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V.I. Housing Authority Awards \$588,000 Contract to Local Firm For Renovation of Senior Center in St. John

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Adrian Senior Center By. OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY

Work has begun to repair the George Simmons Senior Center on St. John, the Office of Disaster Recovery has announced. The facility, built in 1985, was damaged after severe wind, and wind-driven rain from Hurricane Maria lifted the corrugated metal roofing, causing damages to the electrical and mechanical systems as well as the interior of the building, O.D.R. said.

The Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA) awarded a contract to Custom Builders VI for \$588,000 to completely renovate the building, including the roof, water heater, solar panel, air conditioning units, windows, doors, fencing, and other interior and exterior features.

“The Housing Authority is pleased to partner with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Office of the Governor to begin the work to revitalize this important resource for our seniors,” said Robert Graham, executive director of VIHA. “It is critically important to repair facilities to provide much-needed services to our elderly residents, particularly during our response to COVID-19.”

Funding for this project was obligated through the FEMA Public Assistance Program in November 2019.

“The Adrian Senior Center is one of the Office of Disaster Recovery’s Top Projects,” said Adrienne Williams-Octalien, Office of Disaster Recovery director. “The impact its completion will make on the community and the services that will be reinstated is important to the seniors living on St. John.”

VIHA’s board and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development approved the award in January after the bid’s second advertisement, according to O.D.R.

"A sincere appreciation of the commitment made by the VIHA, Office of the Governor and ODR to get this much-needed capital project moving in St. John," said Dept. of Human Services Commissioner Kimberley Causey-Gomez. "Research shows that older adults who participate in senior center programs can learn to manage and delay the onset of chronic disease and experience measurable improvements in their overall well-being."

Abigail Hendricks, the Project Manager of Social Recreation and Senior Citizen Affairs on St. John, said, “It is a home away from home for Seniors and is so missed by them. Seniors engage in recreation, games, and guest presentations on health education and other areas of interest. Since the storm, seniors have been moving around to multiple locations because of not having a home base.”

The center will also be used as a distribution center for the residents of St. John in the event of a disaster. Renovations are expected to be completed by November 2020.