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Bryan to Deliver 3rd State of the Territory Address Tonight, Here's What to Expect

Politics / **Published On January 25, 2021 05:43 AM /**

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Senator Marvin Blyden, left, shakes the hand of Governor Albert Bryan while Senator Kurt Vialet looks on during Mr. Bryan's 2020 State of the Territory Address. By. VI LEGISLATURE

Governor Albert Bryan will deliver his third State of the Territory Address tonight at 7:00 p.m. as he marks his third year as governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The event, being held at the Legislature of the Virgin Islands in the territory's capital, will be carried live on a number of platforms, including the VI Consortium website and Facebook page (feed courtesy VI Legislature).

Mr. Bryan is expected to highlight what the administration sees as successes since taking office, as well as the challenges that arose as a result of the coronavirus.

The administration's tenure has been shaped by the Covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, the coronavirus worldwide emergency took hold one year after Mr. Bryan took office and the governor is expected to highlight the government's response as a bright spot. Mr. Bryan may underscore his administration's success in balancing the pandemic with economic activity, a strategy he has spoken of repeatedly as a victory.

The territory as of Friday had 98 active cases, with 59 on St. Croix, 28 on St. Thomas and 11 on St. John. To date, 40,231 tests have been performed in the territory, with 37,801 returning negative and 2,335 positive, according to data provided by the V.I. Dept. of Health.

As with past addresses, the governor will most likely point to the future in highlighting plans yet to be fulfilled. Indeed, [a post](#) on the Gov't House Facebook page, reads, "Hear how the Bryan/Roach Administration will build on its record of accomplishment in its commitment to transparency, stabilizing the economy, restoring trust in government, and ensuring the disaster recovery is completed as quickly as possible."

The governor is also expected to speak on disaster recovery efforts and achievements from the Office of Disaster Recovery (ODR) and the V.I. Housing Finance Authority. ODR following its creation has been publishing releases about funds secured from FEMA to rebuild the territory in a number of capacities, with the latest being [a \\$113 million FEMA grant to WAPA](#) geared toward disaster recovery efforts on St. John.

The Government Employees' Retirement System remains the administration's and the territory's biggest problem that must be addressed immediately. The pension system is projected to collapse just as Mr. Bryan's first term ends if it is not funded to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. The governor is expected to address the G.E.R.S. issue, and he may take a swipe at members of the 33rd Legislature who on multiple occasions [rejected his securitization push](#).

During his second SOTA, Mr. Bryan [hailed that the USVI](#) was "back on track," as he proclaimed what he deemed to be successes of his first year in office. "We are stabilizing our government to restore public trust. We are continuing the recovery and rebuilding effort. And we are laying a solid foundation in which to grow our Virgin Islands community," said the governor in Jan., 2020.

This year, with the Covid-19 pandemic showing no signs of abatement even with vaccines available, economic hardships are projected to continue, and Mr. Bryan could seek to set reasonable expectations for the coming months and beyond.

Other topics to expect: education, crime, healthcare, what the Biden-Harris victory means for the local government, building consensus with the 34th Legislature, a push to legalize marijuana for recreational use, efforts to seek funding in the bond market, among other items.