



# THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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## WAPA Engages STEM Students in Career Exploration at St. Croix Educational Complex



*WAPA linemen (left to right) Kymani Ross, Evanson Matthew, John Briscoe, and Troy Lake engage with STEM summer students, sharing insights about electricity delivery and careers in the electrical field.*

Kingshill, U.S. Virgin Islands (June 17, 2025) – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “the Authority”) visited the St. Croix Educational Complex today to participate in the school’s STEM Summer Program, engaging students in career exploration and hands-on learning. The visit focused on introducing middle school-aged students to career opportunities within WAPA and highlighting the diverse roles that help ensure the reliable delivery of water and power throughout the Virgin Islands.

The WAPA team was represented by professionals from the Communications, Line, and Information Technology departments. The team engaged with 23 students from 6th to 8th grade, sharing their personal career journeys and insights into their work and the importance of their roles in serving the community.

Students received an introduction to the Territory's power infrastructure, learning how electricity is generated, now increasingly supported by solar energy, and how it is then transmitted and distributed across the islands. Lineworkers were highlighted as essential to maintaining and repairing the powerlines and poles that deliver electricity to homes and businesses. Students came away with an appreciation for the behind-the-scenes coordination, hazardous environment, and engineering involved in keeping the lights on.

As part of the session, students also explored the evolution of water infrastructure — from early wooden pipes to copper and iron systems, and now to modern PVC piping. Students were encouraged to think critically about the future of water systems and imagine how infrastructure could improve beyond today's standards.

One of the most engaging parts of the visit was the interactive “Leaky Pipe Water Challenge,” where students were divided into teams to simulate the repair of a leaky pipe. The hands-on activity emphasized essential skills such as teamwork, communication, and critical thinking, while also encouraging awareness of real-world challenges like water loss.

“We are proud to inspire the next generation of engineers, technicians, communicators, and IT professionals,” said Shanell Petersen, Director of Communications at WAPA. “These students represent our future, and we are committed to providing them with opportunities to learn, explore, and envision themselves in careers that make a difference in our community and, potentially, the world.”

Today's summer camp visit reflects WAPA's ongoing dedication to community engagement, education, and workforce development. By connecting with students early, the Authority aims to inspire interest in STEM careers and build a stronger, more informed future workforce for the Virgin Islands.

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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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