The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Continues To Implement Rotating Power Interruptions In St. Thomas Due To Lack Of Generation Capacity

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ST. THOMAS -- WAPA announced this afternoon that as the Randolph Harley Power Plant on St. Thomas continues to be challenged by the lack of adequate generation capacity to meet an increasing demand for electrical service, the semiautonomous entity has implemented small scale rotating power interruptions this afternoon into this evening.

On Sunday, WAPA made known that it had utilized the same strategy because of the ongoing problem.

WAPA Chief Executive Officer Julio Rhymer, Sr. said the recent generation problems to affect the authority began on Friday morning, when Unit 15, a 20-megawatt generator, tripped. “The failure of Unit 15 had a domino effect on another generating unit, Unit 18, and with the loss of the units, several feeders fell off line. At the time of the service interruption, both units were dispatched providing more than half of the district’s power demand,” Mr. Rhymer said.

A service interruption is now being experienced on a portion of Feeders 7A, 7B, 9E and 8B, WAPA said. Affected areas include: Solberg, Four Corners, St. Peter Mountain Road, Estate Thomas, Peterborg and a portion of Cruz Bay, St. John. The affected portions of 7A, 7B and 8B are expected to be restored momentarily at which time a portion of Feeders 10A and 7C will be interrupted.

In the meantime, plant personnel continue to make repairs to a transformer component associated with Unit 23. It is anticipated that Unit 23, the district’s largest generator, will be brought on line this evening ending the need for continued rotating service interruptions. Currently, Units 14, 15 and 25 are on line.

According to WAPA, earlier on today, the St. Thomas/ St. John district experienced a three-hour island-wide service interruption when the faulty transformer of Unit 23 caused the generator to trip off line. The trip of Unit 23 also caused Units 25 and 15 to fall off line leading to a complete loss of generation capacity at the power plant. Service was fully restored with Units 14, 15 and 25, however, the combined power output of the units does not provide enough capacity to meet peak power demand, making rotating service interruptions necessary during periods of heavy demand.