



News Release

Virgin Islands Port Authority
Office of the Executive Director
Public Relations Department
P.O. Box 301707
St. Thomas, VI 00803

Tel: (340) 774-1629
Tel: (340) 714-6640 / 714-6639
Fax: (340) 714-6675/ 774-0025
E-mail: info@viport.com
Internet: www.viport.com

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Contact: Monifa A. Marrero
Public Information Officer
Cell: (340) 244-1065

VIPA ISSUES TEMPORARY PARTIAL CLOSURE OF CEKA RUNWAY TO REPAIR PAVEMENT BLOWOUT

Virgin Islands Port Authority Executive Director Kenn Hobson announced today that a portion of the Cyril E. King Airport runway was closed around 3:15 p.m. and will remain closed until 6 p.m. pending the repair of damaged pavement on the runway. Several jet flights arriving to St. Thomas will be delayed as a result of the closure.

"The failure occurred at the 1,300-foot mark on the airport runway in an area which had been recently worked on by the project contractor the night before," said Hobson. "A small hole was blown out at the tip of the newly laid pavement by a departing jet this afternoon. We have the contractor already on site along with VIPA's engineering, maintenance and fire department. We anticipate having the work done within the expected time frame."

(more)

Hobson said that commuter planes will be able to use the runway, but jets will not be able to land because there is currently only 5,700 feet of runway available while the repair work is being performed. Jets are still able to depart from St. Thomas. He added that the Port Authority sincerely apologizes for any inconveniences experienced by the traveling public.

The Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas is one of the busiest airports in the Caribbean with only one runway which measures 7,000 feet long by 150 feet wide. This is the first complete overlay of the runway since its completion in 1991. The airport runway overlay project is being conducted from 10 p.m. through 5:30 a.m. each day by project contractor VI Paving, Inc. The repaired sections of the runway are tested daily for compliance with the project specifications by a testing firm certified by the Construction Material Engineering Council, Inc. The project is expected to be completed by December 2010 and to cost \$15 million - 95 percent of which is funded by the FAA via an Airport Improvement Project grant. The remaining five percent funded by the VI Port Authority.

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