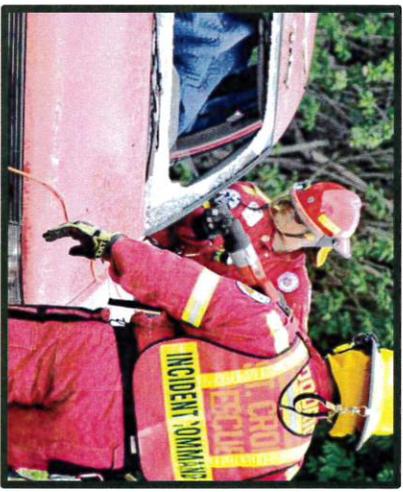


VITEMA

2015



ANNUAL REPORT



Our Vision

To be the preeminent emergency management agency in the Caribbean and the Nation by providing an effective, responsible, and professional network of services to ensure resiliency before, during, and after a natural or man-made incident that may impact the safety and well-being of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Our Mission

The principal mission of VITEMA as a first response coordinator, is to save lives and property of the territory's population, by preparing territorial organizations to respond to, recover from and mitigate against All-Hazards, through planning, coordinating, training and exercise activities and is the sole Virgin Islands government agency designated to supervise, administer and coordinate All-Hazards response and recovery operations.

Table of Contents

- 2 | Mission & Vision
- 4 | Director's Message
- 5 | 2015 Year in Review
Preparedness 6
 - Maritime Response Planning, 6
 - Operation Pillsbury Sound, 7-10
 - 2015 Training 11
 - VITEMA Expo
 - Photo Summary 15-26
- Operations 27*
 - Storm Response 27-28
 - Grants Management 29*
- 31 | Strengthening Local, Regional & Federal Partnerships
- 34 | Leaning Forward 2016



2015 HIGHLIGHTS

- Pg. 7 - 10**
 - Operation Pillsbury Sound
 - Full-Scale Maritime Exercise
- Pg. 15 - 26**
 - 2015 All-Hazards Preparedness Expo
- Pg. 27-28**
 - 2015 Atlantic Hurricane Season

VITEMA LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Mona L. Barnes**
Director
- Allison DeGazon**
Assistant Director
- Debra Henneman-Smith**
Deputy Director,
Administration & Finance
- Renata Christian**
Deputy Director,
Grants Management
- Christine Lett**
Public Information Officer
- Wayne Bryan**
Manager, VI Fusion Center
- Carolyn Wattlely**, 911 Manager
St. Thomas-St. John District
- Shanavia Martin**, 911 Manager
St. Croix District
- Denise Lewis**, Manager
Emergency Operations Center
St. Croix
- Linda Williams**, Manager
Emergency Operations Center
St. John
- Asim Frett**
IT Systems Manager/Logistics
St. Thomas
- Andre Llanos**
IT Systems Manager
St. Croix
- Adelle Williams**
Communications Officer
- Roy McFarlane**
Exercise Planner
- Irvin Mason**
Training Coordinator
- Ethelbert Benjamin**
Facilities Manager
St. Croix



A Message from
MONA L. BARNES
Director, VITEMA

As we watched events unfold in the homeland and around the globe during 2015, it was clear that the type and scale of emergencies grow more complex with each passing year. I believe the best way to meet these evolving challenges is through consistent strategic planning, through enhanced training for first responders and emergency managers and by educating the whole community about the importance of being prepared.

This year VITEMA made great strides in achieving these objectives. The Agency held the first-ever Maritime Planning Workshop that brought together key stakeholders to discuss optimizing operational coordination during a cruise ship incident. We topped off the year with *Operation Pillsbury Sound*, a full-scale exercise that tested the Territory's capabilities in responding to a major incident on the water. For VITEMA, these milestones mark our advent into a more holistic approach to emergency management.

Throughout 2015, VITEMA also dedicated significant resources to raising awareness about preparedness for manmade and natural hazards that may impact the US Virgin Islands. We held the annual All-Hazards Preparedness Expo territorywide in October, boosted our efforts in tsunami education and initiated youth disaster readiness program, Teen CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), at the Educational Complex on St. Croix.

Finally, our continued collaboration with FEMA Region II-Caribbean Area Division yielded significant results in pre-disaster mitigation for the territory. In December, FEMA approved more than \$312,000 to purchase a much-needed generator for the Juan F. Luis Hospital (JFLH) on St. Croix. The generator is critical the medical facility continued operations in the event of a power outage. JFLH is the only acute care facility serving the island's 55,000 residents.

The pages of the *2015 Annual Report* highlight VITEMA's accomplishments throughout the year. Despite fiscal and human resource challenges, the Agency made notable strides. Team VITEMA faced each obstacle with a fierce determination to press forward.

2015
Year
in
Review



Building a resilient community continues to be VITEMA's hallmark. In 2015, VITEMA raise awareness about the hazards that may impact the US Virgin Islands, including tsunamis which can occur with little to no warning.

PLANNING, TRAINING & EXERCISES

Maritime Emergency Planning Workshop

VITEMA held the first-ever Maritime Emergency Planning Workshop, bringing together representatives of the cruise line industry, key federal agencies, local first responders and emergency managers for a strategic level

discussion on responding to a ship emergency resulting in mass casualty and evacuation.

Attending the workshop were representatives of VITEMA, WICO, Royal Caribbean, FEMA-Caribbean Area Division, FEMA-Region II's Defense Coordinating Office, US Coast Guard, US Custom and Border Patrol, Roy Lester Schneider Hospital, VI Port Authority, the University of the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas Rescue, and the departments of Police, Human Services, Tourism and Health.



Figure 1 Phillip Parr of LLC Consulting facilitates maritime incident response discussions during VITEMA's Maritime Planning Workshop.



Figure 2 VITEMA Director Mona L. Barnes speaks with a representative of the Florida Advanced Surgical and Transport (FAST) Team.

The workshop served as a conduit for open dialogue between VITEMA, the cruise line industry and other vital stakeholders, to identify areas in the Territory’s current capabilities and plans where improvement is needed.

During the workshop, facilitators held a tabletop exercise featuring two scenarios – a fire aboard a cruise ship docked at WICO and a biohazard incident. The scenarios were designed to examine protocols between local authorities and the cruise line representatives during incident response operations. Areas identified for improvement included: operational communications between local responders, the dock and cruise ship officials; medical care and evacuation of the injured; and feeding and sheltering of evacuated passengers. VITEMA’s ultimate goal is to develop an annex to the Territorial Emergency Operations Plan specifically addressing maritime incidents.

Operation Pillsbury Sound Full-Scale Maritime Exercise

In an effort to assess the Territory’s capabilities in responding to a major incident at sea, VITEMA conducted the first-ever full-scale maritime incident exercise in St. Thomas-St. John district.

The exercise objective was to attain a clear and accurate assessment of the Territory’s capabilities and resources during a mass casualty incident in a maritime environment and to identify gaps and shortfalls — from training, to equipment and response plans — that must be addressed.

The exercise, titled *Operation Pillsbury Sound*, was held on December 10 – 11, on the body of water located between St. Thomas and St. John known as Pillsbury Sound. VITEMA utilized an actual ferry and actors to portray the victims, making the event as realistic as possible.

As part of the scenario, an explosion occurred aboard a ferry carrying 60 tourists on an excursion to the island of St. John. The explosion resulted in a disabled vessel, dozens of walking wounded, serious burn victims and several fatalities.



Figure 3 Port agents representing cruise lines participate in VITEMA’s Maritime Planning Workshop.



Figure 4 FEMA representatives and VITEMA Director Mona L. Barnes at the Maritime Planning Workshop held on St. Thomas.

Operation Pillsbury Sound unfolded at four separate venues:

- Pillsbury Sound, the body of the water between St. Thomas and St. John
- US National Park Service docks at Red Hook, St. Thomas and Cruz Bay, St. John.
- Schneider Regional Medical Center

on St. Thomas

- Myrah Keating Smith Community Health Clinic on St. John

Close to 20 government agencies, local and federal, participated including; Office of the Governor, the VI Police Department, VI Fire Service, Department of Health – Emergency Medical Services (EMS), St. Thomas Rescue, St. John Rescue, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Schneider Regional Medical Center, Myrah American Red Cross, Department of National Guard, the National Park Service, US Coast Guard and FEMA. St. Thomas-based commercial boating company, Sea Tow, also participated.

First responders and emergency managers were evaluated on; on-site incident management, marine search and rescue operations, operational coordination, operational communications, Emergency Operations Center management, public information and warning, fatality management services, on-scene security and protection and triage/pre-hospital treatment and medical surge.

Lessons learned from the exercise will be used to enhance the Territorial Emergency Operations Plan guidelines managing maritime incidents.



Figure 5 Pillsbury Sound

Keating Smith Community Health Clinic, Tourism, VI Department of Justice, VI

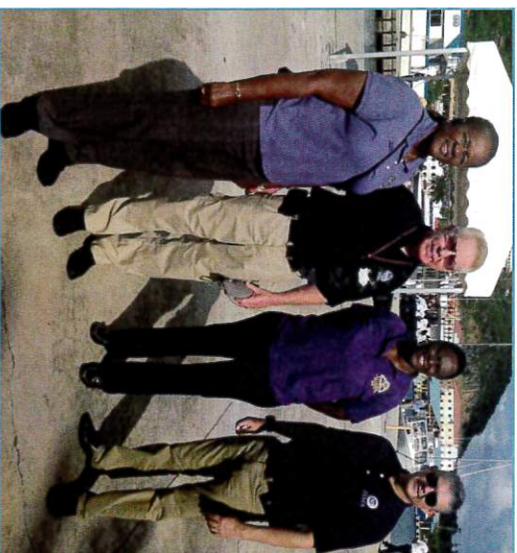


Figure 6 St. Croix Administrator Stephanie Williams, FEMA Region II Deputy Administrator Michael Burns, VITEMA Director Mona Barnes and FEMA-Caribbean Area Division Director, Alejandro De La Campa, at a St. Thomas exercise venue.

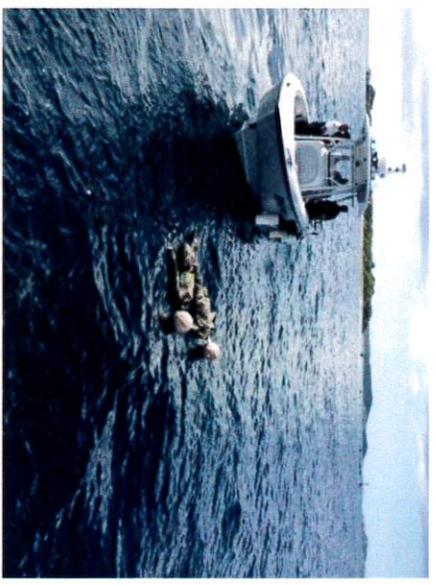
Operation Pillsbury Sound

Full-Scale Maritime Exercise



*Photos courtesy of Clara Freeman,
Office of the Governor*





LANTEX 2015 – Tsunami Warning & Evacuation Exercise

During National Tsunami Awareness Week, March 22 – 29, VITTEMA tested the Tsunami Siren System territorywide and practiced its 911 notification protocol as part of a Caribbean region tsunami response exercise, titled LANTEX 15.

The exercise simulated an 8.0 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Panama that generates a tsunami, requiring a tsunami warning for the entire Caribbean.



Figure 7 Arthur A. Richards Junior High School conducts a tsunami drill.

Public and private sector organizations across the USVI joined VITTEMA in the Caribbean region tsunami response exercise by testing their notification protocols and evacuation procedures. Those organizations included; the Department of Education, the 31st Legislature of the Virgin Islands, Department of Finance, Department of Labor, Department of Human Services, the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands, the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands, the Frederiksted Health Center, the American Red Cross of the Virgin Islands, WICO, Banco Popular of the Virgin Islands, First Bank, Crown Bay Marina, and Tropical Shipping.



Figure 8 Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School students head to higher ground.

During the exercise, VITTEMA activated its 22 (twenty-two) tsunami sirens located throughout the territory – 10 on St. Croix, 10 on St. Thomas and two (2) on St. John. In addition, the Department of Education, with support from VITTEMA, conducted evacuation drills at five public schools; Addelita Cancryn Junior High School and Eudora Kean High School on St. Thomas,

and Arthur A. Richards Junior High School, Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School and Elena Christian Junior High School on St. Croix.

The Department of Education and its contractor CDR Maguire utilized the tsunami exercise to validate school evacuation plans. The department safely evacuated more than 2,000 students, teachers and school staff, which included crossing major roadways to reach designated safe zones.



Figure 9 Larsen Elementary students and staff reach the designated safe zone.

VITEMA, in 2015, also participated in FEMA's regional Hurricane Exercise and the US Army Corps of Engineers Hurricane Prep Exercise held in Atlanta, Ga..

2015 Training

Throughout 2015 VITEMA provided dynamic and relevant incident management training to first responders and emergency managers territorywide.

Among the training opportunities offered by VITEMA was a course in Personal Protective Measures for Biological Events. In early 2015, amid the Ebola crisis, VITEMA moved swiftly to ensure the USVI's medical personnel and healthcare workers received training to effectively respond to an infectious disease incident.



Figure 10 Personal Protective Measures training for health and hospital employees held in January 2015.

• *Senior Executive Seminar for Cabinet Officials*

In May 2015, VITEMA provided a Senior Executive Seminar for the newly-appointed Cabinet-level officials. The seminar was conducted by a team of nationally-recognized homeland security experts.

The intensive one-day seminar engaged the newly-appointed leaders in strategic planning, policy development and organizational design in addressing the Territory's homeland security challenges.

The Executive Education Seminar, titled "Hurricane Response, Recovery and Resiliency," was conducted by a Mobile Education Team from the Naval Post-Graduate School's Center for Homeland

Other 2015 Training included:

- Wide Area Search
- Tsunami Awareness
- Structural Collapse Technician
- WMD/Hazmat Incident Training
- Incident Command System
- Joint Information & Risk Communication
- Emergency Management for Senior Officials Workshop
- Incident Response to Terrorist Bombings



Figure 11 (left to right) FEMA-Caribbean Area Division Director Alejandro De La Campa, Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter, VITEMA Director Mona L. Barnes and FEMA Region II Administrator Jerome Hatfield during the Senior Executive Seminar training.

Defense and Security (CHDS). The CHDS Mobile Education Team developed a multimedia scenario-based seminar to explore the US Virgin Islands' homeland security risks and challenges. The content was designed specifically to help strengthen the territorial government's capability to plan for, prevent, respond to and recover from catastrophic events and terrorism.

Discussions explored authorities, capabilities and concept of operations. It allowed officials to examine the VI's response and recovery operations and to pinpoint where critical gaps exist before a major incident occurs.

In attendance were Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter, then acting governor, Cabinet and other senior officials. Also in attendance were; Jerome Hatfield, FEMA Region 2 Regional Administrator, Alejandro de La Campa, FEMA Caribbean Area Division Director, Renaldo Rivera, the Adjutant General of the VI National Guard, and representatives of the American Red Cross of the Virgin Islands and the US Coast Guard.

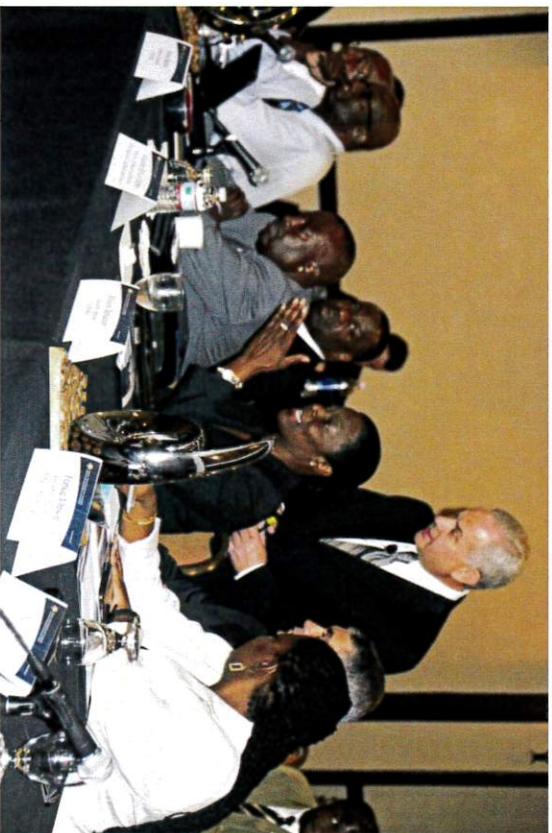


Figure 12 VITEMA Director Mona L. Barnes speaks at Senior Executive Seminar.



Figure 13 Cabinet officials at the Senior Executive Seminar on homeland security held May 2015 on St. Croix.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Among VITEMA's top priorities is community outreach to encourage families and business owners to be ready for natural and manmade hazards that may impact the USVI. As part of that effort VITEMA held tours and presentations to various groups. In October, the Agency held the annual All-Hazards Preparedness Expo on St. John, St. Croix and St. Thomas for the entire Virgin Islands featuring information from public and private sector entities and non-government organizations.

In November 2015, VITEMA welcomed 60 (sixty) students from the Ricardo Richards Elementary School to its St. Croix facility to learn about how the Agency prepares for and responds to major emergencies. Students toured the VITEMA's Christiansted facility including its Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which serves as the hub for emergency response coordination, as well as key offices, the Communications Room and the Director's Office.



In October, VITEMA held the 2015 Annual All Hazards Preparedness Expo featuring first responder demonstrations, family fun and entertainment, and information and handouts from local, federal and private sector representatives on how to be ready when disaster strikes.

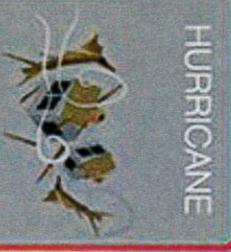
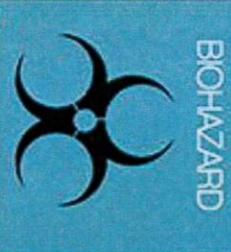
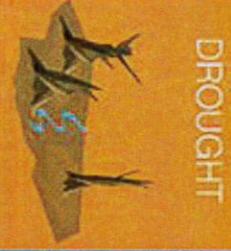
The 2015 Expo theme was "Building Resiliency" — a call to action to be ready before a disaster strikes.



VITEMA'S 5th Annual

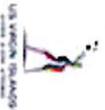
ALL HAZARDS PREPAREDNESS EXPO

BUILDING RESILIENCY

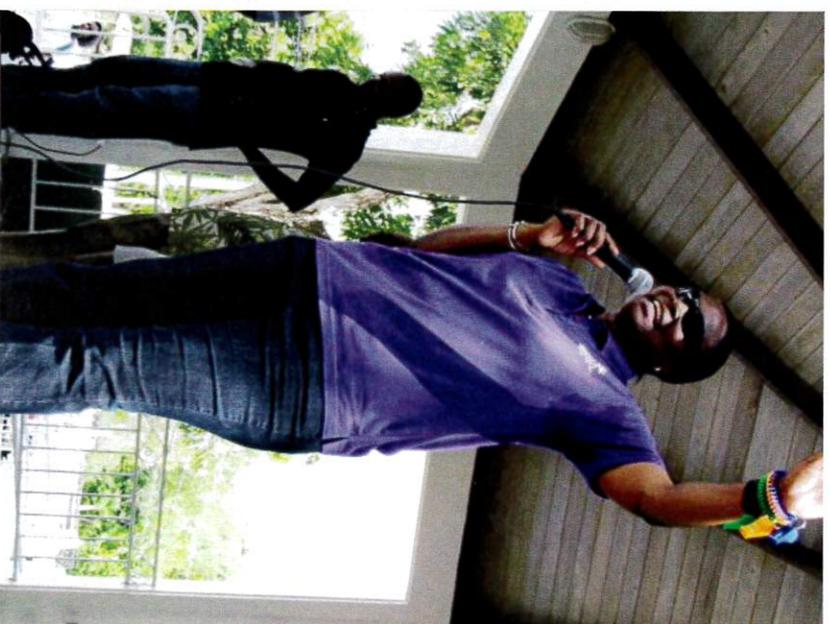
 FLOOD	 WILDFIRE	 TSUNAMI	 HURRICANE
 BIOHAZARD	 EARTHQUAKE	 DROUGHT	 LANDSLIDE

OCTOBER 2015

<p>St. John October 23 10 am - 3 pm Frank Powell Park Cruz Bay with DJ LSI</p>	<p>St. Croix October 24 10 am - 3 pm Csted National Park Historical Site with Digital Band & DJ Edney</p>	<p>St. Thomas October 24 5 pm - 10 pm VITEMA Headquarters with All Access Band</p>
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Cruz Bay, St. John





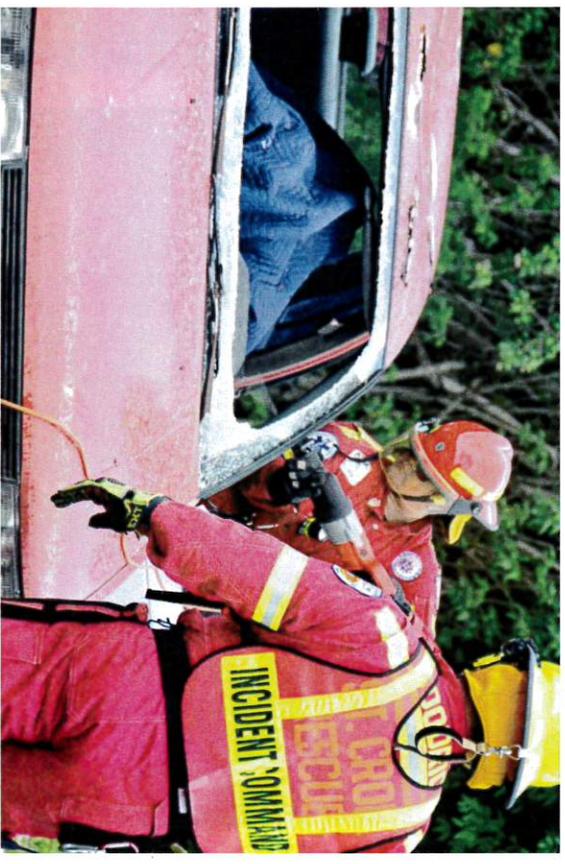
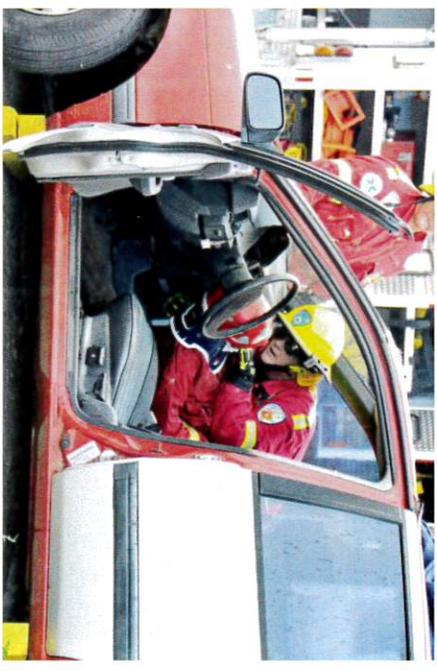
Christiansted National Park Site, St. Croix

Responders Motorcade









*St. Croix Rescue Demonstration:
Car Extrication*

*VI Fire Service Demonstration:
Rooftop Rescue*



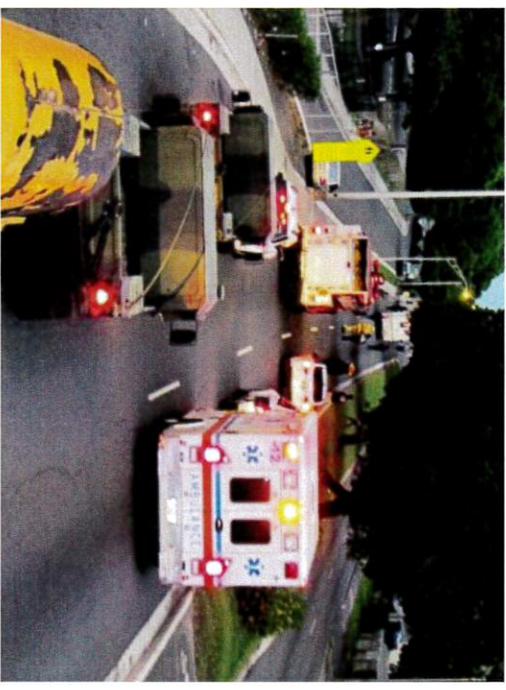
*DPNR & St. Croix Rescue
Water Rescue Demonstration
& Boat Rides*



*Musical Entertainment
& Zumba*

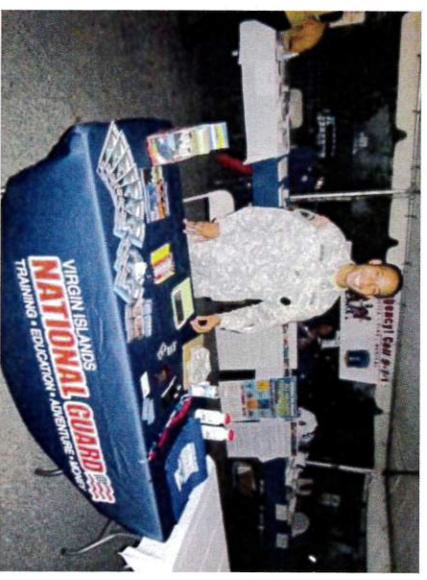


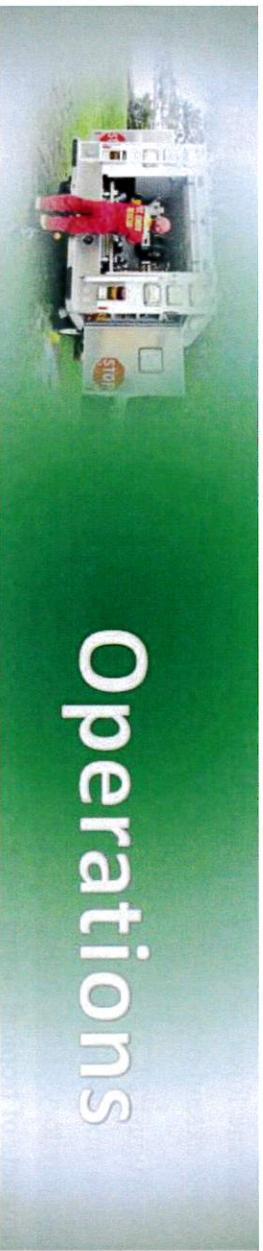
VITEMA, St. Thomas



First Responder Parade & VITEMA Open House







EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

2015 Atlantic Hurricane Season: Storm Response

The territory faced an active 2015 Atlantic Hurricane Season with three named storms, threatening the US Virgin Islands. Between August and September 2015, VITEMA responded to three named storms – tropical storms Danny, Erika and Grace.

Tropical Storm Danny:

On August 17, VITEMA’s Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) began monitoring the first tropical cyclone to threaten the USVI. Tropical Storm Danny formed on August 21, prompting the VITEMA Director to place all EOCs on high alert. In addition, FEMA Region II deployed an Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) to the USVI to support emergency response operations. The team embedded in EOCs territorywide.

On August 23, Tropical Storm Danny intensified into a Category 3 Hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, packing maximum of 115 miles per hour with higher gusts.

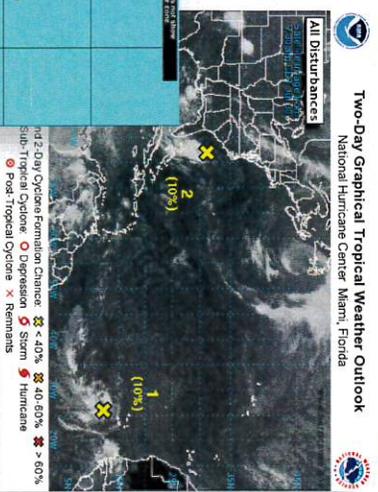


Figure 14 Tropical Storm Erika

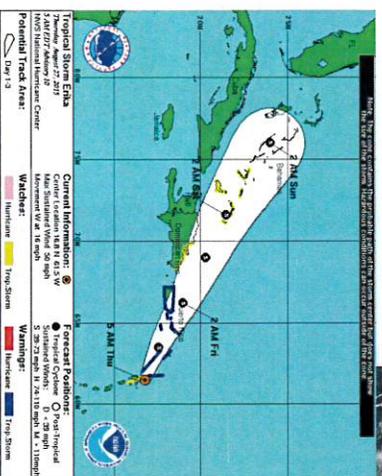
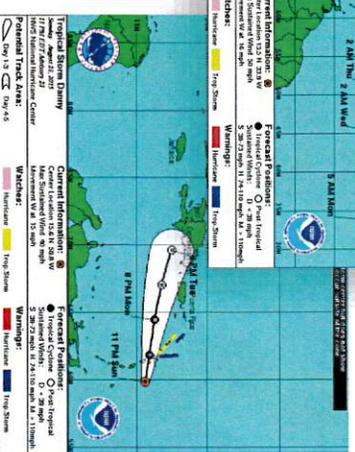


Figure 15 Tropical Storm Danny



Figure 16 Tropical Storm Grace



Hurricane force winds extended outward up to 15 miles from the center and tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 70 miles from the center.

By August 24, Danny degenerated into a tropical depression sparing the territory of the negative impacts of tropical storm force winds and rain.

Tropical Storm Erika:

On August 24, Tropical Storm Erika formed about 955 miles east of the Leeward Islands.



Figure 17 Gov. Kenneth Mapp (center) meets with his Cabinet at VITEMA EOC on St. Croix to discuss storm preparations. Alongside Governor Mapp, (left to right), is Adjutant General Deborah Howell, VITEMA Director Mona L. Barnes and Randall Knight, the governor's Chief of Staff.

On August 26, Tropical Storm Erika was projected to pass over the territory as a strong tropical cyclone packing sustained winds of 50 miles per hour with higher gusts. Tropical storm force winds extended outward up to 105 miles mainly to the north and east of the center. Erika was expected to produce total rain accumulations of 3 to 5 inches with maximum amounts of 8 inches.



VITEMA activated its EOCs territorywide to coordinate response and recovery operations including closure of USVI's sea and air ports, the opening of general public and special needs shelters and sandbag distribution. A FEMA IMAT was already on the ground and remained embedded within VITEMA's EOCs to support storm response operations.

VITEMA EOC Incident Reports

Tropical Storm Erika caused an island-wide power outage and downed poles, electric lines and trees throughout St. Croix. On St. Thomas, small sections of feeders lost power and trees were downed in some areas.

Tropical Storm Grace

On September 5, the National Hurricane Center began issuing advisories for Tropical Storm Grace, the seventh named storm of the 2015 Atlantic Hurricane Season. Grace remained well east of the USVI and degenerated into a tropical wave before reaching the territory.



Figure 18 VITEMA Director Mona L. Barnes speaks during a press conference to announce storm preparations.



Grants Management

Federal funds are essential to VITEMA meeting the mission of readying the territory for all types of hazards and building resiliency. Through the Grants Management Division, VITEMA applies for, administers and monitors federal funding that facilitates the territorial government’s ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural or manmade disasters.

VITEMA manages a combination of NOAA and US Department of Homeland Security grants that address homeland security programs, preparedness, hazard mitigation and disaster public assistance. During 2015, initiatives and costs covered by federal grant dollars included:

- salaries and fringe benefits
- the purchase and installation of tsunami hazard and evacuation signs on Water Island
- a new fleet of vehicles for VITEMA
- training for first responders and emergency managers including specialized courses such as structural collapse operations.
- exercises to test the territory’s capabilities for Tsunami Evacuation and Marine Rescue Operations.
- Teen CERT for the Educational Complex High School students
- hiring a Federal Grants Monitor/Tsunami Coordinator
- printing of the VITEMA Tsunami Awareness Guide
- creating and printing a tsunami children’s book.
- producing and broadcasting a tsunami awareness public service announcement.
- Establishing a Tsunami Preparedness Maritime Task Force to provide guidance to the maritime community.

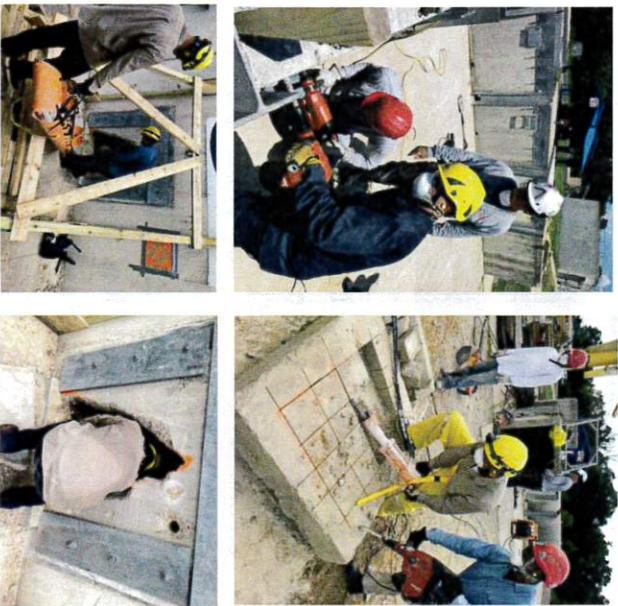


Figure 19 USVI firefighters and rescue personnel receive certified training in Structural Collapse Operations at the Texas Engineering Extension Service.

Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation

During 2015, VITTEMA began work to manage and monitor two major projects totaling \$2.4 million in Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Program grants — the VITTEMA Electrical Underground Project at St. Thomas and the St. Croix Coastal Interceptor Relocation Project.

The VITTEMA Underground Electrical Project will ensure VITTEMA's headquarters on St. Thomas is energized in the event a significant storm impacts the Territory's infrastructure. As part of the project, WAPA will remove overhead electrical cables, place the electrical lines underground, and the VITTEMA into Cyril E. King Airport's direct connection to the utility. VITTEMA serves as a hub for local and federal emergency response and recovery efforts in the event of a major incident or disaster. The Agency must maintain operations and internal and external communications with local, regional and federal partners.

The St. Croix Coastal Interceptor Relocation Project is a fix to the Waste Management's LBJ Pump Station on the north side of St. Croix. The relocation project is currently under review by the Army Corp of Engineers. It is designed to eliminate the risk of failure of the Coastal Interceptor, a critical infrastructure for moving sewage for wastewater treatment. Failure of the sewage line poses a significant risk to public health and to environmental resources in the Christiansted town area.

Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Funding for Critical Needs

In December, FEMA and VITTEMA announced the approval of \$312,500 in Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation funds to purchase of a 1,500kw Emergency Generator Unit (EGU) for the Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center (JFLH) on St. Croix.

The generator will mitigate the possibility of losing power at this critical facility during an emergency and will strengthen territorial capabilities to manage medical emergencies and operations. In April, JFLH lost back-up power generation during an island-wide outage. VITTEMA moved quickly to address this shortfall so that it does not reoccur.

The mitigation activity includes the purchase and installation of a new 1,500kw, 0.8 power factor, 4,160 volts, 60 hertz, at 1,800 RPM Diesel Generator set to replace the existing under size and unreliable 1,100 KW generators that have far exceeded its useful life.

The first step of this mitigation project will be to analyze the load demand to the generator ensuring it will adequately respond during a power outage. Next step will be overhauling the existing generators to ensure that the wiring and hookup mechanism are suitably sized and meet all applicable building, electrical and environmental codes for the installation of the new generator. And the final step will be the request for competitive bids for the purchase and installation of the new generator.

Strengthening Local, Regional & Federal Partnerships

Throughout 2015, the VITEMA Director Mona L. Barnes focused on strengthening the Agency's vital relationships with its local, regional and federal partners. As part of this effort, Director Barnes ensured there was a USVI presence at key strategic meetings and conferences that impact funding and planning for the territory.

Among these key events were:

- The Caribbean Regional Response Team (CRRRT) Meeting held on St. Thomas. The CRRT is co-chaired by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Coast Guard. Discussions included coordinating emergency response to an oil spill and hazardous material incident.



Figure 20 VITEMA Director Mona L. Barnes, Tony de Burn, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and U.S. Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Esther Kia'aina.

- The Department of Interior's – US Insular Areas Climate Change Stakeholders Meeting, held June 2015, at Guam. The USVI was among 90 officials from the U.S. territories and freely associated states met to discuss strategies for climate change adaptation and resiliency planning. Climate change refers to changes that are happening to the planet such as rising sea levels. The potential future effects of global climate change include longer periods of drought and an increase in the number, duration and intensity of tropical storms. Discussions centered on disaster preparedness, energy



Figure 21 VITEMA Director Mona L. Barnes and Rocky Lopes, Deputy Program Manager, Tsunami Program, NOAA National Weather Service, receive a tour of the Charlotte Amalie harbor on DPNR vessel.

needs and planning, natural and cultural resources management, and the role of higher education institutions in capacity building.

- The National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program (NTHMP) Subcommittee Meeting held July 2015, in San Diego, California, to submit reports on how NTHMP funding has impact tsunami readiness in grantee jurisdictions.

- The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) Ninth Caribbean Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Management. The conference served as a checkpoint for updates on a two-year comprehensive strategy on building resiliency across the Caribbean region.
- Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) Operations Committee Meeting held at Florida. Speaking before key representatives of the cruise line industry, Director Barnes presented a case for more effective collaboration and coordination with the local authorities during emergency events.

FEMA Caribbean Distribution Center

On June 16, 2015, Governor Mapp and Director Mona Barnes toured at FEMA’s Distribution Center Caribbean at Puerto Rico.

The 80,000 square feet center is one of eight FEMA distribution centers in the US and is designed to swiftly deploy and deliver disaster relief commodities to the Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. The inventory includes plastic sheeting, tarps, generators, blankets, cots, water, Meals-Ready-Eat (MREs), medical supplies, infant and toddler kits and medical kits. According to FEMA officials, disaster relief commodities can be delivered to the territory within 24 hours.

FEMA Region II – Caribbean Area Division remains one of the VITEMA most crucial partners in providing resources to ensure the Agency’s mission is met.



Figure 22- 23 Property and Procurement Commissioner Randolph Bennett, Governor Mapp, Director Barnes, VITEMA, and Director De La Campa, FEMA Caribbean Area Division Director, FEMA’s Distribution Center Caribbean at Puerto Rico. Figure 23 – 24 Commodities stocked at the FEMA Distribution Center.





Figure 25 VITTEMA Director Mona L. Barnes, Police Commissioner Delroy Richards, then VI Fire Service Director Eugene Farrell and VI senators — Novelle Francis Jr., Kurt Vialet, Kenneth L. Gittens and Myron Jackson — conducted a site visit and fact-finding mission at the Jackson Memorial Trauma Center in Florida. The facility is strategically-located for medical evacuations from the USVI.

VI Water and Power Authority LPG Site

In November, Director Barnes conducted a site visit of the VI Water and Power Authority’s Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) storage and delivery system located at the utility’s Richmond Terminal on St. Croix.

Barnes received an overview of the LPG system operations, from receiving the LPG shipment and discharging it to a storage terminal to the vaporization process and supplying LPG to power WAPA’s generating unit. Barnes also received an overview of the site’s safety and security measures.

Director Barnes also reviewed the LPG site’s emergency notification protocols, the alarm system, the fire evacuation plan as well as the equipment and how it’s design to warn if there is a leakage or some other malfunction.

WAPA and its propane conversion contractor, VITOL, received the first inventory of LPG on Oct. 22, 2015, bringing the two-year conversion project closer to completion. The load of LPG is being tested and commissioned before being introduced to WAPA’s generating units to generate electricity.



Figure 26 VITTEMA Director Mona L. Barnes with Marlen Figueira, LPG Site General Manager.

Leaning Forward – 2016

As we look to 2016, VITTEMA is poised to become a robust emergency preparedness, response and recovery coordinator for the territory.

In 2016, the Agency will welcome a new Deputy Director for Preparedness to manage training, exercises, planning and community outreach, and a Deputy Director for Operations to oversee VITTEMA’s daily operations. This is a significant milestone for VITTEMA. Since its reorganization and realignment in 2010, VITTEMA has been unable to fund and fill these mission-critical positions to meet the standards of the National Incident Management System. This has left other senior managers wearing multiple hats to ensure the Agency meets its mission of saving lives and protecting property.

VITTEMA will also continue to strengthen the USVI Tsunami Readiness Program with the installation of additional tsunami warning sirens at high-risk areas throughout the territory. In addition, strategic planning efforts will focus more intently on ensuring the maritime community is prepared.

Among VITTEMA’s other top priorities is rebuilding its defunct facility at Hermon Hill on St. Croix. In 2011, VITTEMA’s Hermon Hill facility on St. Croix was vacated due to mold. Since then, the facility has been vandalized and left unkempt with overgrown brush covering the property. Through a coordinated effort and support of St. Croix Administrator Stephanie Williams, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Agriculture, and the VI Bureau of Corrections, VITTEMA has been able to maintain the facility and the grounds, enough so that the outside can be utilized for first responder training and other events.

However, VITTEMA’s vision is far beyond utilizing the facility for a training site. In 2016, the Agency will continue to seek funding opportunities to rebuild VITTEMA’s St. Croix office. This would allow all of VITTEMA’s components to be housed under one roof.

On St. John, VITTEMA will continue to make improvements to the newly-acquired office space and the Emergency Operations Center. For years, VITTEMA’s St. John operations have been housed on a single floor of a building within the Department of Public Works’ Cruz Bay facility. In June 2015, following lengthy discussions, Public Works Commissioner Gustav James agreed to transfer the entire two-floor building to VITTEMA.

Finally, VITTEMA will maintain a high level of training opportunities, including beginner and advanced courses for first responders and emergency managers. Our work continues year-round to raise awareness and educate the public about the hazards that may impact the Virgin Islands – so that the USVI is not only ready, but resilient.



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