



For Immediate Release

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U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS FOLLOWING SEPTEMBER STORMS

The Buccaneer Hotel on St. Croix to welcome vacationers starting November 1

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (October 11, 2017) - The U.S. Virgin Islands is getting back to the business of welcoming visitors to its shores following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which struck the Territory last month.

Commissioner of Tourism Beverly Nicholson-Doty reported that the airports on St. Croix and St. Thomas are now open to commercial flights, and one of the flagship hotels on the island of St. Croix, The Buccaneer, has announced it is accepting reservations for leisure guests arriving on or after November 1, 2017.

The historic property received minimal damage to its infrastructure and has remained open to accommodate relief personnel. The resort team reports that while availability is limited due to many rooms being occupied by federal relief teams, the hotel will be fully operational and ready to welcome vacationers starting November 1. Key facilities and amenities, including Mermaid Beach, the golf course, tennis courts, pool, the spa and Mermaid Restaurant will be available for guests.

Additionally, the resort will host the annual St. Croix Coral Reef Swim on November 5. Now in its 22nd year, the race attracts fitness swimmers and world-class athletes who compete in various swim courses, culminating at The Buccaneer's Mermaid Beach.

As discussions with transportation partners continue, the Department of Tourism reports JetBlue Airways has resumed commercial service to the Territory. This service is in addition

to American Airlines operations at both the Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas and the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix, as well as Delta Air Lines and Spirit Airlines service to and from St. Thomas. Inter-island flights by Air Sunshine, Cape Air and Seaborne Airlines are also operational. As conditions improve, airline schedules are likely to normalize. In the interim, passengers are encouraged to check with their airlines for flight times.

"We are working closely with our airline partners to ensure there are commercial flight services to meet the needs of our residents, businesses, visitors and the numerous professionals who are supporting the hurricane recovery," said Commissioner Nicholson-Doty. "We will continue to advocate for expanded service as more of our hotel properties reopen and demand begins to grow in the marketplace," she said.

In order to assess overall readiness of the destination to welcome visitors, the Department of Tourism has met with business leaders in the St. Croix and St. Thomas/St. John districts, and is in the process of conducting an assessment of hotels, attractions and other visitor-related businesses to determine the extent of damage, availability of power and water, and anticipated reopening dates.

The storms' impact to the Territory's hotel inventory was not as extensive in St. Croix as it was in St. Thomas and St. John. In addition to The Buccaneer, Caravelle Hotel & Casino and Tamarind Reef Resort in St. Croix are currently housing relief workers.

Seaport facilities are open, and businesses and attractions are looking forward to welcoming cruise visitors in November.

While the clean-up process is underway in the town of Frederiksted on St. Croix, many dining establishments, stores and activities are up and running in Christiansted on the eastern side of the island. Similarly, shops, restaurants and attractions are ready to welcome customers in St. Thomas. The downtown Charlotte Amalie shopping area, including businesses on Main Street and at Havensight Mall, is ready to open, with power and water already restored. On St. John, efforts are ongoing to clear debris, restore infrastructure and reopen the Virgin Islands National Park.

Many of the Territory's beaches are getting set to reopen in the weeks ahead, pending the completion of water quality testing by the Department of Planning and Natural Resources.

For further information, visit www.usviupdate.com.

The official website to donate to the U.S. Virgin Islands recovery effort is www.usvirecovery.org.

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