

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VITEMA Announces New Asst. Director and Deputy Director of Operations

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From left: Joseph Hodge and Noel Smith. By. VITEMA

Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) announced Thursday two new members to the agency's executive team. VITEMA said Noel Smith will serve as the agency's assistant director and Joseph Hodge as the deputy director of operations. Both team members will be positioned in VITEMA's St. Thomas offices with territory-wide oversight, according to the release.

As the assistant director, Mr. Smith will support the strategic initiatives and the overall development and planning of the agency. Mr. Smith is also tasked with coordinating

activities for the local government and will provide guidance and advice in developing emergency management plans and programs, VITEMA said.

Mr. Smith has served in different capacities throughout the Virgin Islands government. He served as the assistant director and the deputy director of operations of VITEMA, and as a chief planner for the Department of Homeland Security Office. Additionally, prior to his tenure with the government of the Virgin Islands, Mr. Smith served 26 years in the military, which included several combat campaigns with the 82nd Airborne Division and the Special Forces, VITEMA said.

Mr. Smith retired from active military services in December 2002 as a Chief Warrant Officer. He has more than 35 years of management experience in various military, government and civilian sectors.

As the deputy director of operations, Mr. Hodge is responsible for all aspects of operations within VITEMA and the Territorial 911 Emergency Call Centers, which includes planning, response, recovery and preparedness activities, the release said. Mr. Hodge joined VITEMA in 2006 where he served as the communications officer for five years. He was eventually promoted to Emergency Operations Center (EOC) manager in the St. Thomas District before leaving to further his education.

During his previous tenure at VITEMA, Mr. Hodge attended numerous trainings at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Institute in Emmitsburg, Md., and the Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center at New Mexico Tech. He was an active member of St. Thomas Rescue, and has been trained as an Emergency Medical Technician - Basic, VITEMA said.

Mr. Hodge holds a bachelor of arts degree in business management from the University of the Virgin Islands. Having a strong desire to put his emergency management skills and experiences to use, Mr. Hodge has decided to return to VITEMA as the deputy director of operations, VITEMA said.

"We are truly excited to have Mr. Smith and Mr. Hodge on our team here at VITEMA," said VITEMA Director Daryl Jaschen. "They will bring a fresh approach and perspective as we continue to coordinate the territory's preparedness for, and response to natural and man-made disasters. Their combined knowledge of emergency management principles and practices will undoubtedly promote the mission, vision and strategy of VITEMA."