



# the Current Connection

Vol 1. October - November 2021

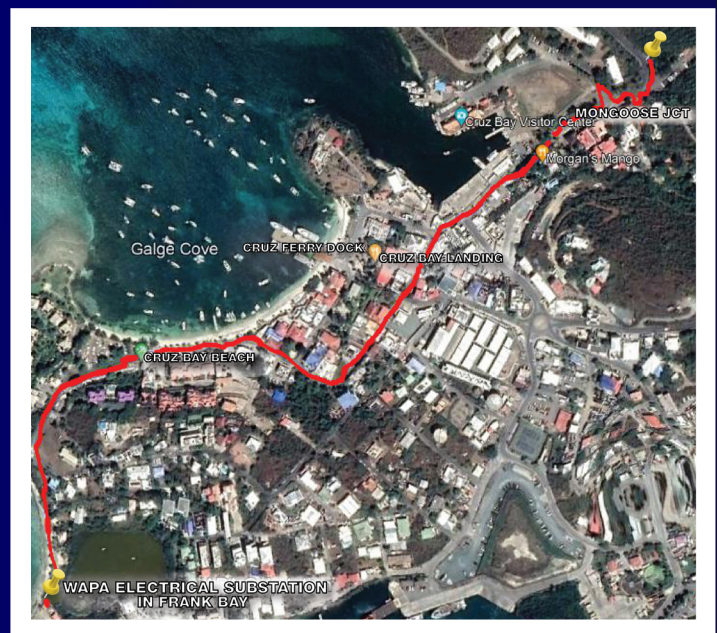
*Building a Brighter Future!*



## UNDERGROUNDING PROJECTS



Work to underground electrical equipment is ongoing on both St. John and St. Croix. On St. John, Haugland Virgin Islands crews are trenching and installing conduits in two locations, from Mongoose Junction and Frank Bay towards Cruz Bay.



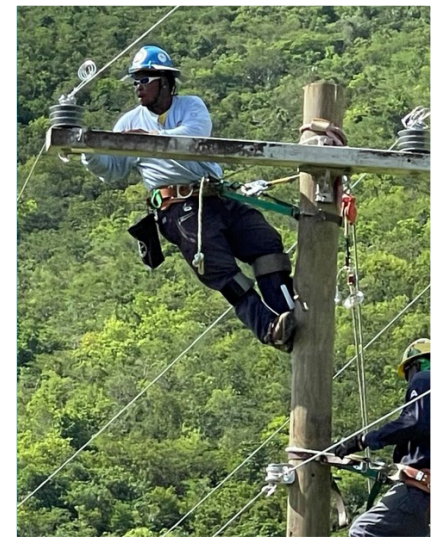


On St. Croix, similar work is underway at the Wilfred “Bomba” Allick Transshipment Port at Krause Lagoon and will commence at another site in Golden Grove by mid October. A third project will see undergrounding work in the Midland Area. J. Benton Construction and Vivot Equipment Corporation are the contractors for the projects at the Container Port and Golden Grove.



When completed, electrical service will be provided to customers through underground equipment. The goal is to replace existing overhead electrical equipment and ensure a more efficient post-storm service restoration. The projects are 100% federally funded, 90% by FEMA with the 10% local match provided by HUD.

2019, when training was originally established to secure certification for hot line work. The program was not completed because of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The current training is focused on courses to both secure certification and provide a means for upward mobility.



As in any electrical utility, the role of the employees in electrical distribution is vital to the success of the company’s efforts to provide customers with reliable and sustainable

## LINE DEPARTMENT TRAINING...



*Building a brighter future together!*

In September, WAPA linemen began an intense training regimen aimed at sharpening the skills required for the performance of daily assignments associated with the upkeep and maintenance of the electric grids. The training will run through June 2023 with various courses and labs during the two-year period.

The sessions are staged on the grounds of the Reichhold Center on St. Thomas, and when training commences on St. Croix later this month, the Agriculture Fair grounds in Lower Love will play host to the Line Department personnel.

WAPA has partnered with Electric Cities of Georgia (ECG) to provide the training. The collaboration with ECG dates back to

service. Funding was provided through a \$215,000 Department of Interior grant and \$301,550 of cost savings realized internally as a result of overtime reduction. The reduced overtime costs resulted from a reorganization of the electric division.

Interim Executive Director Noel Hodge said WAPA will continue to reinvest in our employees through training opportunities. WAPA remains committed to providing training and certification that can afford all employees opportunities to advance in the company.





# LINE DEPARTMENT RELOCATION...

Site preparation is underway in Estate Donoe, the future home of the St. Thomas Line Department. Last month, trenches were dug to accommodate the installation of water, electrical and data services. Footings were also installed for recently acquired office trailers. The trailers are now being outfitted for Line Department personnel who have been without a permanent home since 2017. Line Department offices at the Randolph Harley Power Plant were severely



damaged at the hands of Hurricane Irma. Since that time, the line crews have maintained an office on rental property in Estate Bolongo. The site, located between Market Square East and The Home Depot, also houses a significant portion of the electrical system's inventory.

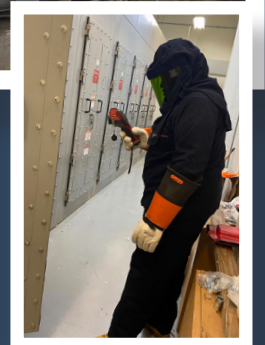
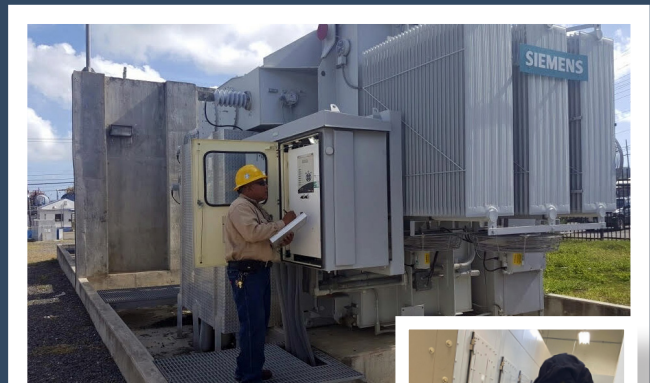


This month, our spotlight is on the employees of the Substation Department. Under the watchful eyes of Manager Chavante Marsh, these employees have provided invaluable service in the years following the 2017 hurricanes. The substation employees, Akeem Thomas and Micah Smith in the St. Thomas-St. John District and Carlos Melendez on St. Croix have held together the hurricane damaged facilities to ensure their continued functionality.

They labor each day to maintain, and when necessary, repair the electrical substations in both districts. Chavante is proud of her team and confident she can call on them day or night to repair and restore the substations. These employees can also be counted on to assist other departments whenever needed.

Hats off to the substation employees territory wide!

## HIDDEN HEROES SUBSTATION DEPARTMENT





# HUMAN RESOURCES STAFF APPOINTMENTS

Attorney Dionne Sinclair was recently named General Counsel and Ashley M. Bryan, as Director of Transmission and Distribution for the Electric System.

**Attorney Sinclair** joined the Authority as Deputy General Counsel in 2020 having spent years in the public and private sectors. She is a former Assistant Attorney General at the V.I. Justice Department. While residing in New York she held positions with The Chandler Law Firm, was founder and principal of her own firm, served as a senior associate with



**DIONNE G. SINCLAIR**  
*General Counsel*

Attorney Sinclair will oversee the Authority's legal and contracting departments.

**Director of Transmission and Distribution Ashley M. Bryan** first joined WAPA in 2014 as an Electrical Engineer I and has an impeccable record of achievement and growth within the Authority. She was promoted in 2017 to Electrical Engineer II and later that year to System Planning Manager. She has served as interim T&D Director since February and has more

than 12 years of work experience in electrical engineering. She has held positions with URS, Corp in Maryland and Wind Turbine and Energy Cables, in Florida.



**ASHLEY M. BRYAN**  
*Director of  
Transmission & Distribution  
Electric System*

Interim Director Hodge said he is elated to make the announcement of these two very competent and dedicated women to key leadership positions within the Authority.

**Chief Information Officer Julius Aubain** recently attended the American Public Power Association (APPA) business-financial conference in Denver, Colorado. Julius served as Vice Chairman of the Information Technology Planning Committee this year and will be chairman of the committee in 2022. He contributed to developing the IT track for the conference, confirming speakers and presenters as well as defining discussion topics. As Vice Chairman of the committee, CIO Aubain worked alongside Chairman James Boyle of Braintree Electric Light Department.

The business-financial conference is the APPA's annual meeting for public power professionals in the areas of business and finance. This year, more than 300 attendees participated in sixty sessions that covered operational areas such as customer accounting and services, accounting and finance, human resources and training, information technology, pricing and market analysis and risk management and insurance.

In September, a health insurance package for employees and retirees was approved and it includes a no-cost increase for employees. This is a significant milestone for WAPA to have secured a new medical and dental insurance package at no-cost to employees. Improved plan



## NOTE WORTHY THE COST OF HEALTHCARE

performance contributed greatly to the no-cost increase. This year, the company engaged an aggressive effort to promote health plan benefits. The plans were restructured making them more affordable to those who selected the family package. A diabetes prevention program was enacted and a dedicated Wellbeing Coordinator, Malissa Neille, was added to the Authority's staff, paid for by our health insurance provider, CIGNA.





# the Pipeline

Vol 1. October - November 2021

## WATER DEPARTMENT ESTATE CALQUOHOUN

In early October, Water System crews completed service installations for two local farmers on V.I. Corp Land in Estate Calquohoun, St. Croix.

These installations will allow the farmers to maintain a sustainable water supply for their livestock farm. Due to the proximity of a six-inch water main, the project required that both lanes of Midland Road be closed to vehicular traffic while the installation work was underway.

