

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Reports Installation Of Over 460 Composite Poles Territory-Wide

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Contractors for the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority have completed the installation of more than 460 new composite utility poles across the two districts, the authority announced Thursday. In all, 7,062 of the new, more resilient poles will be installed on all islands by October 2020.

The composite poles, which can withstand higher sustained wind speeds during a storm, are being installed on St. John, St. Croix and Water Island. A similar project will commence on St. Thomas shortly. BBC Electrical Services and Haugland Energy are under contract with WAPA for the installation of the composite poles, which each carry a 40-year warranty, WAPA said.

“The project, funded 100% by FEMA and HUD, is moving along steadily,” said Executive Director and CEO, Lawrence J. Kupfer. So far, 33 poles have been installed on St. Croix, 402 on St. John and 29 on Water Island. “The project began on St. John and significant progress has been made to date with the newer poles in place along Centerline Road and out to Coral Bay. A total of 1,400 poles are slated for installation on St. John,” Mr. Kupfer added. He said when the project is completed, 3,200 of the newer type poles will be installed on St. Croix, 180 on Water Island, and 2,282 on St. Thomas.

According to WAPA, the schedule calls for the installations to be completed on St. Croix by mid- 2020, and on St. Thomas by the end of 2020. The installations on Water Island and St. John are projected to be completed by the end of 2018.

In addition to the composite pole installations, FEMA is footing the bill for major undergrounding projects on all three islands. The development of engineering requests for proposals is complete for projects on all three islands. Future phases involve advertising and awarding an engineering contract, developing an underground scope of work and drawings, and advertising / awarding a construction contract.

WAPA said it anticipates awarding all construction contracts by October 2020. Other mitigation projects include standalone standby generation for St. John, as well as solar and battery storage systems and electrical micro grids.