

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Tonight On VIPC: Joseph Boschulte (Update: Interview Postponed)

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Update: Mr. Boschulte said he could not make this evening's interview because of a Port Authority board meeting that had lasted longer than expected. He agreed for next week.

Original Story: Fresh from his Canadian trip attending the [Routes Americas Conference 2019](#), Department of Tourism Commissioner Nominee Joseph Boschulte will join VI Consortium's Ernice Gilbert tonight on the Virgin Islands Political Consortium (V.I.P.C.). There, Mr. Gilbert is expected to get insight on Mr. Boschulte's plans for D.O.T., including for each island, along with growth strategies, among other pertinent information relative to the product's growth.

The interview will be live on The Consortium's Facebook platform and the website from 7:30 p.m., and run until 8:00 p.m.

Before being chosen to run the department, Mr. Boschulte had been [on contract with D.O.T. as a specialist](#) to assist in forging critical bonds with the cruise ship industry. The contract, which was to last until the end of 2019, saw Mr. Boschulte working with the Ports of the Virgin Islands along with D.O.T. to help the territory achieve “operational improvements” to the cruise ship sector as well as economic benefits to the community. Previously, Mr. Boschulte was the CEO of the West Indian Company (WICO).

He comes to D.O.T. with a vast amount of experience and management skills to lead the department, along with strong ties to the cruise industry. When he served as WICO CEO, Mr. Boschulte, noting the success of the St. Thomas tourism product at the time, was also passionate about the St. Croix offering and said [the island needed to find an identity](#) to compel more visitors to its shores. As D.O.T. commissioner, he will play a key role in helping shape the St. Croix product.

“Part of the challenge right now is for St. Croix to define its identity. You don’t want to have St. Thomas be a St. Croix and St. Croix be a St. Thomas,” Mr. Boschulte said in March 2015. He said people who go on vacations want variety.

“When people go on vacation, they go to seek memories and part of seeking memories is to do things that are different,” he explained. “So you don’t want to go to three or five ports that offer the same thing. And one of the biggest differentiation for people, particularly cruises, whether it’s big boats or smaller boats, is where you go, and one of the ways that you define where you go is which country’s flag is over where the stop is.

“So that’s why you don’t see often on the same cruise itinerary the same stops,” Boschulte continued. “[For example], you won’t hit St. Croix and St. Thomas, you won’t hit St. Kitts and Nevis, or Antigua and Barbuda, because you just want to hit one of them and you keep going. That’s why you don’t see any of the cruise hitting multiple stops in the Bahamas, unless it’s a three or four-day cruise.”

Mr. Boschulte said either St. Croix’s Christiansted or Frederiksted town must be defined as the destination that people go to once they get off the cruise ships.

“I think from a St. Croix perspective, what has to happen, in my opinion, is one of the towns has to be developed as a point of where people go. When people come off the dock [in St. Thomas] they shop at Havensight or down at Crown Bay, but they drive downtown Charlotte Amalie. What we hear directly from the lines is that you have to have the product. So you have to have businesses, things for people to do. If the decision is to develop Christiansted and continue to build on the boardwalk and retail shops, and if the ships are coming into Frederiksted, then they need to have something to do on the drive up and drive back,” Mr. Boschulte said.

He added, “Both towns have qualities of appeal, both towns have their own stories [and] I think part of what needs to happen is, I think there has to have that [involvement] from the public sector from an infrastructure standpoint, from the private sector from an entrepreneurship and investment standpoint, and the third piece, which I think a lot of people forget a lot of the times, is the community.”

He continued: “We could do all we want to do, companies can invest, the government can build new roads and do all this, but if the people are not part of the equation, then you’ll run into some situations where [tourists] come but the [locals] don’t really want them. People come down, but you really don’t know how to deal with them because you’re not prepared for them to come.”

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