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Dowe at it Again: VIPA Cuts Ribbon on Gordon A. Finch Molasses Pier, Freeing Up Gallows Bay to Welcome Small Cruise Ships, Mini Cruises, Yachts and More

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Elesha George **June 26, 2022**

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Front row left to right: Sen. Kenneth Gittens, VIPA Exec. Dir. Carlton Dowe, Gov. Albert Bryan, Comms. Dir., Office of the Delegate to Congress Tionee Scotland, and Gordon A. Finch. By. ERNICE GILBERT/ V.I. CONSORTIUM

The Gordon A. Finch Molasses Pier Cargo Facility had its grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony at the Krause Lagoon, St. Croix, on Thursday, just 23 months after its [ground-breaking ceremony](#) in July 2020.

The building was named after Gordon A Finch, former executive director and board member who served as executive director for 11 years and was the 4th executive director of the VI Port Authority from 1991 to 2002.

Chairperson of the Port's governing board, Willard John said the opening of the cargo building means that the Gallows' Bay port can now become a small cruise ship port for upscale ferries, mini-cruises and yachts. Before this could happen, however, [dredging is required](#).

VIPA Executive Director Carlton Dowe, known as "Dowe Now" because of his knack for starting and completing projects, was lauded throughout the event by guest speakers. The executive director has continuously stated that the success he's had at the Port Authority is a testament to the people around him, the board along with the over 360 employees at VIPA.

He also gave some pertinent advice to leaders: "All of us must recognize what we know [and what] we don't know. And when we do that, we will be better for it," Mr. Dowe said. "I'm no engineer but I know to surround myself with the best people I could find."

The executive director heaped praise on Tafari Nelson, an engineer with the Port Authority who contributed tremendously to the successful construction of the terminal following the departure of senior engineer Damian Cartwright, who was the lead on the project before exiting the authority early 2021.

The new facility will improve the territory's import and export operations and will allow the Port Authority to convert Gallows Bay from a mixed-use passenger and cargo facility. It is approximately 19,000 square feet and is separated into an administrative space which will house Customs and Border Protection, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and the V.I. Port Authority dockmaster. The facility's warehouse space will accommodate various transshipment companies, and it is separated into three bays.

"With all the necessary entities being under one roof, this facility will allow for a one-stop shop to more conveniently serve the public," said Mr. Nelson.

The \$24 million project was funded in part through a \$10.6 million BUILD Grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (formerly the TIGER, or Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grant). Match funding was appropriated by the V.I. Legislature through a [bill](#) sponsored by Senators Alicia Barnes, Novelle Francis Jr., Donna Frett-Gregory and Kurt Vialet, among other lawmakers.