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Dept. of Tourism Launches Virtual St. John Festival From June 27-July 4; Events Schedule Released

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St. John Festival Revelers

ST. JOHN — The 66th annual St. John Celebration, which was set for June 3 to July 4, has been canceled, but organizers have announced a “pop-up” virtual festival which will run from June 27 to July 4, the Department of Tourism has announced.

Tourism Commissioner Joseph Boschulte stated that due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and restrictions on mass gatherings in the territory, which will likely extend through the summer, the Division of Festivals team made the practical decision to cancel this year’s celebration.

“We will, however, build on the virtual activities our team rolled out for Carnival Virgin Islands on St. Thomas, and we will take our music, culture and pageantry into the homes of thousands of Virgin Islanders and potential visitors to our islands,” said Mr. Boschulte, who added that D.O.T. received tremendous positive feedback from the online social activities, which included musical performances as well as replays of previous carnival activities.

The commissioner, along with Ian Turnbull, director of the Division of Festivals, thanked Governor Albert Bryan Jr., fellow government colleagues, sponsors and volunteers for ensuring the success of St. Thomas’s Virtual Carnival, and said the division looked forward to producing another dynamic virtual event.

Some of the activities planned for the celebration include a virtual Local Cuisine Showcase, featuring Chef Julius Jackson and local culture bearer Irene Scatliff; and a Cultural “Do It Yourself” segment on costuming and traditional games in partnership with Reichhold Center for the Arts. Historian Kurt Marsh, Jr. will speak on the history of Emancipation Day and St. John’s cultural roots.

The popular “Home Wuk” online series will once again feature the USVI’s DJ Avalanche who will serve up feel-good music from the Virgin Islands and the region, D.O.T. said.

“People thoroughly enjoyed seeing and hearing the sights and sounds of an authentic USVI carnival experience, and our goal is to offer more festival vibes to help Virgin Islanders near and far - as well as prospective visitors - feel connected to one another during the pandemic,” Mr. Turnbull said.

There will be a virtual kick-off event on Father's Day, this Sunday, June 21 at 4 p.m., featuring Cool Session and DJ Kuntry.

Festival sponsors include Caneel Bay, Cruzan Rum, Kismet, Oriental Bank, Reichhold Center for the Arts, Sea Shore Allure, Virgin Islands Lottery, Virgin Islands Port Authority and Viya.

The St. John Celebration traditionally culminates on July 4, combining the excitement of carnival with both the Fourth of July and the spirit of Emancipation. Slaves in the U.S. Virgin Islands were freed on July 3, 1848.

Following the virtual edition of Love City’s annual festivities, plans will begin for staging the annual Crucian Christmas Festival, which is slated for St. Croix between December 4, 2020 and January 6, 2021.



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