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Hangar Being Built at Henry E. Rohlsen Airport Represents Springboard for Further Development, New Opportunities on St. Croix

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Render of Eagle Aviation's hangar on St. Croix. By. EAGLE AVIATION

A 25,000 square-foot hangar being built on St. Croix at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport will be the second largest hangar in the Caribbean once it's completed in December 2021. In fact, when the hangar is combined with the office space and other rooms being offered, the facility becomes a 35,000 square-foot behemoth and thereby the largest in overall size in the Caribbean, said Trond Osthaug, president of Eagle Aviation, owner of the new hangar

"We're trying to bring the General Aviation community back to the airport," said Mr. Osthaug during an interview with the Consortium Thursday. The facility is being built west of Bohlke

Airways, another fixed-base operator (FBO), and will be a competitor of the longtime family-held operation, while providing a number of other offerings, including concierge services.

Mr. Osthaug said because of the size of the facility, a number of opportunities and partnerships will become available, among them a flight training school and a possible partnership with the University of the Virgin Islands.

The facility will be able to hold some of the largest private jets in the world, including the Bombardier Global Express and the Gulfstream 650. The aforementioned jets are some of the largest business class jets in the industry and are inter-continental, meaning they could travel long distances of over 7,000 miles on one flight.

The new hangar will be the only facility in the U.S. Virgin Islands able to house these jets, providing opportunities for St. Croix that go beyond the jets and passengers thereof.

Eagle Aviation has a long-term lease with the V.I. Port Authority where the hangar is being built, said V.I.P.A. Assistant Executive Director Damian Cartwright. "We always look at all of our tenants as partners, and we are an autonomous public agency and our partners are private, so in essence I feel like it's still a public-private partnership," said Mr. Cartwright, who was responding to a question posed by the Consortium relative to similarities in this agreement to the [deal V.I.P.A. struck in St. Thomas with Standard Aviation](#).

St. Croix is underutilized in the General Aviation market, said Mr. Cartwright, who is of the belief that competition will stir better opportunities and growth. Mr. Cartwright also saw wider opportunities outside of general aviation, though spurred by it, for the island, as visitors with deep pockets descend on St. Croix and realize an island replete with opportunities. For example, V.I.P.A. owns a 400-acre property that has looked attractive to potential investors for decades, yet shunned because of its nearness to the Anguilla Landfill. But with the Anguilla landfill [scheduled to permanently shutdown](#), the land's prime location — literally a stone's throw away from the airport — has become attractive enough to entice Global Solutions, LLC, to start negotiations with VIPA [to build a hotel](#), which will be a Best Western Premier-branded outfit.

The hotel, however, is being built on only 10 acres of the 400-acre V.I.P.A.-owned plot, leaving most of the land ready for more opportunities — potentially creating a new hub for commerce on the island that could attract a range of businesses: restaurant chains, boutiques, entertainment and Starbucks, perhaps even another hotel.

"If you could get a hotel to come in that area, then definitely more business could be attracted," V.I.P.A. Executive Director Carlton Dowe told the Consortium recently.

Another incentive that could benefit the new hangar is advantageous fuel prices because of the refinery on St. Croix, said Mr. Cartwright. "Typically the folks who come here in General Aviation tend to be more affluent that have more resources to spend, and when you bring in that type of clientele, that also can spark other development on the island of St. Croix. We really see the upside for St. Croix."

The hangar was [first announced in June 2015](#) during a groundbreaking event, however, development was stalled for years.

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