

FEMA Obligates \$6.2 Million For Revitalization of Fort Frederik Museum; Work Projected to be Completed in 2025

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Fort Frederik Museum By. THE OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) has been awarded \$6,213,969 to complete repairs to the Fort Frederik Museum on St. Croix, the Office of Disaster Recovery announced Wednesday. O.D.R. said it received notification of the recent obligation from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Public Assistance Program to renovate both the interior and exterior of the historic site and replace ruined contents.

According to the release, the exterior of the Freedom City landmark was severely impacted when Hurricane Maria caused heavy winds, fallen trees, wind-driven rain and saltwater to permeate the

structure. The damages were compounded by erosion from floodwaters in the adjacent gut and wave action along the ocean shoreline. Interior losses to the museum's contents occurred when windows, doors and leaky skylights were either blown off or forced ajar, stated the release.

The restoration will be completed to resemble all physical and visual aspects of the site's pre-disaster condition, including design, color, hardware, and workmanship. Once the task order to develop the solicitation is approved, the procurement package will be drafted and released by the Department of Property and Procurement.

"This is a momentous and unprecedented opportunity for the Territory. This grant will ensure Fort Frederik improves its standing as a National Historic Landmark, as well as become a preferred tourist destination on St. Croix. The grant will also provide opportunities for local businesses on St. Croix to participate in the renovations process and allow for the timely completion of the project," said DPNR Commissioner Jean P. Oriol.

O.D.R. said repairs include plastering and painting and the refurbishment of gates, signage, cannon carriages, windows, shutters, doors and the roof, in addition to the replacement of lighting, ceiling fans, electrical elements, air conditioning units, picture frames, display cases and furniture. The scope also contains the acquisition of twenty-five pieces of artwork and two exhibits.

"The storms of 2017 wreaked havoc on more than just the Territory's infrastructure. They also caused irreparable damage to our cultural holdings and historic buildings," O.D.R. Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien said. "Through FEMA's support, the completion of this and other projects such as the renovation of Government House and Catherineberg on St. Thomas, The Battery on St. John and Fleming House on St. Croix will ensure that Virgin Island's history is preserved and historic sites are reconstructed correctly, adhering to local and federal standards."

The target completion date for the revitalization of the Fort Frederik Museum is December 2025, according to the release.