholson-

#### Doty

Delroy Thomas, a Virgin Islander visiting from the U.S. for the Crucian Christmas Carnival season, said he was confident that Mapp could bring positive change to the territory, adding that if the new governor failed to keep his promises, the tides would quickly change.

"We need some changes, and we should keep our eyes on what we need to be doing. And Mapp had better keep his promises because if he does not, then he will be a one-term governor, then after two years everything will start going back," Thomas said,

adding, "He's going to be alright."

Leone Rohr, a St. Croix resident residing in Guam for almost 30 years, said that while she would like to come back home, the opportunities on the island are not sufficient for her to do so.

"I think that progress has been good, but of course it would be nice for things to be a little bit better for those who live here," she said. "More jobs and things not being so deteriorated. It's hard when you go away and you come back and see it like this. I grew up here and I live in Guam, so that's a small island, too, but we all need to get better at taking care of our islands."

Asked if she would like to come back home, Rohr said, "Of course, but I can't make money here."

However, Rohr said she is hopeful the new administration could rally the people and uplift the territory from its current state, "because we won't want people to continue leaving," she said.



Williams said he was optimistic about the territory's future with the new administration.

St. Croix Administrator Stephanie Williams

"I feel optimistic and great that we have a new administration, knowing that the Governor has been trying for quite a long time, now he has gotten his opportunity, let's be patient, work with him and see what he could do for the Virgin Islands," he said.

In his address to the crowd on Tuesday, Mapp said, "We are very serious about our cause, and we understand with deep humility your expectations and your hopes, and we will not defy, nor betray them."

However, the new governor implored the community for its help.

"We need your help. There will be some difficult decisions that must be made, there will be difficult days ahead. But this island suffered through the horror days of Hurricane Hugo and came out brighter and better, and these tribulations that we are experiencing

as a territory, we will get to a better sun, but we must remain focused, we must remain disciplined in our efforts, and we must be committed in our cause."

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