

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Senate President Urges Health Officials To Install GPS On New Ambulances

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ST. THOMAS -- Senate President Myron Jackson recently encouraged the Virgin Islands Department of Health to install global positioning system (GPS) capabilities on the new ambulances purchased for the territory, in order to better meet the emergency needs of all residents.

"I have asked for GPS to be included as a feature as it would save precious time in responding to life-threatening and emergency situations," Mr. Jackson said, following a press conference held two weeks ago at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas.

Such a feature would be in sync with territory-wide initiatives such as the Street Naming Project launched by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor for a unified identification of property and residential location efforts, he said.

Under Act No. 7866 (Bill No. 31-0224), the scope of the 2012 Police Fleet Project was expanded to include the acquisition of ambulances and emergency medical support vehicles for the Virgin Islands Department of Health. Act No. 7876 (Bill No. 31-0359) further specified that funds for the emergency vehicles could not be used for purchase of official and ceremonial vehicles for the Offices of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

Three new ambulances were unveiled in Schneider Hospital parking lot for use in the St. Thomas-St. John district as a result, after about six months of negotiations, building, and retrofitting the vehicles to suit the Virgin Islands environment. Similar vehicles [were showcased on St. Croix.](#)

Some of the enhanced features include a kneeling system, which automatically lowers and raises the height of the ambulance when the back door opens; a power loaded stretcher which helps guide it out automatically and allows it to be stabilized on the ground or lifted off with ease; power locks on all compartment doors; reverse cameras to aid drivers in backing up; LED lights which burn brighter and burn less electricity; and siren speakers placed in the bumpers to increase airflow to the engine, according to Mr. Avon Chesterfield, EMS district coordinator for St. Thomas-St. John.

The Ford vehicles all have 4-wheel drive, and were built by Wheel Coach, Chesterfield said, adding that training for emergency personnel will take place over the next 2.5 weeks and that afterward the ambulances will be put into commission.