

The Virgin Islands Consortium

After 8-Hour Early Morning Blackout, WAPA Restores Electrical Service In St. Thomas-St. John District

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ST. THOMAS -- Plant personnel at the V.I. Water & Power Authority's Randolph Harley Power Plant restored full electric power to the St. Thomas St. John district at 11:52 a.m. Tuesday, capping a near eight-hour long electric service interruption, a press release WAPA issued late Tuesday has revealed. The island-wide service interruption began shortly after 4 a.m. and resulted from human error during fuel operations.

"We initially thought the service interruption was triggered by a hard surge that impacted the power plant, but further inspection of the alarms and warning systems revealed that an error in the manner in which fuel was being transferred from one storage tank to another resulted in the failure of both generating units that were on line at the time. The

service interruption affected all feeders and disrupted electric service at the power plant," WAPA Executive Director / CEO Hugo V. Hodge, Jr. said today.

Hodge added that for eight straight hours, plant and line personnel worked feverishly to restart three generating units: 14, 23 and 25 in an effort to develop enough generation capacity to meet the demand for service and restore all feeders. Feeder restoration began shortly after 10 a.m. and all service was restored to the island district just before noon.

In the days ahead, Mr. Hodge said WAPA will be closely scrutinizing the actions of the employee, which resulted in today's island-wide service interruption, to determine if adjustments are required in the fuel operations protocol and to ensure that this type of error does not reoccur.

"I thank the Authority's employees who worked tirelessly to assist in the restoration effort. I would also like to extend sincere apologies to the public for the inconvenience, and thank our customers for their patience and understanding as we worked through the morning hours to restore electrical service," Mr. Hodge concluded.