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Carnival Fever Intensifies in St. John: A Recap of the Weekend's Jouvart and Village Events

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On the left, revelers participated in Jouvart Morning on St. John on Saturday, July 1 as part of the island's 2023 celebrations. On the right, eventgoers enjoy Village activities. By. DEPT. OF TOURISM, DIVISION OF FESTIVALS

The St. John Celebrations rolled into high gear over the weekend, with the widely anticipated Jouvart street parade taking center stage on Saturday, July 1. With the spirit of Carnival in the air, throngs of lightly clad eventgoers filled the small town of Cruz Bay, adding a vibrant note to the Caribbean-wide tradition.

The tempo remained high with village night events bolstered by an array of international and local acts performing. On Saturday, Voice and Shal Marshall from Trinidad lit up the stage, followed

by performances from the USVI's Jam Band and Karnage, and Dominica's Signal Band on Sunday.

Adding to the excitement, globally renowned Reggae sensation, Koffee, known for her hit "Toast" with over 228 million views on YouTube, arrived in St. John on Sunday. Fans eagerly await her performance on the Village's Reggae Night slated for Monday, which also features Jahman, Pressure, and Third World.

As the carnival atmosphere continues to build, Tuesday promises a grand spectacle with the annual parade. The final village night, also slated for Tuesday, features Nailah Blackman and Skinny Fabulous among several other acts scheduled to perform, ensuring the celebrations will reach a fever pitch.

Looking back at the initial stages of the celebrations, the St. John Celebration Village was officially declared open on the night of Thursday, June 29. The six-hour extravaganza, now fondly known as "Drinker's Paradise," was dedicated to local legends Raymond Athenase and the late Rehugh Hendricks.

At the heart of the ceremony was a poignant tribute to Athenase and Hendricks, both fixtures on the St. John Carnival scene. Athenase accepted the honor on behalf of himself and his late friend, overcome by the magnitude of the recognition. Governor Albert Bryan Jr., Senate President Novelle Francis, and Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett were among the distinguished guests who acknowledged the honorees' contributions to the community.

Dept. of Tourism Commissioner Joseph Boschulte praised Athenase for his significant contributions to the tourism industry on St. John, labeling him as a vital asset in the sector. Governor Bryan commended Athenase and Hendricks for their initiative and the vibrant spirit of the entire island. "St. John gets it done. Every time," he declared, emphasizing the unique character of the island's population.

Following the ceremony and ribbon-cutting, the crowd was treated to energetic performances by St. Johnian bands Climax and RVP, Adam O from St. Croix, and Trinidadian Soca act Kes the Band. Although the show ended around 1:30 am, the audience's pleas for more music indicated the enthusiasm for the festivities that are now in full swing.