

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Completion of Dredging Allows Oasis And Solstice-Class Vessels To Berth At Crown Bay

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ST. THOMAS -- For the first time in the history of the cruise port in Crown Bay, the Celebrity Silhouette has berthed along the northern side of the pier at the Austin "Babe" Monsanto Marine Terminal, the Virgin Islands Port Authority announced Wednesday.

"This was never possible in the past because Solstice-class vessels could not safely berth along the north pier," said V.I.P.A. Executive Director Carlton Dowe while making the announcement. "The completion of the dredging in East Gregorie channel to a depth of -10 meters (32.8 feet) allows for both Royal Caribbean's Allure of the Seas, which is an Oasis-class vessel, and the Celebrity Silhouette to bring their passengers to Crown Bay."

Mr. Dowe hailed the berthing as great news for merchants and the economy, and a significant achievement for the Port Authority. The Silhouette and the Allure of the Seas have the combined capacity to bring over 13,000 visitors to St. Thomas -- a first for Crown Bay Center, Mr. Dowe added.

The dredging was funded by the Port Authority via marine revenue bonds issued in 2014 to improve navigational conditions and accommodate the largest cruise ships in the world, Mr. Dowe said. V.I.P.A. hired Orion Marine Construction to perform the dredging.

The executive director went on to thank his staff who he said worked diligently to get the dredging completed, and also V.I.P.A.'s board of governors for their continued support and guidance, according to the release.