

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Over 500 Stateside Linemen Will Be Working With WAPA As Race To Light Up 90 Percent Of USVI By Christmas Begins

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Governor Kenneth Mapp said on Friday evening that more than 500 linemen from across the U.S. will soon be in the territory to help the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority meet its goal of restoring power to 90 percent of the USVI by Christmas.

Mr. Mapp, speaking during his press briefing held at Government House on St. Croix, said 60 linemen arrived on St. Thomas on Friday, 100 were set to arrive on St. Croix today, and an additional 50 would make their way to St. Thomas on Sunday. On the 17th and 22nd of October, 20 and 25 more respectively, are on schedule to arrive. And

between Oct. 27 and Nov. 3, 250 more linemen will be in the USVI, bringing the total to well over 500.

The governor said new types of poles will be used; equipment that can dig through rocks will be utilized and holes will be dug deeper to make for a more resilient power system.

Yet even with all these reinforcement measures, the administration is moving forward with plans to place the territory's power distribution system -- particularly in the USVI's primary and secondary areas -- underground. The governor said Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite, chief of engineers and commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who is in charge of rebuilding Puerto Rico's power distribution system, will assess that of the USVI -- including the territory's generation system. "It means we're going to work towards a more resilient production and distribution of power," the governor stated.

Mr. Mapp included funding in his \$5.5 billion request from Congress to place the territory's power distribution system underground. Whether the funds will be provided remains to be seen.

Below, find WAPA's latest power and potable water restoration update:

ELECTRIC SYSTEM

- The first wave of off-island linemen contracted by WAPA to aid in its electrical restoration have begun to arrive in the territory. 260 linemen and engineers will be in the Virgin Islands by Sunday, another 150 by October 27, and an additional 100 linemen by November 3rd. They are joining crews from the Western Area Power Administration who have been here for several weeks. The off-island crews will be equally divided between the St. Thomas-St. John and St. Croix districts.
- The Authority has contracted with debris removal crews to clean up fallen lines, poles, transformers and other utility-owned hurricane debris. The crews are assigned in each district.
- On St. Croix Friday, line crews continued to work on a double circuit from the Richmond power plant along Feeder 6A to Five Corners and Feeder 6B to Mill Harbor. Some poles were planted on Feeder 1A, which serves the downtown Christiansted area, and along Feeder 8B on Queen Mary Highway. Crews made steady progress on another portion of Feeder 8B, preparing a circuit that runs through the Hannah's Rest intersection, for service restoration. Debris removal crews cleaned up areas around Bassin Triangle and Golden Rock. Those crews will then focus on ridding various public school campuses of downed lines, transformers and broken poles.
- On St. John, line crews continued to prepare areas in Cruz Bay for service restoration. Once electrical service has been restored to the WAPA East End Substation near the armory in Nazareth, portions of Cruz Bay can then be energized. Daily work on St. John involves completing the service path from Cruz Bay, through Estate Pastory, to the Myrah Keating Smith Community Health Center.
- On St. Thomas, crews continued work in Lindbergh Bay toward Gladys Abraham elementary school, on the middle road in Estate Thomas, and on a portion of Feeder 10A extending into Frenchtown.

- WAPA is advising residents that it is necessary to shut off standby generators when line crews are in your neighborhood restoring electrical service. A standby generator has the potential to back feed electricity to the grid which poses a severe safety risk to restoration crews.
- Residents are asked to refrain from cutting damaged or toppled poles. Poles that were damaged must remain in place to allow WAPA to properly document the damage when replacement poles are planted. Once poles are cut or removed by residents, WAPA is unable to seek reimbursement for the damaged pole.

POTABLE WATER SYSTEM

- WAPA reminds the public that a precautionary boil water notice for potable water customers is in place territory-wide. Due to a drop in water pressure, as a precaution, we advise that all water used for drinking, cooking, making infant formula or juices, making ice, brushing teeth, washing fruits or vegetables and washing dishes, be boiled. Bringing water to a rolling boil and maintaining for one full minute is sufficient. Water must be adequately cooled before it can be used and should be stored in clean, covered containers. As an alternative, bottled water certified for sale by the Department of Health may be used.
- There are three days of water storage on St. John; six days on St. Thomas and five days on St. Croix.
- On St. Croix, the Concordia pump station remains off line awaiting equipment repair which should be completed on Saturday. Temporary electrical service was brought to the pump station but later failed. As a result, low to no water pressure will be experienced by customers from mid-island to Frederiksted this weekend.
- On St. Thomas, the Savan pump station at Vester Gade was restored. Efforts continue to bring temporary electrical service to the Contant pump station. Once electrical service is established, potable water service will be restored to Contant and the surrounding areas, including the Contant Knolls housing community.

GENERAL INFORMATION