

The Virgin Islands Consortium

V.I. Fire Service, ATF National Response Team, To Brief Public On 'Partial' Findings Of Royal Dane Fire Investigation (Update)

VIC News / **Published On July 15, 2019 08:44 AM /**

Staff **July 15, 2019**



Update: The press conference has been cancelled "due to unforeseen circumstances," according to Government House.

Original Story: ST. THOMAS -- The Virgin Islands Fire Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives National Response Team will hold a press conference today where officials will give a "partial" briefing on the findings of the investigation into the fire that destroyed some of historic Royal Dane Mall. The press event starts at 10:00 a.m. and will be held at the Omar Brown Sr. Fire Station.

Last week The Consortium [reported](#) that federal arson investigators were joining the V.I. Fire Service probe into the cause and origin of the fire that destroyed much of the historic Royal Dane Mall on the Charlotte Amalie waterfront.

Fire Service Director Daryl A. George Sr. told The Consortium at the time that arson specialists from the ATF were en route to St. Thomas to assist local investigators. “We have a team on the ground right now,” Mr. George said at the time. “And we have specialists on the way. At this time, we cannot say much more or provide any further information.”

Fire engulfed the mall during night of July 4. It took nearly 30 firefighters four hours to bring the blaze under control. One firefight sustained a minor injury to the forearm, the V.I.F.S. said. No civilian injuries were reported.

Mr. George would not speculate about the cause of the Royal Dane inferno.

Earlier this year, fires damaged businesses within several blocks of the Royal Dane Mall. A fire was reported in the storage room of the Tavern on the Waterfront restaurant, which is part of the mall. Another fire was reported in a warehouse undergoing renovations several blocks away.

A 2000 New York Times story described the Royal Dane Mall as “... a maze of shaded alley with rustic stone walls and interesting boutiques” between the waterfront and Main Street. It is one of the oldest warehouses on St. Thomas, with building dating back 200 years according the V.I. State Historic Preservation Office.

Fewer and fewer boutique shops lined the old-world passageways of the Royal Dane after hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, said St. Thomas attorney Tom Bolt. Mr. Bolt’s law offices were located in the mall until the storms. “Few were still there.”

Among the businesses devastated by the fire was Gladys’ Café, whose authentic Creole dishes are beloved by locals and tourists alike.