

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Power Fully Restored To St. Thomas-St. John District Following Unit Failure At Randolph Harley Power Plant, WAPA Says

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ST. THOMAS -- Personnel at WAPA's Randolph Harley Power Plant worked into the early morning hours of Saturday to restore electrical service to the St. Thomas – St. John district following a failure of Unit 23 and a subsequent cascading effect on nine feeders. The unit fell off line just after 5 p.m. Friday interrupting electrical service, WAPA announced early Saturday.

WAPA Executive Director Julio A. Rhymer, Sr. said Friday night that working with only limited capacity from two other generating units, Units 18 and 25, personnel were forced

to engage a limited rotation schedule so as to spread out the available electricity to as many customers as possible.

"In light of the limited generation capacity we have from two generators, about 40 megawatts, we will likely not have the resources available to restore all electric service until Unit 23 is back on line. As the night wore on, we saw a decrease in demand for electricity which allowed plant personnel to gradually restore service, feeder by feeder. At midnight, all but a portion of Feeder 9E which serves St. John was restored," Mr. Rhymer said.

He added that Unit 14 is off line for repair of a problem that developed a day or two ago and Unit 15 is in the process of being converted to burn propane in line with WAPA's ongoing migration to LPG as the primary fuel source. Neither of these units were available for use on Friday night.

Mr. Rhymer said that an initial determination has been made by plant personnel regarding the cause of Friday's failure of Unit 23.

"I have been advised that throughout the day the unit operated irregularly and the situation worsened closer to the end of the day when it eventually tripped off line. At first glance, it appears that an issue within the unit's fuel delivery system caused it to perform erratically at first and then trip off line this evening." he said. Additionally, some electrical problems were detected with the unit during the emergency repairs and its subsequent restart, those problems were also addressed.

Electrical service was fully restored to the St. Thomas-St. John district at 1:12 a.m.

Mr. Rhymer thanked the men and women of WAPA for their assistance, hard work and dedication in resolving the challenges facing the power plant on Friday night.