The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Signs Contracts For Road Repairs In St. John And Improvements To Joseph Gomez Elementary In St. Thomas

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ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp has approved and signed three contracts to complete roadway improvements in St. John and repairs to the Joseph Gomez Elementary School in St. Thomas, Government House made known via press release late Saturday.

On the island of St. John, Rumina Construction, LLC will provide repair work on routes 104-1 and 108. The repairs and improvements designated for roadways 104-1 and 20 will include pavement restoration, retaining wall construction, traffic control, slope stabilization and drainage improvements, according to the release. On route 108 Bordeaux Mountain, Rumina will provide labor, materials and equipment in excavating and widening of the switchback. These roadway projects are being undertaken to improve road conditions and safety for the motoring public on that island, according to Government House.

On the island of St. Thomas, students at the Joseph Gomez Elementary School can look forward to improvements on their campus, the release further states. The contract signed by Mr. Mapp between the Department of Education and Apex Construction Company calls for the construction of lighting and fencing at the school.

In his 2017 budget, Mr. Mapp has included further repairs and construction for schools as well as other significant infrastructure improvements aimed at improving conditions for young people at school and play in the Virgin Islands. But the projects, which come as part of the governor's capital projects bill, will face tough scrutiny during Senate hearings, following the downgrading of the territory's bonds by Moody's; news that Senate President Janette Millin Young used to criticize the governor's 2017 budget.

“My earlier statement about the fiscal year 2017 budget being unrealistic and too optimistic was not made lightly. News of the downgrade in bond rating by Moody’s is not surprising given the submittal of a $110 million budget deficit. We must all be concerned what these downgrades represent for the territory and its residents,” Mrs. Millin Young said following news of the downgrade. “Borrowing at this time would prove difficult. It’s like a consumer with a poor credit rating having a difficult time borrowing money. And, if they can get a loan, it is at much higher interest rates. Higher interest rates mean W.A.P.A. rates would go up, leaving less tax money for public services.”