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# USVI Tops Most Resilient Caribbean Destination List; Boschulte Says Tourism Sector Performing Beyond Expectations

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**Forward Keys' 2022 most resilient Caribbean destination list, based on confirmed tickets for international arrivals between Jan. 1, 2022 to Feb. 28, 2022. By. THE V.I. PORT AUTHORITY**

V.I. Department of Tourism Commissioner Joseph Boschulte has disclosed that the tourism sector in the U.S. Virgin Islands is performing beyond expectations and the completion of phase one of the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport Terminal Expansion and Modernization Project will continue to build on that outstanding performance.

“We are doing extremely well, this particular project is important for the next step for the U.S. Virgin Islands in terms of our movement as a lead overnight destination in the Caribbean,” Mr. Boschulte said while delivering remarks at a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the completion and handing over of phase one of the project on Monday.

“Before the pandemic, 70 percent of our traffic to the USVI came on cruise, right now over 90 percent of our traffic comes from overnight guests and all our overnight guests come through the airports,” he said in his remarks.

“And I think that over the past 20 months we have begun to see what we heard about for many, many years in that the overnight visitor spends differently than the cruise visitor so we have to continue to recognize that, and at the Department of Tourism we will continue to do that. The project is spectacular...the USVI is on the rise,” Mr. Boschulte said.

He said D.O.T. recognizes the potential for St. Croix to be a leading tourism destination in the Caribbean. “We believe St. Croix is a gem that is beginning to shine in the tourism space, and we can see it in the demand for the territory,” he said while reminding the audience of the ongoing tourism campaign which says, “St. Croix, A Vibe Like No Other”.

“The flights are coming in with very high load factors and we expect to see that throughout the rest of the season. The U.S. Virgin Islands has been resilient. The U.S. Virgin Islands is the most resilient Caribbean destination this year,” he said.

For the month of November the territory recorded the highest average daily rate and revenue for available room. “We're at number one and we have been bouncing between number one, number two, and number three for the entire year,” he said, citing data provided by [ForwardKeys](#), which analyzes global air bookings daily, creates insights and forecasts for destination marketing organizations, hotels, hedge funds and agencies so they can be better equipped for traveler demand and change. “This is a testament to our people... in making sure we balance health and the economy.”

The expansion project is a six-year initiative costing a total of \$140 million. The first phase was launched in August 2020. That phase entails enclosing 5,500 square feet of walkway space to increase the seating capacity in the lounge, refurbishing the existing passenger lounge space and restrooms, enclosing the 1,100 square-foot open-air gardens with a new roof structure to provide additional concessions space, and upgrading the mechanical systems for the additional air-conditioned area.

Phase one cost \$8.6 million and was funded with a \$7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce- Economic Development Administration in 2019 with match funding of \$1.6 million from the Virgin Islands Port Authority. The phase one construction was anticipated to take 18 months and be completed in March 2022 but was completed and handed over on month 15.