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Gas and Steam Engulf Sky Over Limetree Bay, Company Says it was 'Minor Refinery Upset'

Community Center / **Published On December 08, 2020 04:27 AM /**

Staff Consortium **December 08, 2020**

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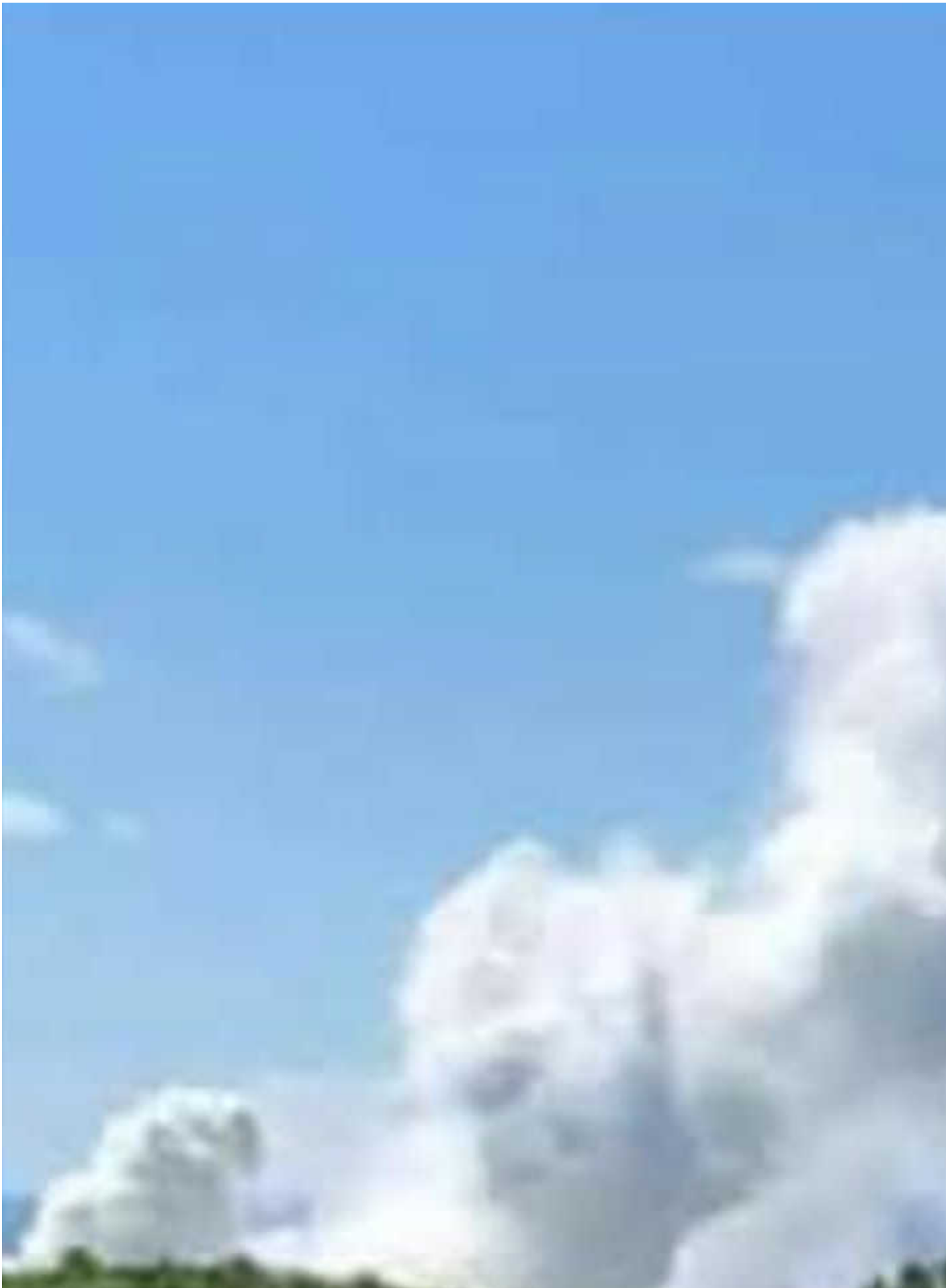
Hess Road leading to the main Limetree Bay office had no visibility during what Limetree Bay has deemed a "minor refinery upset" on Monday. By. PROVIDED

ST. CROIX — Limetree Bay Terminals and Refinery has described as a "minor refinery upset" an incident that resulted in at least a temporary evacuation of some employees and the mobilization of the facility's fire department.

At about noon Monday, the parking lot area of the company's main office was darkened by what appeared to be smoke, but which Limetree Bay has since said was hydrocarbon and steam. The Consortium was on the scene and saw multiple Limetree Bay vehicles and some employees outside the facility at about 12:22 p.m. Perhaps coincidentally, a V.I. Fire Service fire truck drove

past while the incident was still active.

"There was no fire," said Erica Parsons, the company's spokesperson, in response to an inquiry Monday afternoon. She said a statement was posted on the Limetree Bay Ventures [facebook page](#).



Plumes of hydrocarbon and steam rise high over the skies at Limetree Bay Monday afternoon. The company said the incident was a "minor refinery upset".

"On Monday at around noon, Limetree experienced a minor refinery upset on Vacuum Distillation Tower #3. This resulted in a plume release of steam containing light hydrocarbon which traveled northwest and quickly dissipated. The cloud which consisted mainly of steam, did result in an odor," wrote the company. "There are no injuries and the unit was shut down out of an abundance of caution. No immediate impact has been identified, but Limetree's Environmental team is continuing to investigate. Limetree Bay sincerely apologizes for the impact to the community."

The hydrocarbon release was seen far and wide and caused some community concern as pictures taken showed plumes of the gas and steam rising high. Other pictures showed the Hess Road leading up to the company's main office area had no visibility, which could have resulted in vehicular accidents. There was no such occurrence, however.

As of Tuesday morning, the company had not provided another update.

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