

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Bureau Of Economic Research Staff Take Oath In Preparation To Conduct 2017 Census

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Governor Kenneth Mapp has directed the Virgin Islands Bureau of Economic Research (BER) to partner with the United States Census Bureau to conduct the 2017 Economic Census of Island Areas, Government House has announced.

In order to assist with non-response follow-up activities, BER Director Bernadette Melendez and Senior Policy Analyst Donnie Dorsett, as well as other BER staff members took an oath of confidentiality to gain Special Sworn Status Thursday, according to the release.

Bill Samples, economic census assistant survey director and Robert Nusz, economic census assistant survey director staff chief, witnessed Thursday's ceremony. They said the Census Bureau is thankful for the partnership with the Virgin Islands and recognizes the work that the BER is doing to improve the response rate, especially because of the impact of last year's hurricanes, Government House said.

Every five years, the Census Bureau measures the pulse of the United States and its territories' economies through the economic census. Ms. Melendez underscored the importance of economic census data for guiding the territory's economic growth and policymaking, and informing local entrepreneurs' business decisions.

"Reporting provides more accurate information for policymakers and others to continue to enrich our economy," she said.

Employer businesses are required by law to complete surveys. The deadline was June 12, but business owners are still encouraged to respond.

"We want to emphasize to businesses that all the data is kept confidential. The information provided is private and secured," Mr. Samples said.