

**U.S. Virgin Islands 2026 Economic Development Summit
Agenda**

From Recovery to Renaissance: Catalyzing USVI's Economic Transformation

Presented by the 36th Legislature – Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture

Friday, May 22, 2026 | University of the Virgin Islands Great Hall, St. Croix

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

Registration, Exhibition Hall & Continental Breakfast

8:30 AM – 8:45 AM

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Speaker: *Senator Hubert L. Frederick,
Chairman, Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture*

8:45 AM – 9:15 AM

Opening Plenary: A Vision for Economic Transformation

Territorial leaders will outline a bold but practical roadmap for long-term economic stability, legislative leadership, and strategic investment in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Speaker: *Senator Hubert L. Frederick,
Chairman, Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture*

9:15 AM – 10:00 AM

Global Capital & the South Shore Enterprise Zone: Positioning the U.S. Virgin Islands for Strategic Investment

An executive discussion on how the South Shore Enterprise Zone can attract global investment by aligning policy, infrastructure readiness, and competitive incentives.

***Moderator: Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
Chairman, Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance***

Panelist:

- *Anise Hodge, Deputy Executive Director, Virgin Islands Port Authority*
- *Margarita Benjamin, Managing Director of the Economic Development Commission, Economic Development Authority*
- *Nadine Marchena Kean, CPM, Managing Director of the Enterprise Zone Commission, VI Economic Development Authority*
- *Kyle Flemming, Director – VI Energy*
- *Kirk Chewing, CEO – Cane Bay Partners*
- *David Johnson, Director of Port Hamilton Refining and Transportation*

10:00 AM – 10:25 AM

The State of the Virgin Islands Economy – Data Briefing

A fact-based overview of the Territory’s economic performance, sector trends, infrastructure capacity, and projections tied to future development initiatives.

***Presenter: Dr. Haldane Davies
Director, Bureau of Economic Research***

10:25 AM – 10:40 AM

Networking Break

10:40 AM – 11:50 AM

Strategic Recovery: Converting Federal Disaster Funds into Transformational Infrastructure

A high-level discussion on accelerating the deployment of federal recovery funds to rebuild smarter, strengthen infrastructure, and support long-term economic competitiveness.

***Moderator: Senator Marise C. James,
Chair, Committee on Disaster Recovery and Infrastructure***

Panelists:

- *Senator Milton E. Potter, Senate President, 36th Legislature*
- *Dr. Louis Petersen, Commissioner, VI Department of Agriculture*
- *Dr. Richard Warburg, Founder/Director, Impact Traits VI*
- *Ann Hanley, Director of Public Services and Economic Revitalization and Resilience, VI Housing Finance Authority*
- *Adrienne Williams-Octalien, Director, VI Office of Disaster Recovery*
- *Deanna James, President, St. Croix Foundation*

11:50 AM – 12:50 PM

Tourism as Economic Infrastructure: Leveraging the Virgin Islands Brand in Global Capital Markets

An exploration of how tourism supports investment attraction, workforce growth, and capital expansion — positioning the Virgin Islands brand as an economic asset.

Moderator: Senator Milton E. Potter
Senate President, 36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

Panelist:

- *Jeniffer Matarangas-King, Commissioner – VI Dept. of Tourism*
- *Dr. Louis Petersen, Commissioner, VI Department of Agriculture*
- *Lisa Hamilton, President – Hotel and Tourism Association*
- *Joseph Boschulte, CEO – West Indies Company*
- *Anise Hodge, Deputy Executive Director, Virgin Islands Port Authority*

12:50 PM – 1:40 PM

Workforce as Economic Infrastructure: Building the Talent Pipeline for South Shore and Beyond

A focused conversation on building and aligning talent pipelines to support South Shore development, infrastructure modernization, and emerging industries.

Moderator: Michael Carty, Chairman, Workforce Development Board

Panelists:

- *Dr. Gary Molloy, Commissioner of Dept. of Labor*
- *Eric Sonnier, Executive Director – UVI RT Park*
- *Dr. Suzanne Magras, Director, UVI Center for Excellence in Leadership and Learning*
- *David Johnson, Director of Port Hamilton Refining and Transportation*
- *Richard Difede, President – Gold Coast Yachts*
- *James Benton, President of JBenton Construction*
- *Keith Couch, Executive Vice President of Suffolk Construction*
- *Lisa Anders, Senior Vice President, MCN Build Caribbean*
- *Rosalie Drago, Vice President, External Affairs & Strategic Engagement - Haugland Group*

1:40 PM – 1:55 PM

Networking Break

1:55 PM – 3:05 PM

Modernizing Infrastructure for Economic Competitiveness & Resilience

Leaders discuss the critical upgrades needed in ports, utilities, transportation, and digital infrastructure to unlock investment and ensure long-term resilience.

Moderator: Adrienne Williams-Octalien
Director, Office of Disaster Recovery

Panelists:

- *Jozette Walker, Assistant Commissioner, VI DPNR*
- *Anise Hodge, Deputy Executive Director, Virgin Islands Port Authority*
- *Joseph Boschulte, CEO – West Indies Company*
- *Jennifer Nugent-Hill, Senior Director – Tropical Shipping*
- *Stephen Adams, President/CEO - Virgin Islands Next Generation Network*
- *Rosalie Drago, Vice President, External Affairs & Strategic Engagement - Haugland Group*

3:05 PM – 4:05 PM

**Executive Strategy Roundtables
Accelerating the South Shore Agenda**

A structured leadership forum where policymakers, investors, and industry experts identify priorities, align commitments, and shape actionable next steps.

4:05 PM – 5:00 PM

**Closing Plenary
Legislative Commitments, Investor Signals & Next Steps**

A summary of key takeaways announced commitments, and the legislative path forward to ensure the summit translates into measurable action.

Closing remarks by Honorable Hubert L. Frederick