The Virgin Islands Consortium

viNGN To Usher Territory Into New Era Of Prosperity Through Technology, CEO Says

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Dr. Tonjia Coverdale, CEO of viNGN.

ST. THOMAS -- Dr. Tonjia Coverdale has been at her new job as Chief Executive Officer of the Virgin Islands Next Generation Network (viNGN) for less than a month, however, the former Elections System Technology Coordinator and IT professor at the University of the Virgin Islands, told *VI Consortium* in a recent Q&A that technology is the sector that will help grow the territory's economy and lead a new wave of prosperity.

As the new boss of viNGN, Coverdale plans on implementing a strong public relations campaign.

"This is a major shift in life as we know it," Coverdale said about technology and viNGN's broadband capabilities. "In fact, one of my first efforts is a huge public awareness and education campaign on why broadband adoption is important for us."

She added: "My goal in life has always been to take the gifts, talents, and opportunities that God has given me to open up new doors and break glass ceilings to enable the success of my people. I am looking forward to the Virgin Islands becoming a regional and global leader in broadband and other information technologies to usher in a new era of prosperity for our Territory."

Coverdale, who was appointed to the viNGN board before being tapped as its CEO by Governor Kenneth Mapp, sees every home, business, and government agency in the territory being connected to viNGN's already available broadband network with speeds of up to 1000 megabits (MB), which is over 900 times faster than any available internet service in the Virgin Islands.

The opportunity of broadband internet in the Virgin Islands through viNGN will welcome new information-based businesses with "hundreds of local jobs," Coverdale said, adding that, "viNGN has a responsibility to our fellow Virgin Islanders to invest in, and build our communities by serving as a foundation for technology education for our children and adults, both young and seasoned, and creating a local technology workforce to begin circulating within our economy those millions of technology dollars that would usually go out of the territory."

In closing, the CEO expressed excitement as the new boss of one of the territory's most important assets, and said she was "deeply honored" to lead the effort.

VINGN is a subsidiary of the Virgin Islands Public Finance Authority (PFA), created to build and operate the territory's broadband network. While not a service provider, viNGN operates the fiber-optic network and is marketing it as a wholesale product to Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

VINGN's board of directors will convene today at 11:00 a.m. at the PFA, located at 5033 Kongens Gade, Government Hill, St. Thomas.

Update:

VI Consortium received updated information about the viNGN board meeting taking place this morning. The board will convene at 11:00 a.m. today, and not 10:00 a.m. as previously reported. The time change was made to accommodate a scheduling issue with Governor Kenneth Mapp, who is also the board's chairman.