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\$2.6 Million Awarded to Sports, Parks and Recreation for Retrofit of the St. John Community Center

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Community Center on St. John By. ELROY HILL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR ST. JOHN, DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS, PARKS AND RECREATIO

ST. JOHN — The Office of Disaster Recovery on Wednesday announced the award of \$2.6 million to the Virgin Islands Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation (DSPR) for the retrofit of the Community Center on St. John.

O.D.R. said the dual-phased project funded by FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) will include the reconstruction of the DSPR community center and the adjacent building into one 14,232 square foot, two-story structure off Fish Fry Drive.

Located in the heart of Cruz Bay, plans for the proposed site include a recreation room, vocational center, study hall, computer lab, and office spaces. It will also incorporate an outdoor play area for after school and summer camp programs.

“The Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation thanks the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for the funding that will aid in rebuilding the St. John Community Center and services to the residents on St. John,” said Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation Commissioner Calvert White. “Residents will also see an expansion in the services offered with innovative technical courses and children’s programs.”

According to O.D.R., the new multi-purpose community center will be retrofitted for use as a shelter and safe room designed to withstand hurricane-force winds. The building will be constructed to meet FEMA’s standards for safe room construction equipped with back-up power, including a ramp and elevator to ensure ADA compliance to accommodate all members of the St. John community.

“This is a tremendous opportunity. Not only will FEMA support the restoration of the community center but also the development of a much-needed shelter and safe room providing residents with an accessible and comfortable location to shelter in the event of a natural disaster,” said O.D.R. Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien.

This award covers Phase I, architectural engineering and design, and could take approximately six months to complete once the solicitation is released. Phase II, demolition, and construction will begin after the contract is awarded and is slated to take just under two years.