

The Virgin Islands Consortium

viNGN Officials Tour Sites Hosting Computer Centers

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Virgin Islands Next Generation Network (viNGN) President and CEO H. Mark McGibbon, Public Computing Center Manager Anita Davis, and Public Relations Manager Pamela Finley toured each of the 33 free Public Computer Centers in the territory from Monday through Wednesday, June 26-28, with the main purpose of the visits being to express gratitude for the many services provided by the organizations hosting the centers.

According to a viNGN release issued Wednesday, many of the site managers and volunteers were genuinely touched by the gesture of receiving a service award certificate. Sarah Connell, board member of the Garden Street Community Association, Inc., which manages the Long Path Public Computer Center on St. Thomas, happily informed viNGN officials of an enrichment program being coordinated at the center,

holding back tears as she accepted her certificate. "We have more plans in store," she said, smiling broadly.

Gerian James, youth community coordinator at the D.C. Canegata Multi-Purpose Center on St. Croix, maintains her enthusiasm for keeping the computers available to as many as possible, for as long as possible. "These computers are very important to us and the children," she stated. The computers are often used for after-school programs at the very popular venue.

On St. John, Adrian Senior Center Manager Abigail Hendricks was delighted to greet Mr. McGibbon, telling him how much the seniors appreciate having use of the computers and how much help they had all received through Ms. Finley.

"Every week, I receive reports from every department including the Public Computing Centers, and it is clear to me that everything is being done to get the most out of the equipment and software to go beyond the formal grant period," Mr. McGibbon said. "After getting out to see them all and meet the people who sustain them day in and day out, my main takeaway is that these centers are being used, and the community has benefited greatly from their existence."

viNGN was primarily funded by grants from the Department of Commerce through the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) with a charter to provide wholesale broadband middle-mile service to providers and to promote local economic growth, innovation and global competitiveness. The grants awarded were: State Broadband Data Development (SBDD), Comprehensive Community Initiative (CCI), Sustainable Broadband Adoption (SBA) and PCC.

Through the PCC grant, viNGN worked in conjunction with local vendors and suppliers to obtain and install nearly 400 computers, servers, productivity and security software, printers, switches, routers and other peripherals. Selected centers also received furniture, ADA (assistive) hardware and/or software, and large-screen monitors.

*Feature Image: From left to right, Anita Davis, Gerian James and H. Mark McGibbon.
(Credit: viNGN)*