

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Ferryboat Touches Water For First Time; Launch Trip Projected For Mid-June

Business / **Published On May 10, 2016 09:17 PM /**

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ST. CROIX -- Residents, boaters, senators and others gathered at the Salt River Bay Marina today to witness what many believe will usher a new day of affordable travel between St. Croix and St. Thomas, as the QE4 -- a \$2 million ferryboat designed and owned by local businessman Warren Mosler -- was lifted off land by two cranes and placed on water for the first time, after being built at the legendary [Gold Coast Yachts](#) here.

And what a sight it was to behold. Onlookers watched with anticipation as the cranes lifted the boat and, with careful guidance that lasted about 7 minutes, shifted it to sea, hoping that everything would work as planned.

It did. The scattered crowds at the marina roared with approving cheers. The professionals at Gold Coast Yachts, along with Mr. Mosler, celebrated by taking pictures alongside the boat, while others could be seen drinking champagne. It was a simple victory that was expected to go as planned, but seeing the boat sit on water after years of planning, designing, and construction, relieved Mr. Mosler.

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"It's good. One big hurdle has been crossed, and now it's time to get the motors in and fire it to see what it does," said Mr. Mosler, who had told The Consortium in a previous interview that his first hope was to see the boat sit on water. The vessel sits higher than had anticipated, a good thing, he said, because it allows for space used to add extra seats or luggage.



St. Croix businessman Warren Mosler.

Without the two engines, seen [here](#), the vessel weighs 21,000 pounds, Mr. Mosler said, and between 27,000-28,000 pounds once they're installed.

Senators celebrated the momentous occasion and praised Mr. Mosler for his vision, which they say will see increased commute and as a result an uptick in commerce between St. Thomas and St. Croix. Mr. James, in particular, was pleased with Mr. Mosler's commitment to forge a design that would see smoother sea travel than past endeavors.

"I'm more impressed with the commitment to the aerodynamics and the engineering to actually make for a better and safer passenger ride, and in speaking to Warren Mosler, he stated that he actually went beyond the safety suggestions, because we're dealing with passengers," Mr. James said.

Senator Kenneth Gittens, also present today, along with Kurt Vialet, Novelle Francis and Positive Nelson -- all of whom visited during the course of the day, expressed excitement for Mr. Mosler's new venture, and said it would work to unite the islands. Mr. Gittens, [who had clashed with Searborne Airlines over what the deemed as high ticket prices](#) for inter-island travel, also highlighted the possibility of increased commerce between St. Thomas and St. Croix.

"I'm really excited to see this new vessel hit the water today. Certainly an indication of greater things to come. As a territory we've drifted apart because of high airline prices and a lack of an alternate means to travel between islands," Mr. Gittens said.

"I applaud Mr. Warren Mossler on his forward thinking in providing such a needed amenity. This boat can aid families in building familiarity and strengthening their bonds through more frequent visits. I see this motor vessel in the future as a catalyst to transport sports teams, majorettes, carnival/festival participants & goers, choirs, cultural ambassadors and even students so that we can engage in greater cultural exchanges between the islands like we did before," Mr. Gittens added.

After a Coast Guard test to receive certification (two Coast Guard officials were present for today's debut), the boat is expected to be ready for commercial use in one month.

For Gold Coast Yachts, Mr. Mosler's boat was yet another major project in the firm's history of building a host of designs. They've been building yachts here for 31 years, with the QE4 being boat number 170. The company has built three boats that are on this island, fourteen in St. Thomas, four in St. John and all through the Caribbean, the mainland U.S. and Hawaii.