

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VI Flags Fly High During Fort Lauderdale Ambassadors Event; Division Of Festivals Announces Three Artists For Crucian Christmas Festival

Tourism / **Published On October 12, 2019 01:17 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **October 12, 2019**



THE DALMAR HOTEL, FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA -- Joseph Boschulte, the Dept. of Tourism commissioner with the Bryan administration, has been reviving the VI's longstanding Ambassadors initiative and the results are starting to show. From Atlanta, Georgia, to New York City and now to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Mr. Boschulte and his D.O.T. staff have been inviting Virgin Islanders to celebrate their heritage, with the ultimate goal of enticing those who seldom return home to make it a habit of visiting.

The strategy appears to be a solid one, too. There are tens of thousands of Virgin Islanders spread across the U.S., with New York, Georgia, Texas and Florida being just some states with a strong VI diaspora. Anecdotal evidence suggest that the effort is catching on, stirring a renewed sense of pride in the diaspora, while demonstrating a level of care from Tourism for those who've moved away that had not been demonstrated for a long time.



UNITED
STATES
VIRGIN
ISLANDS

st CROIX st JOHN st THOMAS



Dept. of Tourism Commissioner Joseph Boschulte speaks during Tourism's Ft. Lauderdale Ambassadors event on Friday (Credit: VI Consortium)

Virgin Islanders turned out in strong numbers on Friday night here to celebrate VI Culture and mingle with one another -- all while being lured back home for the upcoming Crucian Christmas Festival, which kicks off in December.

During his opening remarks, Mr. Boschulte said the best ambassadors of the U.S. Virgin Islands are its people. "At the Department of Tourism, our job is to bring people to the territory. But there's no better group of people to represent us than people who are from the VI," the commissioner said. The department plans on making other stops in states with a heavy concentration of Virgin Islanders. In a separate interview, Mr. Boschulte spoke of soon-to-be-unveiled marketing efforts solely highlighting St. Croix and its offerings, along with strategies being implemented for the St. Thomas-St. John District.



Division of Festivals Director Ian Turnbull

Ian Turnbull, Shamari Haynes and Halvor Hart, who were recently named territory-wide director of the Division of Festivals, assistant director for the St. Croix District and assistant director for the St. Thomas District, respectively, were on hand to talk about their plans for the upcoming cultural events. Mr. Haynes spoke of new activities being added to the calendar as part of the upcoming Crucian Christmas Festival (CCF); Mr. Hart said plans for St. Thomas Carnival were underway, and all three men struck a central note of unity, stating that they plan on using each festival to promote the one next in line.

Additionally, Mr. Turnbull announced three artists already booked for the CCF: Destra, Teddyson John and R. City. Mr. Turnbull went on to tease, "They say certain artists can't come to the festival but we're bringing them. I'm not going to say no more."



A Moko Jumbie and Dept. of Tourism dancer entertain arriving guests in the lobby area of The Dal Mar's ballroom (Credit: VI Consortium)

The Ambassadors event included an all-star cast of performers from the USVI: Big Band, Pumpa, Mic Love, Caribbean Queen and a guest appearance from St. Croix's blazing hot BugZBugs. The artists and band serenaded the mixed audience of Millennials, Gen X and Baby Boomers. From Mic Love's "VI to the Bone", to Pumpa's "Juice", the crowd could not stand still while the artists performed. A moko jumbie and two Dept. of Tourism dancers helped set the mood, and even Miss Universe U.S. Virgin Islands moved to the sounds of VI Soca music throughout the night.

The department for the first time unveiled the [official flyer](#) of this year's Crucian Christmas Festival, along with [the official logo](#) of the Division of Festivals.

But the most memorable moment of the night came when Pumpa, Mic Love, BugZBugs and former Jam Band member Halvor Hart sang Jam Band hit songs led by Daddy Friday. The crowd, thrust back into the 90s by the nostalgic sounds of the legendary band, sang along, word for word, to end a night that will be remembered by all who attended.