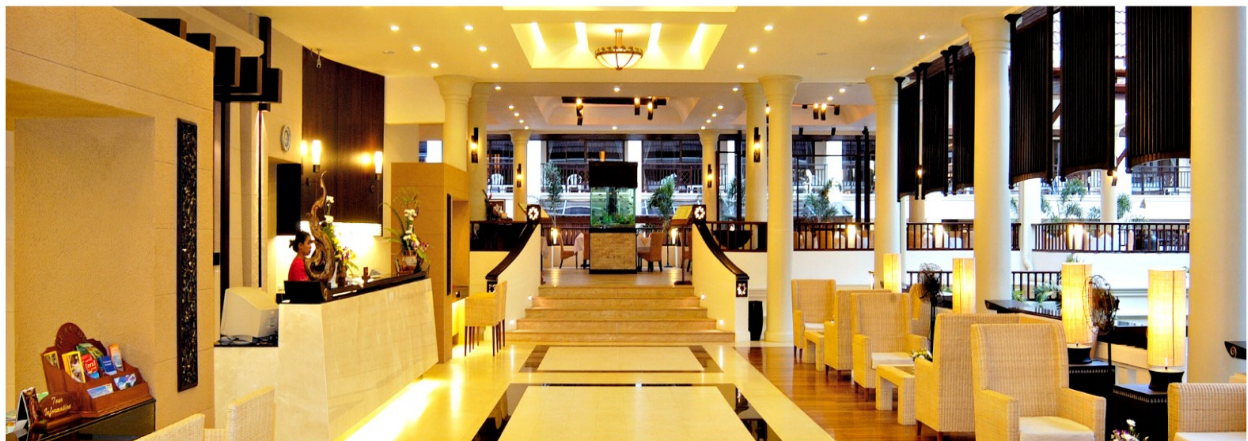


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Announces Major Four-Star Hotel Development For St. Croix; Disney's 'Destination Experience' Assessment To Be Revealed In February

Business / **Published On January 26, 2016 10:31 AM /**

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ST. THOMAS -- Speaking at the State of the Territory Address on Monday night, Governor Kenneth Mapp [made good on his word](#) to announce a major project for St. Croix.

The governor revealed that his administration would unveil, before the end of 2016, a 250-room 4-star hotel development on the big island, however he did not go into details in regards to where on St. Croix it would be built, or the company backing the project's development.

"In 2003, the Public Finance Authority commissioned a destination study by HVS International pertaining to the future development of hotels and meeting facilities for the island of St. Croix.

"I have asked the PFA to have the destination study updated. It is my administration's objective to send to this body before year's end a development project for the construction and operation of a branded hotel facility of at least 4-stars and not less than 250 rooms for the island of St. Croix. In the coming days, I will announce a project team of persons from the public and private sectors who will assist the administration on putting together a transaction deal with a major brand for this facility," Governor Mapp said at the Earl B. Ottley Legislative Hall last night.

In March of 2015, while delivering the keynote address at the Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting, Mr. Mapp [revealed](#) that a Walt Disney Company official had offered the Government of the Virgin Islands the "full portfolio" of Walt Disney's "technical support system" to help create a "destination experience" on St. Croix.

The governor said he had been in conversations with cruise-industry officials, and in a meeting last year with Karl Holtz, president of Disney Cruise Line, he asked whether the company had any plans for St. Croix.

In response, Mr. Holtz, Mr. Mapp said, "talked about the issues of the duplication of visits. He said "Disney has tried St. Croix and there are some issues in terms of it getting ready and being a fully fledged cruise ship destination."

However, the governor said he asked Mr. Holtz to consider including St. Croix on his cruise line's itinerary.

"I said, 'I need help [and] I'm willing to help you [with] the cruise industry, and cruise traffic in the Virgin Islands is essential to our economy, and I'm going to support that, but I need help for where I come from,'" the governor explained.

It was after this candid request that Mr. Mapp said Mr. Holtz "extended to the people of the Virgin Islands the full portfolio of Disney's technical support system."

On Monday night, the territory's leader unveiled the progress his administration has made on that front.

"On January 22, 2015 I met with Mr. Karl Holtz, President of New Vacation Operations and Disney Cruise Line at Government House St. Thomas. During our meeting I learned that Karl had long and historic ties to St. Croix.

"Out of my pleasant surprise of Karl's Crucian ties; I asked him for help. Mr. Holtz graciously agreed to help St. Croix by lending a team of Disney professionals to look closely at what the visitor experience is on the island and what if anything we could do as a community to improve this experience. In addition, the Disney team would help us with an assessment of St. Croix as a cruise destination.

"On November 15th, we hosted a team of four Disney professionals and executives. The team met with government, private merchants, along with taxi and tour operators. The team members immersed themselves as cruise passengers and were able to get a full

experience as day visitors to the island. The team's presence and work with the community went very well. On November 17th, I hosted a closeout meeting at government house with the team and business community. The Disney team has promised a comprehensive written report to us by mid-February.

"Tonight, I wish on behalf of the Territory to extend our sincere thank you to Mr. Karl Holtz and the members of his team from Walt Disney Parks and Resorts. Thank you Karl," Governor Mapp said.

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