

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## With Limited Budget, Dept. Of Tourism Launches 150-Day Marketing Plan

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Following the impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in September, the Department of Tourism has developed a 150-day rolling marketing plan to share with industry stakeholders, D.O.T. announced today.

"This new plan has been developed to establish priorities and a road map of activities we will pursue as our destination recovers," said Beverly Nicholson-Doty, D.O.T. commissioner.

She noted that the "abridged plan" will be fluid and adaptable to the current dynamic recovery environment, and that D.O.T. is committed to continuing to share regular

progress updates with travel partners and the local community.

Mrs. Nicholson-Doty disclosed that the department is working with a significantly reduced budget, as marketing activities are funded by room tax revenues. "With a significant number of accommodations unavailable for most of 2018, the marketing plan reflects working with a reduced budget," she explained, noting that the U.S. Virgin Islands will maintain a limited presence at key trade shows across the United States.

Public relations and marketing efforts will focus on sharing Virgin Islanders' stories of resilience. "Our digital marketing efforts will primarily focus on social media, where we will highlight segments such as cruise, shopping, dining, watersports, beaches, romance, culture, available accommodations and yachting," she said. Efforts and messaging toward telling stories of resilience will use the hashtag #USVISTillNice.

"As we recover from the challenges posed by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, we have no doubt that there is an opportunity for the U.S. Virgin Islands - with a refreshed product and visitor experience - to become the premier tourism destination in the Caribbean," the commissioner added.

Mrs. Nicholson-Doty reported that airline and cruise line development meetings will continue this year, and that voluntourism opportunities are being launched across the territory, a detailed plan for which will be unveiled during the first quarter of 2018.

The USVI's film industry will also remain a focus, D.O.T. said, with the department attending industry trade shows specifically targeted to this audience.

The commissioner expressed her ongoing appreciation of the business community and travel partners for their support of the destination and their continued collaboration.

D.O.T. will make the 150-day plan available to stakeholders over the next several days.