

The Virgin Islands Consortium

FEMA Approves Over \$300,000 In Mitigation Funds For Emergency Generator At Juan Luis Hospital

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ST. CROIX -- Officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) announced today the approval of a \$312,500.00 grant in pre-disaster mitigation (PDM) funds for the acquisition of a 1,500kw emergency generator unit (EGU) for the Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center (JFL) in St. Croix, a press release FEMA issued this morning has made known.

JFL is the only hospital on the island and provides 24-hour acute emergency and ambulatory care services to the 50,000 residents here.

“Identifying appropriate emergency resources and having them available is an essential task for a rapid response and recovery process after an emergency. Mitigating the possibility of losing power at such a critical facility during an emergency will strengthen the territorial capabilities to manage medical emergencies and operations. Therefore, we worked with VITEMA to identify resources available to address this; support them during the process and now we can see the results,” said Alejandro De La Campa, FEMA Caribbean Area Division (CAD) Director.

“Shortly after I came on board at VITEMA, there was an incident where Juan Luis Hospital lost back-up power generation during an island-wide outage. Addressing this shortfall quickly became a priority for VITEMA, so that it never happens again. Our hospitals must be operational especially during a major incident,” said Mona Barnes, VITEMA Director. “Through FEMA we were able to identify and secure funding to purchase a new generator that will mitigate power loss. The installation of a new generator at JFLH ensures that our Territory is truly prepared if there is a major incident. The collaborative effort between the VITEMA and FEMA Caribbean Area Division speaks volumes about our continuing partnership and we are grateful for their support.”

The proposed mitigation activity considers the installation of a new 1,500kw, 0.8 power factor, 4,160 volts, 60 hertz, at 1,800 RPM diesel generator set to replace the existing undersized and unreliable 1,100 KW generators that have far exceeded their usefulness, according to the release.

The hospital submitted a project proposal to FEMA for the purchase of one emergency backup generator and installation fees, to ensure continuity of the facility's operations during failure of the island's sole power generating system. In the aftermath of hurricanes such as Hugo, Marilyn, Georges, Lenny and Omar -- which heavily impacted the territory and caused widespread damages and prolonged power outages -- protecting and providing backup power generation to the hospital became an evident need, the release continued.

The first step of this mitigation project will be to analyze the load demand to the generator ensuring it will adequately respond during a power outage. Next step will be overhauling the existing generators to ensure that the wiring and hookup mechanism are suitably sized and meet all applicable building, electrical and environmental codes for the installation of the new generator. And the final step will be the request for competitive bids for the purchase and installation of the new generator.

FEMA administers several pre and post disaster hazard mitigation assistance programs, including the PDM, the release revealed. The grant program implements mitigation efforts to reduce risks to life and property from future events, while also reducing dependence on federal funds in future disasters.