

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Viya Installs Three Communication Hubs In St. Thomas Free Of Charge; St. John Hubs Coming Soon

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In an effort to provide communication for the community in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, Viya announced early Wednesday that three communication hubs have been established on St. Thomas, with more to be installed in St. John.

Access to internet and the ability to make calls will serve as a lifeline to many in the St. Thomas-St. John District who have been struggling to connect with families. Viya did not say how soon the service would be available in St. John, however the company is sending a helicopter to St. John with equipment at 9:00 a.m. today, to begin the work, according to Viya Vice President of Public Relations, Jennifer Matarangas-King.

"We know that many residents on St. Thomas do not have access to connectivity because of the sheer volume of downed lines and the lack of power to most customers, which affects our Hybrid-Fiber Coax network. We are working very closely with our partners at VI Water and Power Authority to get both systems up as soon as possible," said Viya CEO Alvaro Pilar.

"In the interim, we are doing everything within our power to provide options for our customers. Effective today, Viya is establishing Viya-Fi hotspots at three locations: Tutu Park, Havensight and Emile Griffith Park," he informed.

According to Viya, rather than merely providing traditional phone banks that will create long lines as customers wait to speak on a finite number of landlines, Viya has developed Viya-Fi hotspots that will allow over 250 people at a time to bring their device, smartphone or tablet, to the site for connectivity. Customers will be able to make voice calls, send text messages and send e-mail. By Thursday, Viya will also have staff on site to provide wireless devices for individuals that do not have one.

"We know that most customers have some type of wireless device and this is the most efficient way to serve the maximum number of people in an orderly fashion. When members of the community go to the aforementioned sites, they should log on to ViyaFi_FREE_ACCESS. All sites will have the same log-in information and you do not have to be a Viya customer to use our hotspots," Mr. Pilar said.

"Viya is very excited about, and committed to, being able to provide a viable solution to assist with the community's communication needs. We plan to add additional hubs in the future on St. Thomas and St. John," Mr. Pilar concluded.