

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Port Authority Launches New Pilot Boat For Use In St. Croix Harbors

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ST. CROIX -- The Virgin Islands Port Authority said this afternoon that it launched a vessel dubbed Earl Larry Finch II, above, in the harbors of St. Croix on Monday, replacing the original Earl Larry Finch vessel that was taken offline last year due to storm damage.

The new vessel's first assignment: To escort the Captain Dann tug and barge into the Christiansted channel as it delivered oil to the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority's facility, according to the release.

The island's harbors had been serviced by one pilot vessel since the first Larry Finch went offline, (the Claude Berry), which was quite taxing on V.I.P.A.'s pilots and the boat, said V.I.P.A. Executive Director Carlton Dowe.

But with the new \$500,000 pilot boat purchased by the Port Authority, V.I.P.A. now has two pilot boats to assist all cruise, cargo and private vessels with entry into St. Croix's harbors to berth safely, according to the release.

The Claude Berry is stationed at the Wilfred Allick Port and Transshipment Center, called the Container Port, which is St. Croix's busiest cargo port. The new pilot boat will service the other seaports on St. Croix.

According to the release, the Earl Larry Finch II is an all structural-grade welded aluminum, 32-feet long vessel with an enclosed cabin. It is outfitted with brand new state of the art twin 300hp Evinrude ETEC engines and equipped with navigational instruments such as a depth finder and a radar.

Image Credit: V.I.P.A.