



VOLUME 2  
MAR 2024

# VITEMA VOICE

## *In Memoriam*



### **Merlinda Philomene**

Sunset 03.17.2024

For the past two years, Ms. Merlinda Philomene served as VITEMA's Deputy Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations. But more importantly, in our close-knit community, she was a cherished daughter, sister, coworker, and friend. For those in VITEMA who worked with her and knew her well, she will be missed not only for her green thumb and candled office, but also her willingness to listen and give advice and pep talks when needed. Her sudden loss has left a void that will be felt for many years to come. On behalf of the entire VITEMA staff, we continue to pray for her loved ones that they may find comfort at this time.

May she rest in eternal peace.



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(Above) Proposed rendering of new VITEMA facility at Hermon Hill, St. Croix

## DO YOU KNOW THE TONE? THIRD THURSDAY TSUNAMI TESTING

NEXT DATE: 04/18/2024

### VITEMA CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

STX EOC DESIGN Saferoom & Wind Retrofit	40%
STX EOC Slope Stabilization & Stormwater Management	5%
STT EOC Phase 1: Roof Repairs	100%
STT EOC Phase 2: Building Repairs	30%
STT EOC Fence Damages	15%



(Above) Proposed rendering of the new VITEMA facility at Hermon Hill

### VITEMA CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

The New EOC in STX will be a state-of-the-art facility that enhances the operational capacity of VITEMA and its public and federal partners. The building's saferoom can accommodate over 200 personnel in emergency conditions. It will have parking capacity for patrons and be fully equipped with hurricane windows. The facility will have 3 options for power connection: a primary meter base, secondary meter base, and two on-site generators.

## WHAT'S NEXT?



**NATIONAL HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK**  
May 5-11, 2024



**CAPSTONE WEEK**  
MAY 20-24, 2024



### NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATIONS WEEK

April 14-20, 2024 is National Public Safety Telecommunications Week. This is a time to celebrate and thank those who dedicate their lives to serving the public. We take this time to say thank you to our **911 Call Center Operators** for their 24-hour dedication to ensuring our safety. THANK YOU!

Be sure to tell them how much we appreciate them this week and every week!

### HURRICANE CONFERENCE 2024



Along with hundreds of national emergency management professionals, VITEMA staff members, community partners from Departments of Justice, Health, and Human Services, as well as Love City Strong and VOAD members, attended the National Hurricane Conference in Orlando, FL the week of March 25-29. Attendees also led break out sessions on USVI Fatality Management in a Major Hurricane; Maritime Accountability; and the Future of Community Readiness: Locally Rooted Preparedness and Mitigation. The sessions were well received and attendees are looking forward to the 2025 Conference in New Orleans.



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**Celebrating 911 Public Safety Telecommunication Week with the St. Thomas 911 Call Center (far left) and St. Croix 911 Call Center (above and left)**

## CONGRATULATIONS, MS. GUMBS & MS. SILCOTT-WILLIAMS!

St. Croix District

**EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**



**Germaine P. Gumbs**  
Emergency Planning Coordinator

St. Thomas/St. John District

**EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**



**Adelle Silcott-Williams**  
Communications Specialist



*Training is in session at St. Thomas EOC.*

### WHAT IS CAPSTONE?

The annual Capstone exercise, being held this year from May 20-24, is a comprehensive set of hurricane-related scenario-based drills designed to test the readiness of the USVI as we head into hurricane season. While primarily built to test the public sector readiness, it also incorporates key private sector partners as well. The week's activities are led by VITEMA and FEMA, one of our key federal partners in preparedness and response.



*VITEMA Director Daryl Jaschen talks to the assembled crowd during Caribe Wave 2024.*

### CARIBE WAVE 2024

Caribe Wave 2024 was a success! VITEMA would like to thank each and every single person that participated this year! Tsunamis are no notice events and we are working hard to educate the community. We had the largest number of participants EVER in this year's Caribe Wave exercise - over 23,000! It's not a matter of if but when - #KnowYourZone!

### COMMUNITY SURVEY

How can we better serve you?



I speak English. Hablo español. Mwen pale kreyol. Nagsasalita ako ng tagalog. Je parle français. أنا أتحدث العربية. मैं बोलता हूँ नहीं.

Email [contact@vitema.vi.gov](mailto:contact@vitema.vi.gov) for outreach assistance in your language or let us know if you can assist with translations, including ASL interpretations.