The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gerry Yandel's Last Day At VI Daily News Was Monday. He Is Now The Bryan Administration's Deputy Communications Chief.

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Gerry Yandel, the well-known media figure who worked for 9 years at the Virgin Islands Daily News, spent his last day at the publication on Monday as executive director. Mr. Yandel confirmed in a post on Facebook Monday night that he had joined the Bryan administration's communications team as deputy communications director, answering to communications boss Richard Motta.

"After 9 years of some of the most gratifying, rewarding and exciting print journalism in a career that began in 1980, today was my last day as executive editor of The Daily News," Mr. Yandel wrote in a Facebook post.

Adding, "I'm switching sides and going to work for Gov. Albert Bryan Jr. as his deputy communications director and to do what I can to support his mission to help the territory recover from the hurricanes and make the USVI better than ever.

"Thanks to the many talented people I have worked with at The DN who serve the people of the USVI so admirably, and I am looking forward to meeting a new bunch of talented colleagues who do the same. VI Strong."

Mr. Bryan has been trying to grow his communications arm, attempting to hone the administration's messaging as his leadership takes hold and with tough decisions ahead that may ultimately affect Virgin Islanders. The administration had hired Astia LeBron to work in the communications department, but she was soon after moved to the Department of Labor, according to people familiar with the process. The administration has also hired Amaziah George, owner of State of the Territory News, who has done occasional freelancing, as well as writing opinion pieces, for The Virgin Islands Consortium.

Mr. Bryan has some difficult choices ahead, with residents continuing to express frustration with the government's slow process in issuing tax refunds, along with a myriad of other problems, including the condition of the USVI's health facilities. There's also the daunting task of securing matching funds needed to release hundreds of millions of disaster recovery federal dollars; the halting of excise taxes by a federal judge that's resulted in the loss of million of dollars; the territory's difficulty in receiving favorable interest rates in the bond market; and the cost of utilities that continues to depress the struggling economy.