

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VITEMA To Present St. John Rescue Squad With New Ambulance

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ST. JOHN -- The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) will deliver a new 2017 ambulance to the St. John Rescue Squad on December 15, at 7:00 p.m. during the Christmas tree lighting at Cruz Bay, VITEMA announced Thursday.

"After closely assessing the needs of first responders, we reprogrammed funds to enhance medical transportation services on St. John," VITEMA Director Mona Barnes said.

The Type 1 Ambulance was purchased for \$126,663, utilizing Homeland Security Grant Program federal funding. St. John Rescue will use the ambulance to support the

Department of Health's Emergency Medical Services during normal operations and will provide additional patient transport capability during disaster response operations, according to VITEMA.

"We remain committed to the safety and preparedness of the St. John community and the new ambulance is a significant step toward improving medical services and the critical transportation needs of the island," Ms. Barnes said.

VITEMA was also able to secure additional Homeland Security grant funding to purchase medical supplies and equipment for Water Island Rescue. Water Island has limited emergency response capabilities for a large-scale event due in part to the lack of basic medical supplies. Water Island Rescue, a volunteer, non-profit community organization, provides the initial emergency medical response for any event on this island.

This month, VITEMA will deliver approximately \$21,000 in medical supplies to supplement Water Island Rescue's current stock. The medical supplies and equipment include emergency oxygen kits, a resuscitator, trauma bags, extrication device, splints, and a portable generator to be used at response sites.

VITEMA is also working to secure a back-up generator for the Water Island firehouse, which serves as a distribution point during disaster.

According to Barnes, the ambulance and medical supplies advances the territory's continued efforts to enhance medical surge capabilities in a major emergency or disaster.