

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Upgrades At Henry E. Rholsen Airport Continue With Apron Rehab Project

VIC News / **Published On April 29, 2015 01:12 PM /**

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ST. CROIX -- As the Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA) continues with its quest to make St. Croix a more attractive destination for airlines, the agency commenced work on Tuesday on phase 2 of what it's calling the HERA Apron Rehab project at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport's terminal, that will see the terminal's commuter and jet parking apron being free from cracks and trip hazards once completed.

The contract was awarded to Betterroads Asphalt Corporation, LLC, a company based out of Puerto Rico, with its Virgin Islands office in St. Thomas -- doing its first major job on St. Croix, according to John Henderson, project superintendent for the company. The job is expected to last five to six months, and includes 10,500 square yards of concrete.

Upon completion, a new project that's part of the same contract awarded to Betterroads, pavement to the airport's runway tracks.



Betterroads employees pose for group picture

"The new pavement is needed to support the heavy aircraft that we have on the apron and all the commercial aircraft that come in," said Damian Cartwright, senior engineer for VIPA.

According to Cartwright, phase 2 costs \$3.3 million, 90 percent of which is being funded by the Federal Aviation Administration via a \$4.9 million airport improvement program (AIP) grant received by the Port Authority from the US Department of Transportation last year. A total of \$3.9 million from the grant is to be used for airport development on St. Croix.

The remaining 10 percent of the contract awarded to Betterroads is provided by VIPA, which equates to about \$330,000, and will be funded through an allotment from the agency's fiscal year 2015 budget.

The new paving will boast 15 inches of concrete supported on a symmetric base, which Cartwright said is more than able to support heavy loading from the airplanes, and will last for a "significantly long time."

Phase 1 of the rehabilitation project was awarded to Virgin Islands Paving, Inc., and arrangement as phase 2.



From left, Betterroads Quality Manager

Pamela Geiger, Betterroads Superintendent John Henderson, and Senior Engineer at VIPA Damian Cartwright

While on the site, a slab-breaking machine, one of only twelve in the world, was demolishing parts of the paving where new asphalt will be added. Henderson said the company has hired all local workers, and is hoping to expand its business on the big

island.

"We're hoping that this is our stepping stone to much larger projects on St. Croix, especially with the Port Authority," Henderson said.

In relation to pay, Cartwright said because the project is being funded with federal money, the [Davis-Bacon Act](#) minimal rates apply to all workers, and since federal projects are subject to federal auditing, Betterroads must pay its employees fairly to comply.

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