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St. Thomas is Now Home to the Largest Free-Span Terminal in the Caribbean With Opening of Standard Aviation

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Standard Aviation Hangar By. STANDARD AVIATION

It seems as if every other month the V.I. Port Authority, led by Executive Director Carlton Dowe, is hosting a ribbon-cutting event for major projects spearheaded by VIPA. But people who know of Mr. Dowe's penchant for getting things done are not surprised.

Yesterday in St. Thomas — right across from a new maintenance building that has become the home of V.I.P.A.'s maintenance employees, which had [its own ribbon-cutting in March](#) — another ribbon-cutting ceremony was held. The event was for Standard Aviation, a fix-based operator (FBO) providing aeronautical services that proponents have praised as a major development that

will grow the territory's tourism sector.

In August, VIPA held a ribbon cutting affair for [a \\$24 million project](#) that will see all cargo operations move from Gallows Bay to the Molasses Pier. Earlier in the year, a ribbon-cutting was held for the [newly built dual-purpose Welcome Center](#) in Gallows Bay; VIPA is looking to transform the port into a bustling destination where tourists with deep pockets frequent after deboarding luxurious, small cruise ships.

Four projects in one year, and according to VIPA there's much more to come: On Oct. 29, VIPA will host an event at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport for phase one of the Terminal Modernization and Upgrade Project.



Governor Albert Bryan speaks at Standard Aviation's ribbon-cutting ceremony in St. Thomas on Wed. Oct. 7, 2020 (Credit: Standard Aviation)

Standard Aviation and its full concierge service was made possible through a public-private partnership with VIPA and Standard Aviation. As part of the agreement, Standard Aviation was required to fund the construction of the maintenance building now housing VIPA maintenance employees, in exchange for using V.I.P.A. property to build the world-class, 28,000 square-foot hangar and aviation facility. The lease agreement is for 30 years with a 10-year renewal option, according to Damian Cartwright, VIPA's assistant director and director of engineering.

Recognized as a member of Air Elite® by World Fuel network, Standard Aviation is among the top 75 World Fuel Services branded locations known for their superior facilities and unparalleled customer service. With the in-house capability to offer charters of fixed and rotor-wing assets, the Standard Aviation facility includes AeroMD air ambulance, Breeze Air Charters, Caribbean Buzz Helicopters, and UFLYVI (flight school, aircraft rental, and management).

With the Standard Aviation terminal totaling 28,000 square feet, it is the largest free-span building in the Caribbean, the company said in a release issued Wednesday. The FBO includes a 24,000 square foot hangar, which can accommodate jets up to a Gulfstream G550. The facility has been heavily reinforced to withstand tropical storms and hurricanes to protect valuable assets from the tropics' harsh elements. Semi-autonomous tugs ensure that aircraft are safely positioned while maximizing storage space, Standard Aviation said. Opulent facilities for visitors and crews include separate lobbies within the two-story complex, pilots' relaxation room, and a flight planning conference center overlooking the runway of Cyril E. King Airport.



Standard Aviation's conference room located on the facility's second floor. (Credit: Standard Aviation)

Attending the ribbon-cutting were dignitaries from the legislative and executive branches of government, among them Governor Albert Bryan and Senate Vice President Myron Jackson. Both leaders lauded the new development, with Mr. Bryan praising Standard Aviation head Shaun Miller for what Mr. Bryan said was the will to press on even when faced with obstacles. The governor praised Mr. Dowe, the VIPA board and others for their unrelenting efforts.

Also present was Senator Donna Frett-Gregory, a former Port Authority executive instrumental in the latest development's successful opening.

"Our team is elated to welcome jet owners, charter guests, and their crews to our world-class facility in the Virgin Islands," said Mr. Miller, managing member of Standard Aviation. "For St. Thomas and numerous surrounding islands, there has not been an FBO to meet the expectations of modern, high net worth travelers. Standard Aviation raises the bar, enabling St. Thomas to compete with the world's most lavish FBOs."

In addition to being named to the prestigious Air Elite network, Standard Aviation is also certified by the Corporate Aircraft Association (CAA) as a preferred FBO, according to a company release. The company is also active with the National Air Transportation Association (NATA), exceeding the highest safety practices for aircraft fueling.

"Tourism is vital to the Virgin Islands economy, and our premiere new facility is an important piece of that picture for the future," said Sabina Rosario, general manager of Standard Aviation. "As Caribbean tourism steadily rebounds from the effects of COVID-19 and the previously relied upon cruise industry, visitors will exclusively select destinations where they can rely on exceptional facilities and five-star experiences. Our customer service team members undergo training and demonstrate the regional knowledge, to provide the concierge services that will make any client's trip perfect."

Bespoke to jet travelers, Shari Pellows Interiors was entrusted with the design. Merchants Commercial Bank financed the project, according to Standard Aviation.