

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Customs And Border Protection Gathers Feedback On USVI Trade Automation Process

VIC News / **Published On June 20, 2017 03:57 PM /**

Staff **June 20, 2017**



ST. THOMAS -- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) held an event Friday at the Cyril E. King Airport to gather local feedback to incorporate the U.S. Virgin Islands into the [Automated Commercial Environment](#) (ACE), to expedite the importation process, the federal agency announced Tuesday morning.

With the title *On the Path to Automation, Getting there together!*, the USVI trade community and CBP had an open dialogue regarding the challenges of using a manual paper-laden process, its impacts to commerce, and the initial steps taken by CBP to modernize this process through the introduction of electronic filing or automation, according to CBP.

ACE is the primary system through which the trade community reports imports and exports and the government determines admissibility. Through ACE as the Single Window, manual processes are streamlined and automated, paper is being eliminated, and the trade community is able to more easily and efficiently comply with U.S. laws and regulations.

In 2016, the CBP San Juan Field Office started the process of gathering information on the longstanding system in which all custom entries are made by importers in person, on the island of St. Thomas. Amalie.



CBP ACE meeting on Friday, June 16 in St.

Thomas. (CBP)

“Stakeholder input has been key to our ACE success. This input has been a critical component in defining the business requirements that have made up our ACE deployments, and will continue to be critical as we enter the next phase of ACE,” said Brenda Smith, executive assistant commissioner for trade. “We look forward to the ongoing dialogue, including today’s discussion, to determine how we can integrate the needs of USVI processing into ACE.”

With a manual cargo clearance process, each CBP employee must retain and apply import laws and regulations based on a manual review upon receipt of clearance documents.

“We need to make the trade entry process in the USVI more customer friendly,” stated Edward Ryan, assistant director of field operations for trade in Puerto Rico and the USVI.

Customs regulations require the advance electronic transmission of cargo information prior to arrival into the United States by sea or air.

The first step in utilizing ACE for trade automation will be to test the carrier manifest component of ACE. This will involve the cooperation of select vessel carriers to send their advanced manifests through ACE for CBP VI review, according to CBP. Thereafter, this submission requirement will be implemented for all vessel carriers. This will bring vessel carriers in line with the Customs regulations.

CBP requirements in the USVI are unique because it operates under the Danish Public Law 64; a law that remains in effect since 1914, when Denmark sold the islands to the U.S.