

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Food, Arts And Crafts Fair Keep Its Flare, Taste, In St. Thomas

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CHARLOTTE AMALIE -- The Emancipation Garden came alive on Wednesday for the annual Food, Arts and Crafts Fair, a celebration of Virgin Islands Culture that brings to the fore a magnificent display of the diversity of the territory, its people and storied history.

The bedrock of the event is the highlight of Virgin Islanders who have left positive marks. The Charlotte Amalie High School Class of 1972 was recognized this year, and the theme of the event was "Bathe in Waters Blue".

Local dignitaries participated in an opening ceremony, which included a ribbon-cutting, event. Among them was the territory's governor, Albert Bryan, who said he appreciated that the event brings families and friends together.



"As you walk around today you're going to be running into all kinds of friends and family that you haven't seen for years. I think that's one of the most beautiful parts of carnival," he said.

Tourism is the most important product of the Virgin Islands, and carnival is one of the territory's biggest showcases. According to Government House, in 2018 spending by visitors territory-wide generated an estimated \$917,319,134, averaging \$2.5 million in transactions per day.

Senator Myron Jackson, a historian and Virgin Islands culture and artifacts preservationist, said he was encouraged by the exuberance of participants, though the ongoing drought in the territory had affected the variety of items available.

"Overall it went well. The drought has taken its toll on farmers, which was evident by the lack of the products we would see," the senator said. Mr. Jackson said while indoor and other plants often used for decoration were strong in representation, herbs and vegetable crops were missing. Mr. Jackson also lauded the entertainment, and he thanked committee members for putting on yet another successful event.

The Emancipation Garden was lined with vendors from every angle, selling products made in the Virgin Islands. From clothing to jewelry, soaps, spices, crafts and more, patrons took home items seldom sold in the major retail outlets in the USVI. On the roadsides, food vendors could barely keep up with orders as residents and visitors alike salivated at the surfeit of offerings on hand.

The fair is part of carnival activities on St. Thomas. Events continue tonight at the Carnival Village, followed by the Children's and Adults Parades on Friday and Saturday, respectively.