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WAPA Finally Restores Power (3:50 a.m. Tuesday) to Customers in St. Thomas and St. John After All Day, Almost All Night Blackout

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The Randolph Harley Power Plant in St. Thomas By. ERNICE GILBERT/ VI CONSORTIUM

ST. THOMAS — A district-wide power outage that affected the St. Thomas-St. John District early afternoon Monday continued to impact the district Tuesday morning, and was not restored until about 3:50 a.m., the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority has announced in an updated issued at 4:05 a.m.

"With four generating units online, electrical service was restored to all customers in the St. Thomas St. John District at approximately 3:50 a.m. The restoration capped district wide outages

that occurred initially at 12:28 pm Monday," WAPA said.

The authority explained that a combination of apparent fuel-related and excitation issues with the largest generator at the Randolph Harley Power Plant contributed to the operational challenges plant personnel were confronted with for almost 16 hours Monday afternoon into Tuesday morning.

WAPA apologized to all customers for the inconvenience caused by the electrical service interruptions.

According to an update issued at about 3:20 a.m., only three of 14 feeders had been restored at the time, with another partially coming online, after the plant — which had been restored Monday night — went offline again just before midnight at about 11:53 p.m.

"Efforts continue by personnel at the Randolph Harley Power Plant to resolve an electrical service interruption that has affected the St. Thomas - St. John District since just before midnight Monday," WAPA said at the time.

The utility lost generation power to Unit 23 at 12:30 p.m. Monday and had begun to restore power near 7:00 p.m.

Restoration, however, was short-lived.

WAPA said Unit 23 — which caused the island-wide power outage Monday — along with two smaller units, were causing the issues. "Personnel are focused on returning Unit 23, the plant's largest generator, and two other units to service in order to facilitate electrical service to all customers. A fourth and smaller sized generator, Unit 14, is also online to supplement the generation capacity needed to restore all customers," WAPA said.

It added, "Unit 23 tripped at 11:53 p.m. Monday and staff members are continuing to troubleshoot and resolve excitation issues with the unit. As of now, customers on Feeders 7E, 8A, 8B, and a portion of 7C have been restored."

The district-wide outage complicated a delicate reopening for non-essential businesses in the district — especially those without generators — that were cleared to resume operations Monday under Governor Albert Bryan's new "Safer at Home" reopening phase.