

Good day, Honorable Chairman Angel Bolques, Jr., Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports, and Parks of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands of the United States (USVI), Honorable Senators, Central Staff, and the listening and viewing audience. I am Calvert White, the Commissioner of the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation (DSPR); here to provide testimony on the Department's strengths, weaknesses, operations, opportunities, accomplishments, and priorities.

Allow me to introduce members of my Leadership Team. Joining us remotely we have, Ms. Renee Hansen, Assistant Commissioner – St. Croix, Ms. Rellina Pelle, Human Resources Manager, Ms. Jamilah Henry, District Administrator of Sports and Recreation – St. Croix. Mr. Vincent Roberts, Assistant Commissioner – St. Thomas/St. John, Ms. Carol Peters, Director of Business and Financial Management, and Mr. Elroy Hill, Deputy Director – St. John.

Our department is fortified by several key strengths that serve as the foundation of our operations. Firstly, we boast a robust leadership team with a wealth of experience and a shared commitment to our mission. Secondly, the diversity of skill sets within our team enriches our approach, ranging from grant writers and psychologists to sports management professionals. We take pride in our team's innovative spirit, constantly seeking creative solutions to challenges. The seamless coordination of events and a strong spirit of teamwork underscore our ability to deliver impactful programs and services to the community. Moreover, our commitment to the community is reflected in the diverse array of programs we offer, contributing to the well-being and engagement of the people we serve.

In acknowledging our weaknesses, we recognize areas where improvement is imperative. Communication is a priority, and we are committed to implementing strategies to ensure timely and effective communication within the public through various mediums such as social media, radio, and newspapers. Ensuring the timely submission of documents and enhancing accountability within the agency are critical aspects of our ongoing improvement initiatives. Additionally, the lack of equipment for park maintenance is a challenge we are actively addressing, along with the need to establish metrics to measure our performance comprehensively.

Turning our weaknesses into opportunities, we are poised for positive transformation. Modernizing outdated facilities presents an opportunity to enhance the quality of services we provide, while collaborations with entities such as the Department of Health and the Virgin Islands Department of Education have proven successful. Embracing technology presents an opportunity to streamline operations, improve communication,



and enhance overall efficiency. Strategically planning to invest in sports tourism within the next two to three years contributes to economic growth and community engagement. Furthermore, upgrading playgrounds and facilities aligns with our commitment to providing top-notch recreational spaces for our community.

Acknowledging the threats we face is essential for proactive planning. Challenges such as low salaries affecting recruitment efforts and the lack of equipment and indoor gym facilities pose threats that we are diligently working to address. Storage challenges, procurement process issues, and budget allocation imbalances also require attention. Our commitment to meeting deadlines and managing vendors and contractors effectively is a priority.

Our strategic priorities guide our path forward. Securing additional funding to hire more employees and increase wages is imperative to ensure a skilled and motivated workforce. Efforts to secure additional facilities recognize the need for expanded space to accommodate our growing team. Exploring various avenues to generate additional revenue, including parking fees, advertisements, and program fees, will contribute to sustaining and enhancing our services.

### **Day to Day Operations:**

As we strive for continual improvement within our department, it is imperative to address the day-to-day challenges that hinder our efficiency and overall functionality. I have identified several key areas that require immediate attention:

**Establishment of an Enforcement Division:** Relying solely on external agencies such as VIPD, DCLA, and others has worked at times but overall has proven to be ineffective in meeting our enforcement needs. Therefore, it is essential to create an internal enforcement division within our department. This division will enable us to respond promptly to issues, maintain better control over enforcement procedures, and ensure the safety and security of our facilities, especially on our public beaches.

**Salary Increase to Attract and Retain Talent:** To attract highly qualified candidates and retain our valuable employees, it is crucial to increase salaries. Competitive salaries not only motivate our current staff but also attract individuals with the necessary skills and expertise to enhance our department's capabilities.



**Boosting Maintenance Supplies Budget:** The upkeep of our facilities significantly impacts on the overall functionality and appearance of our department. Therefore, during our budget preparation, I will increase the maintenance supplies budget to ensure that we have adequate resources to address maintenance needs promptly. This investment will lead to improved facility conditions, creating a more conducive environment for both staff and visitors.

**Recruitment of Additional Staff:** Adequate staffing is vital for the smooth operation of our department. We need to bolster our team with additional personnel in various roles, including recreation, maintenance, groundskeeping, sanitation, and custodial services. Considering the flexibility and cost-effectiveness, the inclusion of part-time positions can help meet our staffing requirements efficiently.

Addressing these challenges is essential to fostering a cohesive, efficient, and enjoyable work environment within our department.

### **Human Resources:**

In the past six months, we have welcomed 10 new hires across various positions within the department. These include an Executive Administrative Specialist, Lifeguards/Instructors in both STX and STT locations, a Sanitation Worker in STT, a Youth Community Coordinator in STX, a Recreation Leader in STJ, a Groundskeeper in STT, and a Recreation Specialist in STX.

However, during this period, we have also experienced 9 resignations and 2 retirements. Among those departing was Recreation Leaders, a Lifeguard/Instructor, a General Secretary, a Messenger/Receptionist, an Executive Administrative Assistant, and a Tract Superintendent. Additionally, we saw retirements of a Custodial Worker and a Tract Superintendent.

Currently, we have 2 vacancies projected for FY25, specifically for a Messenger/Receptionist in STT and a Lifeguard/Instructor in STT. Challenges facing the department and personnel include the impact of financial constraints on staffing levels, leading to increased workloads for existing employees. Our department has seen



a reduction in staff from an average of 132 to 119 active employees, resulting in individuals taking on multiple roles.

Moreover, the lack of upward advancement opportunities within the department and comparatively low salaries contribute to difficulties in retention and recruitment. Many employees appreciate working for the agency but find it challenging to sustain due to the inflated cost of living. These issues must be addressed to ensure the continued effectiveness and well-being of our department and personnel.

**🚧 Capital Projects:**

Today, I am pleased to share with you an informative overview of the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation's action plan for disaster projects.

**- DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS, PARKS, AND RECREATION  
 ACTION PLAN DISASTER PROJECTS  
 PRIORITY LISTING**

***St. Croix Recreational Facilities***

Updated: September 10, 2024

Scope of Work	Person Responsible For Work	Projected Completion Date	Contractor	Funding Sources	Project Status	% Completed
<b><u>1. Reinholdt Jackson Ball Park</u></b> Resurfacing of basketball court with installation of new perimeter fencing and LED sports lights on courts and softball field. Perimeter fencing at ball field to include	Arol Abel Roy Canton	May 2024	Custom Builders	FEMA	Awaiting FEMA approval for dugout, press box replacement.  Re mobilization Week of Sept 16,2024to complete Light install, Dugout and Press box	80%



new batting cages, playground equipment, new press box and repair and replace dugouts, and repairs to the recreation building						
<b><u>2. Frederiksted Waterfront, Midre Cummings &amp; Budhoe Park</u></b> Repairs and painting of walkway bollards, chains, install new walkway lighting	Arol Abel Roy Canton	August 2024	Custom Builders	LOCAL	COMPLETED.	100%
<b><u>3. Marley Beach</u></b> Installation of new picnic tables and benches, repairs and painting of bollards and chains and the installation of aluminum railing	Arol Abel Roy Canton	November 2023	Caribbean Contracting Services	LOCAL	COMPLETED	100%
<b><u>4. Pedro Cruz Ball Park</u></b> Installation of new scoreboard, electrical repairs, fencing repairs, and the installation of new LED sports lighting	Arol Abel Roy Canton	September 2024	Polaris	FEMA	Awaiting Contract for Sports Lighting installation Project on St. Croix  To begin week of Sept.16 2024	All other work 100% completed



<p><b><u>5. D.C. Canegata Softball Field</u></b>                  Repairs and replacement of dugouts, fencing repairs and the Installation of new LED sports lights on softball field, basketball, and tennis courts and baseball field</p>	<p>Arol Abel                  Roy Canton</p>	<p>October                  2024</p>	<p>D.V.D.                  Construction</p>	<p>FEMA</p>	<p>FEMA approval granted for the LED Sports Lights installation and Dugout replacement.                   Light installation and Dugout replacement in Progress</p>	<p>85%</p>
<p><b><u>6. Rudy Krieger Ballpark</u></b>                  Installation of new perimeter fencing at basketball and volleyball courts, the softball field, installation of new LED sports lights on courts and softball field. Repairs to walkways and walkway lighting. Resurfacing of the basketball and tennis courts.</p>	<p>Arol Abel                  Roy Canton</p>	<p>September                  2024</p>	<p>Custom                  Builders                   McCourt</p>	<p>FEMA</p>	<p>FEMA Project                  COMPLETED                   Awaiting Court resurfacing project; Projected to Start November 2024</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p><b><u>7. Cramer's Park Pavilions</u></b>                  Construction of 5 new beach pavilions, HC parking, demolish and construct new electrical service building, picnic</p>	<p>Arol Abel                  Roy Canton</p>	<p>February                  2024</p>	<p>D.V.D.                  Construction</p>	<p>FEMA</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>100%</p>



benches, and BBQ grills, and perimeter fencing						
<b><u>8. Cramer's Park Concession</u></b> Construction of new Concession Building	Arol Abel Roy Canton	N/A	CoCosol International Springline	FEMA	Archeological Survey Completed.  Springline to present amended drawing by October 2024	Completed  95%
<b><u>9. Horace Clarke Ballpark</u></b>	Arol Abel Roy Canton	N/A		FEMA	On Hold Reprogramming of funds request submitted to FEMA; DC Canegata Small Field Phase (2) Awaiting Approval documentation from FEMA for transfer of funding	0%
<b><u>10. Randall Doc James Racetrack</u></b>	Arol Abel Roy Canton	N/A		FEMA	Project On Hold	0%
<b><u>11. Vincent Mason Pool Resort</u></b> Construction of a new pool, repairs to restrooms, pavilion, pump room, walkways, guard house and entrance gate.	Arol Abel Roy Canton	March 2025	J. Benton Construction	FEMA	New Contract awarded, notice to proceed issued, work in progress  Work Commence on 6/12/2024	25%
<b><u>12. Profit Community Center</u></b> A&E for the repairs to the existing Community Center	Arol Abel Roy Canton	N/A	A&E by Springline	FEMA	Development of SOW and A&E with Springline. 75% completed; Final plans October 2024	75% A&E
<b><u>13. DC Canegata Baseball Field Stadium</u></b>	Arol Abel Roy Canton	N/A	A & E by Springline	FEMA	Structural Analysis to be completed in November 2024, for Final scope determination.	0%



<u>Structural Analysis and repairs.</u>					Led lighting install September 2024	
<b>14. DC Canegata Recreation Building Generator Room and Roof repairs</b>	Arol Abel Roy Canton	NA	A & E by Springline	FEMA	Generator Room approvals received, awaiting HMGP final approvals on roof and building repairs design.	0%

***St. John Recreational Facilities***

<b>1. Cruz Bay Tennis Courts</b> Resurfacing of the tennis courts and the repairs to fencing	Arol Abel	October 2023	McCourt	FEMA	COMPLETED	100%
<b>2. Orville Brown Basketball Court</b> Resurfacing of the basketball court, Bleachers, LED Sports lights.	Arol Abel Roy Canton	October 2023	Charles Electrical Services, LLC McCourt	FEMA	Installation of LED Sports Lights in progress. Completion September 2024 Court Resurfacing Completed	All other work 100% Completed
<b>3. Winston Wells Park</b> Repairs to the perimeter fencing at softball field, repairs to bleachers and concession.	Arol Abel Roy Canton	N/A		FEMA	Property occupied by Dept. Education DPW, SPR and Harnel (A&E) to review the final plans for the bleachers, and concession / press box. It was determined that the cost for construction may be above the budgeted amount. However, it was also decided to send it out to bid to determine what can be deleted from the design to meet the budget.	80% A&E
<b>4. Oppenheimer Beach</b> Repair to Beach House facilities.	Arol Abel Roy Canton	N/A	Harnel International	FEMA	A&E In progress; Soil testing to take place in October 2024	0%
<b>5. St. John Community Center</b> Reconstruction of facility - Community center / Hurricane shelter	Arol Abel Roy Canton	N/A	Harnel International	FEMA	A&E In progress	25%





***St. Thomas Recreational Facilities***

<p><b><u>1. Alvin McBean Recreational Complex:</u></b>  Repairs to Bleachers, Concession, Restrooms, Fencing, Sports Lights, install flag poles and new Scoreboard</p>	<p>Arol Abel  Roy  Canton</p>	<p>June 2024</p>	<p>Custom Builders</p>	<p>FEMA</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p><b><u>2. Coki Point Beach</u></b>  Repairs to beach house restrooms, boardwalk, and Concession Kisok</p>	<p>Arol Abel  Roy  Canton</p>	<p>November 2023</p>	<p>In-House</p>	<p>FEMA</p>	<p>Work completed</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p><b><u>3. Doris Hodge Tennis Courts &amp; Paddleball Courts</u></b>  Repairs to Bleachers, Perimeter fencing, and resurfacing of courts, and installation of LED Sport Lighting.</p>	<p>Arol Abel  Roy  Canton</p>	<p>May 2024</p>	<p>Custom Builders   Charles Electrical Services, LLC</p>	<p>FEMA</p>	<p>North Bleachers needs additional funding for repairs.   Design drawings and SOW being developed in- house for the north bleacher repairs  LED light install completed</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p><b><u>4. Emile Griffith Ball Park</u></b>  Renovations to Restrooms, Concession, and the installation of new bleachers, Press Box, LED Sports Light at Softball Field, and perimeter fencing.</p>	<p>Arol Abel  Roy  Canton</p>	<p>October 2024</p>	<p>Four Star Construction, LLC</p>	<p>FEMA</p>	<p>Installation of Handicap ramp</p>	<p>85%.</p>
<p><b><u>5. Ezra Fredericks Ballpark</u></b>  Solicitation for quotes for A&amp;E for design of concession and restrooms, Remove and replace chain link fencing, resurfacing of Basketball Court, replace existing court fixture w/ LED.</p>	<p>Arol Abel  Roy  Canton</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	<p>Boschulte Architects</p>	<p>FEMA</p>	<p>Awaiting A&amp;E Contract approval</p>	<p>0%</p>
<p><b><u>6. Frenchtown Ballpark (Aubain)</u></b>  Repairs to Press Box, Concession, Installation of new Bleachers and</p>	<p>Arol Abel  Roy  Canton</p>	<p>May 2024</p>	<p>Custom Builders</p>	<p>FEMA</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>100%</p>



Score Board, barrier, perimeter fencing and LED Sports Lights at Softball Field						
<b><u>7. Kirwan Terrace Ballpark</u></b> Fencing, Repairs to Bleacher, Concession, LED Sports Lights on Field, new Score Board	Arol Abel Roy Canton	July 2024	Caribbean Contracting Services	FEMA	Completed	100%
<b><u>8. Lionel Roberts Stadium</u></b> Electrical, and Concession repairs, Fencing and installation of LED Sports Lighting on Baseball Field, and field restoration	Arol Abel Roy Canton	October 2024	Polaris	FEMA	Structural assessment recommends demolition of stadium. Awaiting delivery of lights for Field. October 2024	75%
<b><u>9. Lionel Smut Ballpark</u></b> Designs for the Repairs to Concession and Restrooms, and for the design for a new perimeter concrete retaining wall. The installation of new LED Sport lights on courts ball field	Arol Abel Roy Canton	December 2024	Charles Electrical Services LLC	FEMA	Selected A&E firm Boschulte Engineering awaiting Contract for Concession and Wall.  Led install Completed	10%  100%
<b><u>10. Nadir Basketball Court</u></b> Replacement of perimeter fencing, Bleacher and playground equipment replacement, Installation of LED lights at Basketball Court	Arol Abel Roy Canton	October 2024	Charles Electrical Services LLC (Sports Lights) LEBG, LLC	FEMA	Ligh Installation awarded to Charles Electric  LEBG other repairs Repairs in progress	20%
<b><u>11. Clinton Phipps Racetrack</u></b>	Arol Abel Roy Canton	N/A		FEMA	On Hold	
<b><u>12. Milton Newton</u></b>	Arol Abel Roy Canton	N/A			Community Partnership	
<b><u>13. Territorial Playground Equipment upgrade</u></b>	Roy Canton Arol Abel			Grant	Equipment Purchase Contract completed, Installation Contract being developed.	



<b><u>14. Territorial LED Lighting upgrade</u></b>	Roy Canton Arol Abel	November 2024		Grant	STT/STJ STX	85% 5%
<b><u>15. Territorial Court Resurfacing</u></b>	Arol Abel Roy Canton			Grant	STT STX	100% 50%

