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Fire Service Receives \$664,316 From FEMA for Wind Retrofit Project of Fire Stations

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Virgin Islands Fire Service Fire Truck in Richmond, St. Croix By. ERNICE GILBERT/VI CONSORTIUM

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), recently awarded \$664,316 to the Virgin Islands Fire Service (VIFS) for the Herbert L. Canegata (Richmond) Fire Station Wind Retrofit Project to renovate all three buildings in accordance to the 2018 International Building Code, the Office of Disaster Recovery (O.D.R.) has announced.

The wind retrofit for the fire station's existing structures will consist of the installation of hurricane-rated shutters; impact and wind rated, single and double glass steel entry and garage bay

doors; hurricane straps to harden the roof to wall connections and steel framing; and other methods to increase the wind load capacity, O.D.R. said.

“This is a great day for the Virgin Islands Fire Service. We are taking another step toward making our facilities stronger and more resilient. Stronger facilities benefit not only the Fire Service but also the community we serve,” Daryl A. George, director of the Virgin Islands Fire Service. “We are grateful to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and our other disaster recovery partners- the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency, Witt O’Brien’s and the Office of Disaster Recovery- for their support of projects like this.”

In addition to the retrofit of the Herbert L. Canegata Fire Station, exterior equipment such as lighting, security cameras, electrical components, HVAC implements, solar panels, and all communication mechanisms will be secured with hurricane rated strapping or bracing. Also included is the hardening of external fixtures such as gutters, downspouts, and roof vents.

“The retrofit of the Richmond Fire Station will secure the provision of critical services in the event of a disaster,” Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, O.D.R. director. “We continue to work closely with our local and federal partners to develop and obligate initiatives to strengthen our infrastructure.”

This project meets a priority goal of the HMGP by minimizing hazards before and during an event, thereby safeguarding the lives of first responders and the safety of the community at large. The deadline for completion is March 2026, the O.D.R. said.