

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Pence Arrives In USVI Friday; St. Croix Airport Reopens; Curfews Eased Again

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ST. CROIX -- Vice President Mike Pence and his wife will land on St. Croix at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport tomorrow, and will receive an aerial tour of the island to survey the damage caused by Hurricane Maria, and later speak with victims of the storm. Mr. Pence, along with Governor Kenneth Mapp and Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett (Ms. Plaskett is traveling with the vice president tomorrow), will meet the press at the airport's Army Flight Operation Hangar Friday morning. The Consortium was set to cover the event and we will still attempt to do so, but was told that the White House had chosen two media entities to be the only press at the event. It was not clear who gave the recommendations, and how the two unrevealed media houses were chosen.

Government House attempted to include The Consortium as part of the invited media, but the Secret Service, we were told, would not allow any media at the event other than the chosen two. The action is curious and surprising; The Consortium has covered Hurricanes Irma and Maria, Mr. Mapp's daily press briefings, and other items related to the disasters relentlessly, and has brought live coverage of many of the governor's press briefings. To not be included with invited press to Mr. Pence's visit is rather anomalous.

In other recovery-related news, the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport opened for commercial flights today, with Delta Airlines and Jetblue both leaving with passengers to U.S. terminals. Customs and TSA are also functional at the airport, according to Department of Tourism Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty. Others carriers with flights include American Airlines, Seaborne Airlines and Cape Air.

The governor announced new curfew hours that will remain in effect on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. On St. Croix, the new curfew hours are 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m., meaning St. Croix residents have between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. to conduct business. In the St. Thomas-St. John District, the new curfew hours are 8:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.

Below, find the other important updates from Mr. Mapp's Thursday press briefing: