



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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Figure 1: Rey Belardo Jr., Line Supervisor at WAPA (left), speaking with attendees at the 2024 AGRIFEST at WAPA's booth in the Energy Village led by UVI's CGTC.

WAPA Proudly Participates in St. Croix's 52nd Annual AGRIFEST

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority's ("WAPA" or "Authority") was a proud participant of St. Croix's 52nd annual Agriculture and Food Fair beginning February 17, 2024, through February 19, 2024. The event, jointly sponsored by the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture, University of the Virgin Islands School of Agriculture, VI Department of Tourism, VI Lottery, and VIYA, provided the WAPA team with the opportunity to connect and provide public education on a variety of Authority topics and projects.

Part of the weekend's activities included several stations represented by team members of the Richmond Power Plant; the Transmission and Distribution department, including WAPA Linemen; Internal Audit Revenue Assurance, Communications; and the Chief Administration Office. Located in the *Energy Village* this year in collaboration with the Energy Office and UVI's Caribbean Green Technology Center (CGTC), the new grant-funded electric bucket truck and Tesla were also on display as part of the Authority's efforts to champion sustainability and energy efficient initiatives. The Authority also set up a creativity station, where children were able to learn about water conservation and best practices for electrical safety through a series of coloring book activities designed for a wide range of ages.

The stations provided WAPA team members the opportunity to engage with the public on what happens during loss of power generation at the plant, downed power line safety, impacts of meter tampering, and how to protect themselves from lead. Handouts were shared on how to reduce electricity consumption, report electricity theft, and recommendations by the Environmental Protection Agency on steps to take at home whether using cistern or potable water to reduce lead. As part of those outreach efforts, faucet and pitcher filters were also distributed to community members during the fair.

“At WAPA, we understand the significance of maintaining a strong connection with our customers in the Virgin Islands. This past weekend provided us with a valuable opportunity to not only address inquiries and receive feedback but also to personally interact with numerous customers. Meeting face-to-face allowed us to forge deeper connections and foster a greater sense of transparency,” said Shanell Petersen, Director of Corporate Communications at the Authority.

A special thank you to all the WAPA team members who assisted over the past few months to make this outreach event successful! See recap video [here](https://youtu.be/GaRN7fsBlzk?si=0J1OSZnUTguj_A2C) on WAPA’s YouTube page:
https://youtu.be/GaRN7fsBlzk?si=0J1OSZnUTguj_A2C.

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About WAPA: The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority is an autonomous agency of the Virgin Islands Government which produces and distributes electricity and drinking water to residential and commercial customers in the territory. WAPA was created by the Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands in 1964 through Act No. 1248. Today, WAPA generates electrical power at production plants on St. Thomas and St. Croix and distributes electrical service through smart grids to customers on St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John, Hassel Island, and Water Island. Potable water is distributed to almost 13,000 customers through water lines and standpipes. WAPA also has the responsibility of installing and maintaining streetlights.

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