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## New Venue, Big Turnout at 2019 Lechon Festival

Entertainment / **Published On December 09, 2019 04:45 AM /**

Staff Consortium **December 09, 2019**

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**Lechon 2019 in La Reine adjacent to the Pueblo Supermarket** By. Ernice Gilbert for the Virgin Islands Consortium.

Last year, the 13th annual Lechon Festival was held at the Armapavi Ballpark in Castle Coakley on the Hess Road across from the Limetree Bay man camp. The event, while good, saw low turnout for a number of reasons.

This year the organizers moved the event to La Reine adjacent to the Pueblo Supermarket, which is also central to many surrounding Hispanic communities. Coupled with creative marketing as the event neared, along with the presence of a well-known band out of Puerto Rico, this year's event -- held on Sunday -- was one of the best in both turnout and food availability.

The Lechon Festival celebrates the Hispanic heritage on the island of St. Croix, and serves as a gathering where the entire island, not just Hispanics, can enjoy and have a fun, safe time.

Lechon Festival President, Jose Nieves, thanked the owners of the former location for their support over the years, and said the new location at Pueblo allows the organization to come closer to its vision for the festival.

"This is not just for Hispanics, it is the Latin-Crucian Pig Roast Festival so everybody needs to be included," he told the Consortium Sunday during an interview.

Vendors who participated were satisfied with the turnout. Some were skeptical at first, but once they saw how well attended the event was, concerns were allayed. According to Mr. Nieves, there were seven vendors who roasted whole pigs, all of which were sold out by mid-afternoon.

This year, the Lechon Festival Committee will donate a percentage of the proceeds from the festival to the St. Croix Educational Complex Marching Band, Mr. Nieves said. He said St. Croix residents should expect to see the event at the same location it was held this year.

Members of the Lechon Festival Committee include Jose Nieves, president, Luis Cuencas, vice president, Nancy Torres, treasurer, Jeannette Karina Guzman, secretary, and Edgar Bengoa, Domino Team leader.