

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VI Businesses Owe \$8.5 Million In Expired License Fees, DLCA To Embark On Collection Effort

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ST. CROIX -- The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) Commissioner nominee is notifying the public of action his department will soon be taking to recoup some \$8.5 million owed to the Government of the Virgin Islands (GVI) by businesses in the territory that have failed to reapply for their business licenses, yet continue to operate.

DLCA's Commissioner nominee Devin Carrington, through a press release issued late Monday, said the \$8.5 million owed to the GVI was uncovered through a recently-conducted audit of delinquent business licenses in the territory. Carrington said all businesses operating in the islands do so after obtaining an annual license from DLCA.

Clearly stated on each license, he said, is the start and expiration date of said license. Failing to renew on time is accompanied by monetary penalties to be paid along with the license renewal fee.

"It is completely unacceptable for any business to think that it is appropriate to continue operations without a current license and at the same time not pay fees legally owed to the Government of the Virgin Islands," Carrington said.

Carrington said DLCA hasn't been diligent in its efforts to regulate business license renewals, and the task of doing so effectively, pose an even greater challenge for the department because it has lost employees over the years as a result of the territory's financial condition.

Nonetheless, Carrington said it's the businesses' responsibility to renew their licenses yearly, adding that DLCA will soon embark on an effort to collect monies owed.

"Especially in these times, where the government is financially strapped for cash, it is only right that businesses that are granted a license to make money in the Virgin Islands, pay their fair share to the Government of the Virgin Islands," Carrington said.