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Governor Bryan Urges Community to Come Forward With Information About Recent Homicides

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – Governor Albert Bryan Jr. began his weekly COVID-19 briefing on Monday with a plea to residents to unite against the gun violence that has been plaguing the Territory and come forward with information about recent homicides.

"Today, I want to address another serious public health and safety issue here in our Territory. That matter is gun violence," Governor Bryan said. "Unfortunately, we have lost eight people to the Coronavirus here in the Territory since we officially began our response in March. In that same timeframe, we have lost almost three times as many Virgin Islanders to senseless gun violence."

While it is easy to point the finger at law enforcement, the hard truth is that no law enforcement strategy that does not involve information and cooperation from the community will stop gun violence from reoccurring, the Governor said.

"The VIPD is working hard and is making progress in apprehending many of these violent offenders, but they can use your help," Governor Bryan said, citing the $15,000 reward offered for information leading to the arrest of the perpetrators of the Hospital Ground shootings in April and the $60,000 reward for information about the murders of Aaron and Rique Ashby in Tutu Valley last month.

To report a crime, call 911 or use the anonymous tip line Crime Stoppers USVI at 1-800-222-8477.

Pending legislation
Governor Bryan also urged residents to support and lobby for action by the 33rd Legislature on a number of initiatives Governor Bryan has proposed that are good for, and necessary to, the community.

"We remain diligent in pushing our Legislature for the Fire-EMS merger that would allow for ambulances to be closer to our neighborhoods, the behavioral health act that would address our mental health problems, the mass gatherings act so that we can pre-empt situations like the one where six individuals were shot, the white collar crime unit to put an end to public corruption, the Trusts legislation that would being new money to our shores and the Free Trade Zone that will create new career opportunities," Governor Bryan said. "These measures need community support if they are to be enacted, just as with our COVID fight, you, the community, are the most important variable. Let our leaders know what you are for, not only what you are against."

Social Security stimulus checks

- The Territory is in the process of distributing $7,762,715 of CARES Act Stimulus payments to 6,473 Social Security recipients.
- The Bryan/Roach Administration has issued 41,356 stimulus checks totaling $64,166,029.
- The Governor is working with lobbyists in Washington, D.C., to ask for a second round of Stimulus checks and local municipal aid.

COVID-19 cases

- Currently tracking 77 active cases
- 9,443 individuals tested to date (almost 10% of the population)
- 8,997 of those tests were negative
- 439 tests came back positive
- 7 tests are pending
- 354 people recovered
- 8 fatalities to date
- Four COVID-19 patients are hospitalized, with two on a ventilator, at Juan F. Luis Hospital on St. Croix.
- Three COVID-19 patients, with two on a ventilator, are hospitalized at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas.

Governor Bryan's next update is scheduled for 1 p.m. on Monday, August 10.

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