

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Carnival Village Opens In St. Thomas; Activities To Run Through May 4

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ST. THOMAS -- The opening of a carnival or festival village in the U.S. Virgin Islands has traditionally signaled that festivities are in full swing. The aforementioned happened in St. Thomas on Friday evening, where Governor Albert Bryan and other local officials held ribbon-cutting and welcoming activities to kickoff the 2019 carnival season.

This year's carnival village has been named "Coggie's Musical Ville: Culture, Fun and Flair, it's a Carnival 2019 Affair".

"I'm one of those people who don't feel the Christmas spirit until Christmas Eve day. But tonight I feel the carnival spirit," Mr. Bryan said during his remarks at the carnival village.

Conveying his love for the season, he said there were two dealbreakers when he contemplated running for governor: "I wouldn't be able to go down the street and play mas in St. Thomas and St. Croix's carnival. The second one was that I wouldn't be able to be the bartender in the Carnival Kaleidoscope J'ouvert Troupe."

"Seriously, such a wave of nostalgia has hit me while sitting here because it just brought back all the memories of carnival for me," the governor added. He reminisced on his grandmother sewing his carnival attire, and his dad and other men running a booth in the carnival village."

Mr. Bryan described carnival as a time of full enjoyment, "totally letting go," he said.

The governor went on to thank the Carnival Committee for what he said was the organization's hard work over the years to put on carnival events. And he encouraged residents and visitors alike to participate in the festivities, while steering clear of areas known to be dangerous.

The governor on Thursday announced administrative leave for non-essential government employees, a traditional move that Mr. Bryan said was to "encourage greater participation in the Food Fair and to enhance the celebration of the Virgin Islands Carnival for all residents and visitors."

Leave for non-essential employees residing in the St. Thomas-St. John District:

- Wednesday, May 1, 2019 - Food, Arts and Crafts Fair Day - 12:00 p.m. (noon) to 5:00 p.m.
- Thursday, May 2, 2019 - J'ouvert - 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The governor also granted one administrative day for non-essential government employees territory-wide:

- Friday, May 3, 2019 - Children's Parade Day 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Michael Coggins, this year's honoree has shared his talents with thousands of Virgin Islanders and visitors during his career, performing with musical legends like Milo and the Kings for nearly twenty-five years. Mr. Coggins's love for the trombone saw him set a musical standard and become a cultural ambassador in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

And he excelled in his craft, a feat accomplished, he said, because "playing the trombone has always been my desire; it helps me [to] live without stress."

Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach also shared remarks, stating, "When our ancestors first celebrated the mas, a part of what they celebrated was that we were now in possession of our bodies. That the drums, the music, the culture that had been denied us, we were embracing it and celebrating."

See the 2019 carnival festivities lineup [here](#).