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## WAPA Says it Fared Well During Weather System; Line Crews Addressing Isolated Power Outages

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The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority power plants at Estate Richmond on St. Croix and Krum Bay in St. Thomas fared well in the recent weather system with no interruptions to power production, WAPA said Thursday. There were some sporadic feeder outages on Wednesday, Wednesday night, and Thursday morning associated with the increased winds of Tropical Storm Isaias.

WAPA Line Department crews have been addressing several isolated electrical service interruptions in both districts. Additionally, at mid-afternoon today, crews completed planting new utility poles and transferring lines in the Golden Rock area. Work on the trouble calls will continue through the night tonight.

“These outages are routinely caused by primary service lines slapping against each other, trees intermittently contacting power lines, or tree branches and limbs coming to rest on the service lines. In either scenario, an electrical fault is detected, and the feeder is tripped to protect the grid, and prevent surges from back feeding into the power plants,” said Chief Operating Officer of Electric System Clinton T. Hedrington, Jr. An electrical fault usually requires a Line Department crew to be dispatched to inspect the primary service lines along the entire feeder path, determine the cause of the outage, clear the lines or make required repairs all before power can be restored.

“Due to increasing winds earlier today, restoration efforts were suspended, but, at first light, and once the winds subsided, crews resumed the restoration of our mainline electrical feeders,” said Hedrington. By 9 a.m. Thursday, crews had shifted to addressing the isolated or pocket outages.

Chief Operating Officer of Water System Noel Hodge reported no potable water service interruptions during the passage of the tropical storm. “The system in both districts did well, our pump stations remained online, and service was not impacted.”

Executive Director Lawrence J. Kupfer thanked the WAPA employees who worked in advance, during, and now after the storm event to maintain and restore service to our customers. “Our crews worked throughout the night as weather conditions allowed, I thank each of them, as well as those who worked at our power plants, dispatch centers, and in water distribution. We will also take a second look at our storm operations, review any lessons learned, and tweak our emergency operation plans accordingly,” he said.

Kupfer also thanked members of the public who experienced service outages for their patience and understanding. “At WAPA, the safety of our personnel is our utmost priority and unfortunately, when inclement weather, and specifically increased winds or gusting winds are present, we are unable to work safely, and must suspend restoration efforts, as was the case Wednesday night and again early this morning.”

Customers who are experiencing either an electrical or potable water outage and have not already reported the service interruption to WAPA are asked to do so. Customers can call either 340-774-3552 or 340-773-2250, select option 4.

Kupfer also reported that the monthly governing board meeting scheduled for Thursday was postponed, but the board did hold an emergency board meeting this afternoon. “The governing board approved a provisional extension of the maturity dates of lines of credits and overdraft credit facilities with Firstbank until April 30, 2021, and a similar extension with Banco Popular until October 31, 2020.”