

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Heads To Cruise Ship Conference In Florida To Promote Territory's Tourism Product

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Cruise ships in Frederiksted, St. Croix

Governor Kenneth Mapp will travel to Miami today to attend the annual SeaTrade Conference, widely known as 'Cruise Shipping Miami Trade Show,' where he will meet with cruise industry officials as he continues his bid of building the territory's tourism product.

According to information released from Government House, Mapp will participate in an array of meetings and promotional media events, along with Virgin Islands Department of

Tourism (DOT) officials.

The governor, similar to his recent trip to New York where he was interviewed by various media outlets, including an [interview on Bloomberg TV](#), has scheduled several newspaper and radio stops while in Miami.

Mapp has been adamant about keeping the territory's main export -- tourism -- at optimum levels, and recently stated at the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting that the territory is losing its edge, and that if something isn't done, it could be lost for good.

"I want to ensure that our single-most important economy in this territory is given the support and direction, and the resources that it needs so that we can grow," he said. "We had a competitive advantage, we're losing it, and if we don't turn the corner, we will lose



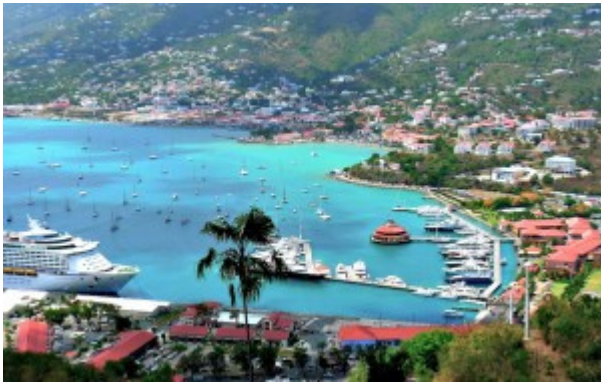
A cruise ship docked in Frederiksted, St.

Croix, March 15

The governor has also [spoken recently](#) with Karl Holz, president of Disney Cruise Line, who, seeing the governor's desire to revive St. Croix's economy, promised the "full portfolio" of the company's "technical support system" to help create a "destination experience" on the Big Island.

The Disney brand spans a range of industries, including movies, music, clothing, live theater and, most important to the territory, cruise ships, and possibly, theme parks. Mapp said the company is best positioned to attract new visitors to the islands' shores.

"There is no brand that I know of that exists on the planet today better than the Disney brand that have been able to successfully achieve experiences for its guests," the governor said. "[Holz] is going to do this gratis — no cost to this government — in furtherance of their issues and their concerns and the needs that they have in St. Thomas, to assist this government and this community, to get St. Croix positioned to be a destination with its own identity [and] with its own experiences."



Sky view of St. Thomas' Waterfront

Mapp said when all of the territory is attracting tourists to both visit on a cruise, then plan a return trip for an overnight stay, he would be pleased.

“Because at the end of the day, we don’t care if a passenger visits St. Croix and St. Thomas and it’s the U.S. Virgin Islands. What we care is that they have very good experiences,” he said, adding, “And if they’re on St. Croix, and their experiences are uniquely different than that of St. Thomas, but believe that they have not been able to complete their visit and do all that’s available for them to do, and they need to fly back and spend time and stay on-island, that’s the objective that we want to achieve.”

Mapp continued pushing the importance of joining forces with Disney, adding that if the government, community and businesses would partner, much could be achieved.

“My view is we’ve been kind of prodding along and moving along trying to get this done. I think Disney has been very effective in doing this in their business model. Everything that they may suggest we may not accept and agree, but I believe that they have tremendous resources and they can provide tremendous technical support if we worked as a team — the community, the government, and the residents, and the businesses — we would be able to do much for this destination on the island of St. Croix, and again begin the process of growing our economy further, and growing St. Croix’s destination,” he said.

While Governor Mapp is away, Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter will serve as acting governor in accordance with local law. Mapp is scheduled to return to the territory on Wednesday afternoon.

Feature Image: Cruise ships docked at Frederiksted Pier, St. Croix, March 15