

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. Of Health Finally Receives 5 Brand New Ambulances

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Ernice Gilbert **April 21, 2017**



ST. CROIX -- After waiting over six months, the Virgin Islands Department of Health, during an event held at the Charles Harwood Medical Complex in Richmond, unveiled two brand new ambulances for use on the island on St. Croix, bringing to an end a period when many of the island's residents had to sometimes wait hours before EMS could respond to an emergency.

The ambulances -- procured during the tenure of former Property and Procurement Commissioner Randolph Bennett -- took six months to be retrofitted for use in the territory, because of the islands' terrain. Two are stationed on St. Croix, two on St. Thomas and one on St. John, according to D.O.H.

Officials from D.O.H., some of its employees, as well and P&P personnel -- including its new commissioner, Lloyd Bough, Jr. -- participated in the press unveiling. Senator Sammuell Sanes, who voted for the emergency vehicles bill that cleared the way for the Public Finance Authority to float a \$10 million bond for the purchase of vehicles in multiple first responder agencies, said he was pleased that the ambulances had finally arrived. He also called for proper maintenance of the new vehicles, a concern that Mr. Bough and Dept. of Health Commissioner, Dr. Michelle Davis, said was at the top of D.O.H.'s agenda.

Mr. Bough, acknowledging that he had little to do with the process of purchasing the ambulances, nonetheless expressed satisfaction that they were finally in the territory, and praised P&P employees for their tireless work in making sure that they arrived.

And Ms. Davis hailed the arrival of the new vehicles as a big step in the right direction, referring to the ambulances as state of the art, and stressing that they will be well maintained, with a rotating schedule in place to make sure that the vehicles last as long as possible. She also floated the possibility of D.O.H. ordering at least one more ambulance for St. Croix.

Jacqueline Greenidge-Payne, acting EMS territorial coordinator, said she was happy that the ambulances had finally arrived -- not because of the employees who make up the first responder team that she leads -- but rather for the wellbeing of the people they serve on a daily basis.

The ambulances cost \$200,000 each, according to information provided by Mr. Bennett last year. Other agencies receiving vehicles as part of the \$10 million [emergency vehicles bill](#) included the V.I.P.D., V.I. Fire Service, Public Works, Bureau of Corrections, the Office of the Examiner and the central government.