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WAPA Brings Units 15 and 23 Back Online at Harley Power Plant, Says More Stability Has Been Added to Facility

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WAPA's Unit 23 at the Randolph Harley Power Plant. By. THE V.I. WATER AND POWER AUTHORITY

Personnel at the Randolph Harley Power Plant completed repairs to the V.I. Water and Power Authority's largest generating unit Sunday night and have tested and returned Unit 23 to service today, announced the utility.

The unit's tripping offline Saturday morning and subsequently being unavailable pending repairs contributed to a pair of district-wide service interruptions over the last two days, WAPA said.

WAPA Interim Executive Director Noel Hodge said Monday that having the additional 39 megawatts of capacity provided by Unit 23 adds significant stability to the power producing capacity of the Harley plant. For residents on St. Thomas and St. John, this means a lower risk of a major outage.

“We have gone without Unit 23 since Saturday and meeting the demand for electrical service since then has been a challenge,” Hodge said, noting, that on Saturday night, the lack of adequate generation capacity required a schedule of rotating power outages.

“I am pleased that on Sunday we dispatched a combination of other generators which provided us more than adequate capacity to meet the electrical needs of all customers and avoid a rotating outage schedule,” he said. The authority said it maintained service in the district on Sunday using a combination of oil fired and propane powered generators. “We deployed Unit 14 and the Wartsila LPG units, which WAPA own, along with leased generator, Unit 27. With Unit 23 dispatched today, we are in a better place when compared to over the weekend in terms of the plant’s generation capacity,” the executive director stated.

According to the release, throughout the day on Sunday, plant personnel addressed issues with fuel nozzles and failures on the Direct Current (DS) System of Unit 23. The unit was tested today under low load before being dispatched. Hodge also said that repairs to Unit 15’s lube oil pump motor which commenced over the weekend were completed today. By the end of the day, the 20-megawatt dual-fuel generator will be available for dispatch. “Just as with Unit 23, Unit 15 will provide additional power production capacity and more plant stability,” Hodge said.

He also reported that there was no major impact on WAPA by the passage of Tropical Storm Grace. Throughout the day Sunday, Line Department crews were dispatched to address a few isolated or “pocket” outages across the three islands.

“The winds or rain associated with Grace never really posed a major problem for WAPA although there was some delay in the deployment of crews to trouble spots during some of the heavier showers. All in all, the Authority did well as far as the effects of the tropical storm,” he said.

Hodge thanked the men and women of WAPA who worked tirelessly throughout this weekend to make the necessary repairs to Units 15 and 23 and to minimize the effects of the power production challenges on our customers. “While we did experience two major outages this weekend, the outcome could have been more pronounced without the team effort of our staff. I also express a heartfelt thank you to the Line Department crews who worked through the inclement weather on Sunday to address the isolated outages we experienced.”

He apologized to WAPA’s customers for the inconvenience caused by the weekend’s service interruptions.