



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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Image Above: Matthias Clark, Mechanical Engineer at the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority during the Office of Disaster Recovery Round Up recent episode providing updates on the Midland Underground Project on St. Croix.

Undergrounding Electrical Lines Means Improved Grid Resilience, Authority's Projects Make Significant Headway

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “Authority”) would like to provide the public with an update on the significant progress made to multiple undergrounding projects on the island of St. Croix, as well as highlight the recent completion of the Container Port Project.

The decision to begin transitioning the Authority’s electrical infrastructure underground came after the extensive damage resulting from Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. As a strategic step to prevent a recurrence of grid compromise, the Authority began the installation of underground infrastructure territory-wide, making it more resilient and immune to extensive damage from natural disasters. In addition to improving grid reliability, the undergrounding projects also aim to enhance safety for the public and utility workers by reducing the risk of electrical hazards from downed power lines. An overall reduction in the amount of above ground poles will also help reduce constant vegetation interference.

The current targets of the undergrounding projects are key facilities and businesses, particularly those affecting the territories lifeline following a natural disaster. The Authority’s current roster of undergrounding projects on St. Croix include:

- Golden Grove Undergrounding Project: Spans from Golden Grove Road (West of UVI) to Queen Mary Highway and ends near the Virgin Islands Police Department Facilities.
- Midland Undergrounding Project: Spans from Route 663, adjacent to Central High School to Queen Mary Highway and ends near Melvin Evans Highway.
- Container Port Undergrounding Project: Spans from Container Port Road to the end of Melvin Evans Highway.

The recently completed Container Port Project was energized on March 14, 2023, and in addition to residential customers, also benefits Limetree Training School and VI Port Authority Facilities. Golden Grove Undergrounding Project is at 99% completion and is servicing Golden Grove Adult Correctional Facility and Detention Center, Patrick Sweeney: Training Academy/ Police Headquarters/ and K9 Unit, Bureau of Motor Vehicles, and multiple businesses along the Queen Mary Highway—in addition to residential homes. Lastly, the Midland Undergrounding Project sits at 98% completion and will provide service to Central High School, Original Pentecostal Church, Agape Medical Center and Kingshill Funeral Home. Junctions have also been installed at intersections for expected expansion into the residential areas.

All projects noted above are funded 90% by a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant with a 10% US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) match.

"We are proud to share our progress on these vital undergrounding projects," noted Cordell Jacobs, Interim Director of Transmission and Distribution at the Authority. "By moving power lines underground, the Authority is taking proactive steps to improve grid reliability and we appreciate the patience and support of our customers as we work to complete these important infrastructure upgrades."

The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority Communication's department is committed to reaching, informing, and connecting with the youngest members of the community to the eldest, through meaningful, transparent and effective communication.



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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.