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BMV Receives \$3.2 Million From FEMA to Demolish and Replace Dilapidated BMV Office on St. Thomas

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Damaged BMV building in St. Thomas By. O.D.R.

The Bureau of Motor Vehicles has received an obligation of \$3,231,954 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Public Assistance Program that will provide for the demolition and replacement of the department's main office on St. Thomas, announced the Office of Disaster Recovery (O.D.R.) Thursday. Located in Sub base, the one-story building suffered extensive damage when winds, heavy wind-driven rain, overland flooding and tidal surge associated with 2017 hurricanes swept the area.

"The monies will allow us to build a longstanding user-friendly facility, one that we have been waiting for, for a very long time," said BMV Director Barbara Jackson-McIntosh. "The

community will benefit from adequate parking and a building that is handicap accessible. We've been working in less than desirable conditions for a very long time, so along with the community, the staff will experience a modern, up-to-date facility with the latest technology."

The losses to the St. Thomas location amassed to over \$5M, between FEMA direct funds and proceeds from insurance, the BMV now has sufficient resources to take the next steps to begin the design of the new facility, O.D.R. said.

Despite its current state, the building is still used to conduct drivers' written tests, renewals and vehicle licensing and inspections. It will be rebuilt to accommodate staff, a waiting and test room, cashiers, and vehicle inspection bays.

"For far too long, residents and staff that utilize the St. Thomas office have had to endure sub-par conditions and reduced services," said O.D.R. Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien. "Through the support of our federal and local stakeholders, the BMV will finally begin to rebuild the St. Thomas location, construction should be complete by April 2022."

The project to replace the department's office on St. Croix is still under review from FEMA, O.D.R. said.