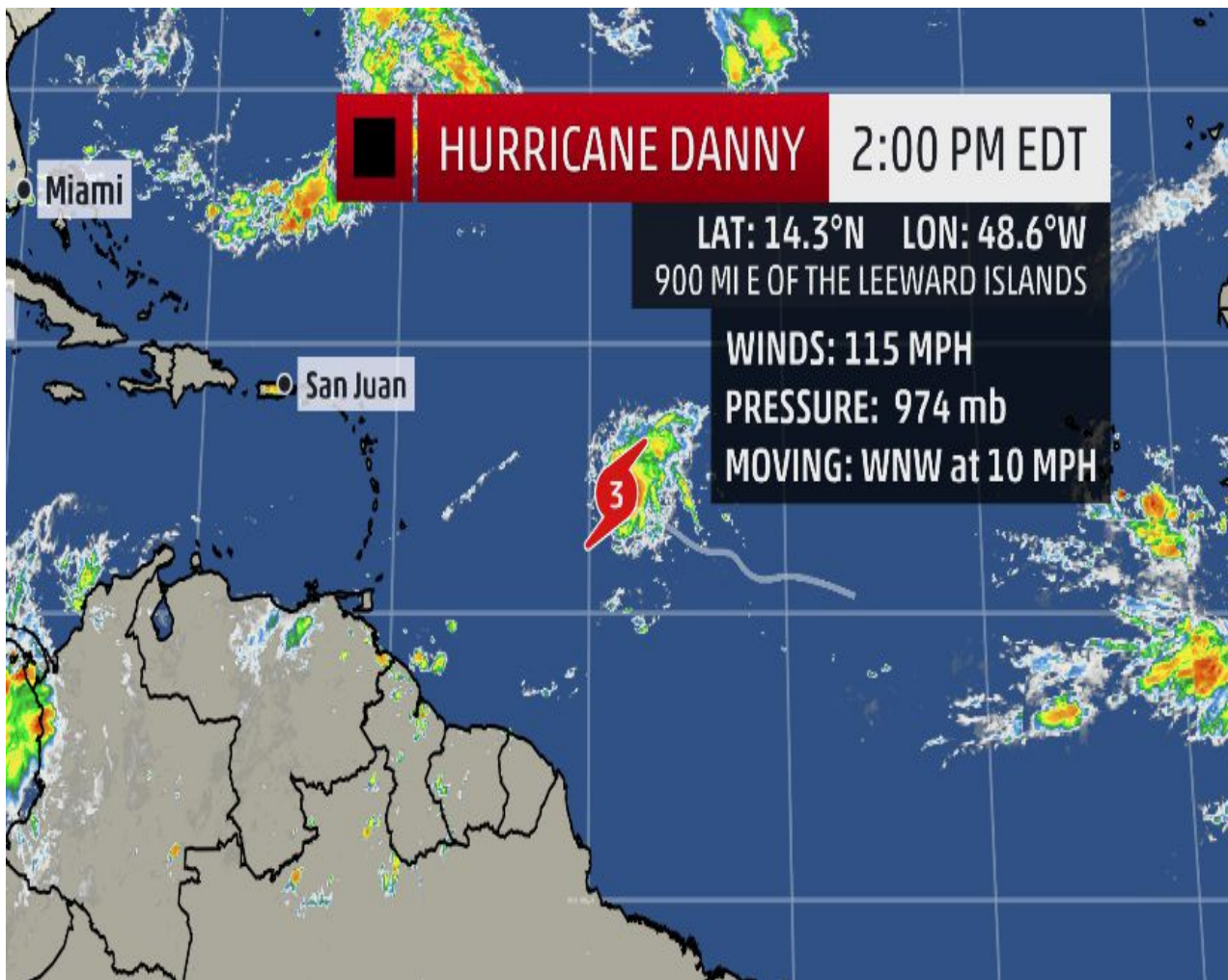


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Danny Strengthens To Cat 3 Hurricane, Mapp Announces Saturday Press Conference, Sandbag Distribution Begins Territory-Wide

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Ernice Gilbert **August 21, 2015**



ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp has called a press conference for Saturday at 11:00 a.m. at Government House here to address the territory on the possible effects of Hurricane Danny, and to inform residents on preparedness measures the government, through its first responder agencies, has put in place.

Meanwhile in the Atlantic, Hurricane Danny has strengthened into a Category 3 storm on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, according to the National Hurricane Center. According to reports from a NOAA Hurricane Hunter aircraft, the storm now packs

maximum sustained winds of 115 miles per hour with higher gusts.

No additional intensification is expected, as Danny is moving into an area of unfavorable upper-level winds, and a weakening trend is expected to begin later today. Consequently, no adjustment to the forecast intensities from the previous advisory is required.

At 11 a.m. today, the center of the hurricane was located near 14 degrees North, 48.2 degrees west or about 1,131 miles east-southeast of St. Croix. The hurricane is moving to the west-northwest at 10 miles per hour. There are no coastal watches or warnings at the present time. The forward motion is expected to continue through tonight with a turn towards the west expected on Saturday or Saturday night.

Hurricane Danny remains a tiny hurricane. At 11 a.m., hurricane force winds extended outward up to 15 miles per hour from the center and tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 70 miles from the center.

Currently there are no watches and warnings in place.

Response and readiness efforts are currently well underway throughout the Government of the Virgin Islands. At 10 a.m. today, Governor Kenneth Mapp, VITEMA Director Mona Barnes, other Cabinet members, WICO and key non-government organizations, received a comprehensive briefing on Hurricane Danny, from Roberto Garcia, Meteorologist-in-Charge at the National Weather Service – San Juan Forecast Office.

Forecast Analysis: USVI, Puerto Rico and its Coastal Waters to be Impacted

According to Garcia, based on projections, Hurricane Danny may weaken to a tropical storm with top sustained winds of 50 to 55 miles per hour by the time it reaches the USVI and Puerto Rico, which is forecasted to be late Monday night into early Tuesday morning. Maritime conditions are also expected to begin rapidly deteriorating on Monday and continue into Tuesday. On its current path, the center is projected to pass over or very near to the north of St. Croix and all three islands should expect some type of impact, Garcia reported.

However there is not enough data to predict the rainfall. "The National Hurricane Center is not producing rainfall estimates because (Hurricane Danny) still too far," he said. "It depends on the movement of the system and it depends on the size."

Both NOAA and Air Force Reserve Unit reconnaissance aircraft are investigating Danny today, and that data will provide a better estimate of the hurricane's structure and strength.

The National Hurricane Center will issue its next complete advisory at 5 p.m. today.

VITEMA Director Urges the Public to Prepare

VITEMA Director Mona Barnes is urging the community to make their final preparations for Hurricane Danny and to monitor this system very closely as it approaches the US Virgins Islands.

“While the forecast is still uncertain, we cannot wait until the very last minute to prepare,” Barnes said. “Ensure your family has a disaster plan of where to go if you have to evacuate and how to remain in contact if separated. Check your emergency supplies and make sure you have enough essential items stocked for at least three to five days. And finally, make sure you stay tuned to local radio and television for weather information and alerts as well as instructions from local government officials.”

VITEMA's Emergency Operations Centers have been placed on alert for activation this weekend to coordinate the response efforts for Hurricane Danny. Barnes has also requested support from the FEMA Region II – Caribbean Area Division (CAD).

FEMA CAD Director Alejandro De La Campa, during today's briefing, announced that the federal agency will deploy a 20-man Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) to Territory to support response efforts, and the commodities were prepositioned and ready to deploy in the USVI, if necessary.

Correction: August 21, 2015

A previous version of this story, because of a text error, incorrectly stated that Hurricane Danny carries maximum sustained winds of 155 miles per hour. The correct strength is 115 miles per hour. The story has been updated to reflect the correct information.

[Listen to the original recording](#)