

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Construction Of Henry E. Rohlsen Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Facility Starts Today

Business / **Published On January 25, 2016 01:09 PM /**

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ST. CROIX -- The Virgin Islands Port Authority on Friday, Jan. 22 broke ground for the construction of what is deemed as this island's first state-of-the-art fire fighting facility. A \$7.1 million contract to construct the modern space was awarded to AT Construction Solutions, and the firm's Vice President of Operations, Luis Uzcategui, said 40 locals would be hired.

Speaking at the groundbreaking event just east of the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport's tower, various VIPA executives -- including Carlton Dowe, the authority's executive director and David Mapp, the government-owned entity's assistant executive director heading the St. Croix branch -- spoke of the importance of the pending facility and how it will enhance the

airport's fire service arm, a critical component of all airports.

The new 12,000-square-foot fire station will feature cutting-edge firefighting equipment and accommodations for the fire fighters. It will replace the existing fire station, which has been in deplorable condition for several years, according to VIPA officials.

"This is an important project for St. Croix. The Rohlsen Airport will receive a significant improvement, and the project will employ residents on St. Croix during the construction phase," said Mr. Dowe in a recent press release.

Damian Cartwright, senior engineer for VIPA as well as other officials to include Mr. Dowe, challenged AT Construction Solutions to stay within budget and finish on time, if not before. And there were remarks from other officials as well, including St. Croix Administrator Stephanie Williams, who spoke on behalf of Governor Kenneth Mapp in support of the facility and its benefits to this island.

VIPA received a Federal Aviation Administration Grant in the amount of \$6,870,128 (of which \$2,575,084 was discretionary funds). The total cost of the project is \$7,182,801, and the remainder will be funded by the Port Authority.

The FAA had stopped discretionary funding for the Rohlsen Airport in 2002 due to issues regarding the closure of the Anguilla Landfill which have since been resolved, Mr. Dowe said. This grant marks the third year in a row that HERA has received discretionary funding.

Feature Image: VIPA, Mapp administration and AT Construction Solutions break ground at the location of the Henry E. Rohlsen aircraft rescue fire fighting facility.

Image Credit: VIC.