



October 2009

VITEMA

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2009

"Building a Strong Foundation for Preparedness"



V.I. Territorial
Emergency Management Agency

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On the cover: A construction crew unloads steel flown in for the build out of VITEMA's new headquarters and 911 ECC.



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Fiscal Year 2009 was a year of significant change for the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) as it took the initial steps to transform and transfigure itself into an independent agency with an expanded role and added responsibilities in emergency management. With the enactment of the Virgin Islands Emergency Management Act of 2009 on July 2, 2009, the agency gained the jurisdiction over the Virgin Islands Office of Homeland Security, the Territorial Public Assistance Unit and 911 emergency communications system.

From organizational restructuring and the acquisition of new divisions, to leading the gargantuan effort to overhaul an antiquated 911 communications system, the dedicated professionals of VITEMA are meeting the challenges of this realignment and have strengthened their resolve to enhance the territory's preparedness posture.

In the midst of this complex transformation, VITEMA coordinated the response and recovery efforts of a Category 3 hurricane and other tropical storms and for major accidents and local threats, and played a vital role in the territory's response to the H1N1 flu pandemic.

Beyond our response and recovery efforts, VITEMA secured highly-competitive mitigation grants and stepped up our efforts to educate the public about the importance of disaster preparedness. We have also forged new alliances with the business community and strengthened our ties with our regional and federal partners, which has resulted in beneficial training and the attainment of valuable assets.

This annual report gives a more detailed summary of our most recent activities and significant accomplishments that align with the goals of the Administration and this agency, as well as where our critical challenges remain. We appreciate the opportunity to look back at another notable year as we look to the way forward in FY2010. We thank you for your support and continued interest in our success.

Mark A. Walters
Acting Director

Our Mission

The principal mission of VITEMA as a first response coordinator, is to save lives and property of the territory's population, by preparing territorial organizations to respond to, recover from and mitigate against All-Hazards, through planning, coordinating, training and exercise activities and is the sole Virgin Islands government agency designated to supervise, administer and coordinate All-Hazards response and recovery operations. Authority is derived from V. I. Code, Title 23, the VITEMA Act (5233) of 1986 and the Emergency Management Act of 2009.

Our Vision

To be the pre-eminent emergency management agency in the Caribbean and the Nation by providing an effective, responsible, and professional network of services to ensure resiliency before, during, and after a natural or man-made incident that may impact the safety and well-being of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Executive Summary

The executive summary provides an overview of the key operations conducted during fiscal year 2009 and highlights some of the organizational and transformational changes that took place.

Legislative Changes—The Reorganization of VITEMA.

VITEMA worked throughout FY2009 to implement Governor John P. de Jongh Jr.’s vision of an emergency management system that better coordinates emergency responses and that mirrors national norms in emergency management.

To that end, James Lee Witt & Associates was contracted to conduct a study of VITEMA’s existing structure and how it could be retooled to reflect national trends and best practices in emergency management. Since the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, state and local governments across the United States have moved to establish emergency management agencies as a separate office dedicated solely to emergency-management matters.

Following the conclusion of James Lee Witt & Associates’ in-depth analysis, Governor de Jongh submitted legislation to begin the process of reorganizing and realigning VITEMA. After months of testimony before the V.I. Legislature, the measure passed and was signed in to law by Governor de Jongh on July 2, 2009.



The Newly-Restructured VITEMA

The legislation establishes clear lines of authority for emergency management in the territory, elevating VITEMA to an independent stand-alone agency with expanded roles and responsibilities. The measure also placed 9-1-1 emergency communications system under the direction of VITEMA and gave the VITEMA jurisdiction over the Virgin Islands Office of Homeland Security and the Territorial Public Assistance Program.

During a cabinet-level meeting held July 30, on St. Croix, the VITEMA State Director unveiled the new structure and a more holistic and territorial approach to emergency management. The State Director also introduced the senior staff of the newly-realigned agency. The managers of

the St. Croix and St. Thomas 9-1-1 emergency communications centers were also introduced, along with the Homeland Security Advisor.

With the agency's reorganization, VITEMA became compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), a template developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for the management of incidents. NIMS guides departments and agencies at all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector on how to work seamlessly to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity, in order to reduce the loss of life and property and harm to the environment.

As a result of the reorganization, new Notices of Personnel Action (NOPAs) were prepared, new job descriptions developed and for most part, the new management team was picked from the personnel of the consolidated agencies. As a result of past audit findings and penalties imposed, VITEMA also adjusted how it used local funds and federal grants to pay for salaries.

VITEMA, in its new role, also moved to re-energize the Virgin Islands Emergency Management Council (EMC) which met quarterly throughout FY2009 to discuss initiatives and policies in emergency preparedness and response as well as to review practices and identify gaps.

FY2009 topics included VITEMA's reorganization and the implementation of the new 9-1-1 emergency communications system, Hurricane Omar after-action and follow-up, H1N1 preparedness and plans for school closure, VITEMA's new curfew pass policy, state of emergency peace officer activation protocol and government emergency telecommunications. The council



A FEMA representative speaks to the VI Emergency Management Council about the territory's response to Hurricane Omar during a December 2008 EMC meeting.

also received a presentation on proposed changes to the hurricane alert notification system from the National Weather Service, on the management of VI ports pre-and-post-disaster from the US Coast Guard, and Public Assistance reimbursement and on hazard mitigation opportunities as a result of Hurricane Omar.

More importantly, VITEMA activated the EMC for disaster coordination during Hurricane Omar, Tropical Storm Ana and Hurricane Bill. Conference calls were convened with the EMC, the National Weather Service and the US Coast Guard on the closing of schools, government operations, ports and roads. This allowed for a quick and coordinated response to emergencies.

The Modernization of the 9-1-1 Emergency Communications System.

VITEMA played a key role on the E911 Executive Steering Committee and the E911 Task Force, a team Governor de Jongh charged with fully modernizing the existing outmoded system, before taking governance of the territory's 9-1-1 emergency communications system in July 2009.

The complex task involved coordination between multiple government agencies, working with local contractors – electricians, plumbers, painters, builders and more –, and hiring new operators who were required to complete a rigorous training curriculum based on national standards.

The Division of Personnel, working with consultants from IBM, established new positions for the call centers – including emergency call center operator, emergency call center supervisor and emergency call center manager – with an increase in salary to reflect greater responsibilities. The new positions were developed using current industry standards and best practices.

Using a program called “Criticall,” application who applied to be operators were tested on their ability to multi-task, test their typing skills and accuracy, reading comprehension, map reading, and critical decision making. Applicants also were required to pass medical certification and obtain or maintain First Responder Training, Emergency Medical Services Modified Basic training, National Crime Information Center certification and HAZMAT Training. Operators must be qualified and certified in Priority Dispatch for Medical, Fire and Police. The training included classes such as first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, hazardous materials, weapons of mass destruction and basic conversational Spanish. They also received training on crisis counseling, effective verbal communication and customer service. Forty-three operators have been hired to man the call centers – 25 on St. Thomas and 18 on St. Croix.



The new system features protocol cards that will prompt emergency operators with relevant questions to ask individuals reporting a broad range of emergencies including fires, medical crises, and crimes. (Below) The 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Center on St. Croix.



Besides hiring and training operators, the modernization of the 9-1-1 system included erecting radio communications towers to interconnect all of the territory’s locations, building and equipping the call centers and improving radios and communication systems equipment for first responders. The project took just under two years and about \$17 million to complete.

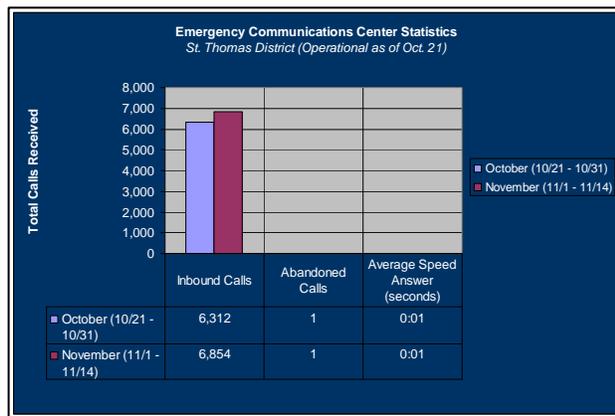
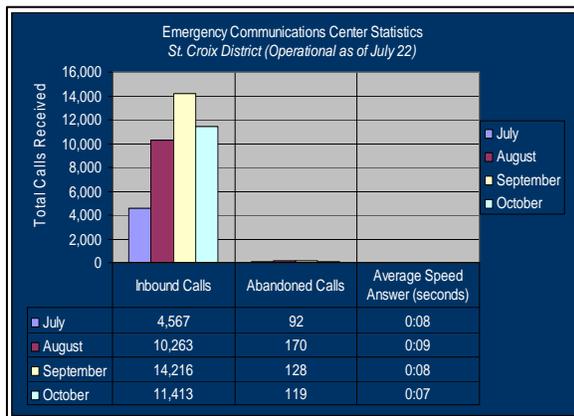
Both the St. Thomas and St. Croix communications center became operational in FY2009, providing 9-1-1 services to the entire territory.

The St. Croix center went live on July 22, and the St. Thomas center, which also serves St. John and Water Island, followed just a few months later on Oct. 21. Each center is capable of backing

each other up in case of an outage and operators can now directly dispatch Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services responders and when required, remain on the line, providing immediate pre-arrival medical emergency assistance.

The center will utilize secure radio frequencies with an increased geographic coverage and that is monitored only by law enforcement and other first responders. All 9-1-1 calls are recorded and archived.

Governor de Jongh, who was accompanied by directors and commissioners of first responder agencies, conducted walk-thru of both centers. The media was also invited to observe and report on the walk-thru for St. Croix and St. Thomas.



****Abandoned Calls – 911 callers hanging up before an operator responds. All abandoned calls originating from land-lines are called back to verify emergency. Currently, we do not have caller ID for calls originating from cell phones.**

The modernization of the 9-1-1 emergency communications system has made giant strides but work remains to fine-tune the system. The IBM package which includes the system’s hardware and other supports does not address software to extract empirical data from the Computer Aided Dispatch, such as number of calls by location and emergency by types or occurrences. Achieving the ability to retrieve these types of data remains a challenge and we are working to procure a report package that will give us that capability.

Emergency Communications Center managers began work, in FY 2009, to standardize operating procedures, working both with operators and first responders. As part of the process to develop one standard for both centers, VITEMA has created and implemented an exchange program which allows employees and supervisors to work shifts at their sister-office.

Since the centers went live, operators have received a significant amount of calls that are non-emergency related. Managers are working on a campaign to educate the public the proper use of 9-1-1.

Besides the high number of non-emergency calls, operators continue to struggle with the lack of street signs and homes that do not have their address visibly posted, which hampers the operator’s ability to help first responders quickly reach the scene of an incident. Operators often

have to rely on turn-by-turn directions from callers and rely heavily on using landmarks for directions.

Capital Projects—VITEMA HQ Construction.

VITEMA purchased the former ED Plumbing for its new headquarters in FY 2009. Earlier this year, contracts for the build-out of the facility went out to bid and were later awarded to Apex Construction.

Work began in March 2009 with the build out of the Emergency Communications Center, which was being constructed on a separate accelerated timeline due to contractual obligations with IBM, the company hired to establish the new 911 system in the territory. With strict contract deadlines in place, VITEMA moved quickly to acquire additional steel to fortify the structure, to upgrade the roofing and to install two new floors in the building.

When completed, the facility, which is constructed to the International Building Codes, will house all of VITEMA's components and highly-sensitive and secure equipment.

The first floor of the facility includes the 911 Emergency Communications Center, the Emergency Operations Center, the Fusion Center and the Secure Compartmentalized Information Facility (SCIF), a room that will be certified by DHS as secure enough to manage classified information and communications between local and federal government agencies. A server room that supports the 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Center, the EOC and the Fusion Center, is also on the first floor.

The Fusion Center — being built to DHS specifications — will allow local and federal agencies to work in a coordinated environment to share law enforcement data, intelligence and analysis. From the project's inception, VITEMA has been collaborating with DHS officials, who have traveled to St. Thomas to meet with Jaredian Design Group and give input on how to best incorporate DHS's specifications in the drawings and plans and to monitor the project's progress. VITEMA's goal is to earn DHS certification for the Fusion Center and SCIF. VITEMA also began reaching out to U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, the FBI, the VI Attorney General's Office and V.I. Police Department to establish protocols for the Fusion Center.

The Emergency Operations Center, which is also being housed on the first floor, will allow local and federal emergency management agencies to co-locate in the event of a disaster. VITEMA will be purchasing furniture and equipment to support the EOC.

The second floor is dedicated office space and workstations for VITEMA's staff as well as workstations for St. Croix staff or federal employees on travel to VITEMA.

In the event of a disaster, the third floor also houses a male and female dormitory, shower facility and restrooms for 24/7 operations.

The estimated cost of this project – which includes property acquisition and demolition and structural upgrades – is approximately \$6.9 million. To mitigate as much as humanly possible against disruption of operations, VITEMA has installed a generator and uninterruptible power supply units to protect the agency's electronic equipment against power failures, unstable line

powers, and a gas powered fire suppression system for the ECC that minimize equipment damage.

Also, the facility's energy-efficient air conditioning system has built-in redundancy capabilities so that if one segment shuts down, another can fully support the building. Every measure possible was taken to ensure efficient use of energy throughout the facility.

Emergency Operations—Major Storms

Hurricanes Omar and Bill, tropical storms Ana, Erika, that brought torrential downpours and major incidents and accidents, tested VITEMA's emergency preparedness, response and recovery capabilities in FY2009.

Two weeks into the start of the fiscal year, on Oct. 14, 2009, Hurricane Omar swept through the Virgin Islands causing significant damage to the territory's infrastructure.

Pre-landfall, VITEMA activated Emergency Operations Centers on all three islands, alerted federal partners that deployed emergency response teams and pre-staged critical assets for post-impact including roofing, ice, water and a Naval ship capable of providing aircraft, medical and emergency power support. As a result damage assessments, the entire territory was granted a presidential disaster declaration for FEMA's Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation

programs. Since there was not enough damage for Individual Assistance, VITEMA coordinated with the U.S. Small Business Administration which resulted in an SBA agency declaration for St. Croix.



Hurricane Omar caused significant damage to the territory's infrastructure especially to St. Croix.



Gov. John de Jongh Jr. and FEMA Regional Administrator Stephen Kempf sign an Omar reimbursement agreement.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Omar, VITEMA coordinated meetings with primary departments to strategize the removal of 47 boats wrecked and submerged in Christiansted Harbor to clear navigable waterways; to clear debris; and to restore power to St. Croix.

Damage assessments documented millions of dollars in damage to public buildings and properties. The territory was approved for \$7.2 million in FEMA Public Assistance and \$1.1 million in Hazard Mitigation Program funding. SBA approved \$1.6 million in business loans, \$3.1 million in individual loans for homes and personal property, and \$36,800 for an economic injury loan.

Other Storms & Incidents.

VITEMA activated all of its emergency operations centers to the response activities for Tropical Storm Ana and Hurricane Bill and conducted daily meetings and conference calls with our federal and local partners such as the National Weather Services, FEMA, Government House and all first responder departments and agencies. VITEMA also coordinated the deployments of federal teams and assets to the territory.

Other emergency coordination efforts include an accident involving the Duckaneer, an amphibious vehicle carrying 48 passengers, the driver and a tour guide. About 30 people required emergency care. Other incidents requiring VITEMA coordination included the ammonia tank spill on St. Croix and fires at former American Red Cross Building, Mountain Top and the Bovoni landfill on St. Thomas.

H1N1 Pandemic Coordination.

VITEMA worked closely with the V.I. Health Department in coordinating the H1N1 virus response. VITEMA was responsible for resolving logistics issues the Health Department faced with transporting H1N1 test kits and anti-viral medication to the territory. To assist with public outreach and to address of VI senators, VITEMA participated in press conferences and testified at legislative hearings.

Improvements in Emergency Operations & Emergency Operations Centers.

Post Hurricane Omar, VITEMA identified areas for improvements and as a result, standardized the procedure for issuing curfew passes. VITEMA also continued its effort to upgrade the territory's three EOCs.

VITEMA completed renovations at the St. John EOC and installed a T-1 line for increased bandwidth. Homeland Security purchased new video teleconference equipment and furniture. On St. Croix, Apple Construction continued work on VITEMA's EOC. Additionally, HOVENSA reviewed its 2009 budget and decided to partially fund renovations at the St. Croix EOC. On St. Thomas, VITEMA continued to manage the build out of the former ED Plumbing which will accommodate the EOC and the agency's other components.

Through Property and Procurement, VITEMA has also updated its fleet of vehicles from the VI Police Department exchange.

VITEMA's Operations Division also maintained monthly meetings with Emergency Service Coordinators on St Croix, St. John and St. Thomas and provided training on the Logistics Capability Assessment Tool and Points of Distribution.

VITEMA Secures 41 Generators to Shore Up Shelters & Other Critical Facilities.

Addressing critical concerns raised in the aftermath of Hurricane Omar and which had been a problem for many years, VITEMA secured 41 generators to shore up emergency shelters and other critical infrastructure.

As Hurricane Omar disaster operations wound down, VITEMA convened an Emergency Management Council meeting to review the territory's response and recovery efforts, to identify areas of success and to pinpoint where improvements were needed. One of the notable gaps was emergency power at the territory's shelters.

When VITEMA learned that FEMA was in the process of transferring its excess generators to other federal agencies, the agency seized the opportunity to request that the territory be considered. FEMA agreed to donate 41 generators to the territory.



An Air National Guard crew delivers donated generators to King Airport as part of Vigilant Guard 2009.

VITEMA, Public Works Departments and Property and Procurement Department worked quickly to process the necessary legal documents and also traveled to FEMA's logistics center at Muanabo, Puerto Rico, to inspect the equipment and to make preparations for their transport to the territory.

Through an agreement with the U.S. Department of Defense, the generators were moved and airlifted as part of the National Guard's weeklong Vigilant Guard 2009 Exercise held in March in Puerto Rico. After their arrival in the territory, through local public/private sector collaboration, the generators were transported to a storage facility on island.



A local trucking transported the generators to on-islands storage facility.

VITEMA later arranged for the deployment of the US Army Corps of Engineers' 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power) to assess the shelters and other critical facilities to determine the proper placement of the generators. The Prime Power Team completed the assessment and thanks

to the Department of Public Works, 35 of the generators have been installed to-date. *See Appendix 6.*

Mitigation—Planning for the Future.

Mitigation is the key to quickly recovering from the disastrous effects of major storms. Since Hurricane Hugo, the territory has taken significant steps to mitigate damage to property, but much remains to be done. In 2006, VITEMA and WAPA joined forces to go after FEMA’s highly-competitive pre-disaster mitigation grants.

In FY2009, armed with a \$2.7 million FEMA pre-disaster mitigation grant, VITEMA and WAPA embarked on the first phase of a major project to bury overhead electrical cables underground throughout Christiansted town. The Christiansted Underground Electrical Distribution Project will minimize money spent on manpower and equipment to re-energize the island’s town center, help businesses rapidly recover and resume operations and keep workers gainfully employed.

The grant funding is being used to construct duct bank system for communications lines and primary and secondary electrical distribution and to build conduits and place manholes along the chosen routes.

WAPA began the first of two phases in the Christiansted Underground Project in September of 2009. General Engineering Corporation has begun excavating and then will install conduits and manholes from the Richmond Substation to West Street in the town of Christiansted.

Funding for the St. Thomas’ Main Street Underground Project is anticipated in FY2010. In preparation for the Main Street project, VITEMA hired URS Corporation to map the existing electrical cables, water pipes and sewer lines underneath the streets in downtown Charlotte Amalie. WAPA will use the data collected to map out where the cables should be buried and to minimize disruption of traffic once the project begins.

After receiving the VITEMA briefing on Hurricane Omar hazard mitigation funding, several government agencies applied for funding of the approximately \$1.1 million dollars mitigation grant fund to purchase hurricane shutters that will mitigate further damage to equipment and facilities. The agencies included the departments of Property and Procurement, Education, Human Services and Public Works.

Public Assistance & Disaster Closeout of FEMA Disaster Grants.

The Public Assistance Unit worked diligently throughout FY2009 to ensure the territory receives and properly manages FEMA Public Assistance funding, which partially reimbursed the V.I. government for dollars expended in its post-Omar recovery efforts. As of September, Hurricane Omar federal share obligations received from FEMA totaled \$7,190,932. Additional funding is



VITEMA and WAPA have embarked on the first phase of a major project to bury overhead electrical cables underground throughout the town of Christiansted. The project is being funded through a FEMA pre-disaster mitigation grant.

anticipated for V.I. Waste Management Authority, WAPA, the Public Finance Authority and Schneider Regional Medical Center.

To better monitor how government agencies are handling the disaster grant; VITEMA designed a Hurricane Omar Update spreadsheet to track receipt, payment and disbursement of federal funds. The spreadsheet also allows VITEMA to identify agencies that require monitoring and notification to move expenditures in a timely manner. To date, \$1.6 million of the Omar disaster grant has been spent. Agencies were formally advised of their inactivity and were encouraged to make payments to vendors expeditiously.

VITEMA also continued its efforts toward closeout of old disaster grants including hurricanes Hugo, Marilyn, Bertha, Georges, Jeanne and Lenny, flooding of 2003 and 2004. We have prepared and started the implementation of an action plan to closeout Hurricane Hugo, which has been endorsed by FEMA.

Catastrophic Planning for Earthquakes & Tsunamis.

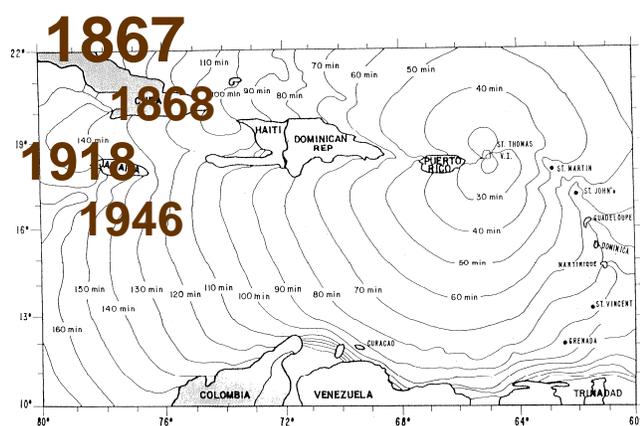
Among VITEMA's top priorities in FY2009 was enhancing territory's readiness posture through planning for all hazards, especially catastrophic earthquakes and tsunamis. Using the scenario of the 1867 Tsunami which hit St. Croix and St. Thomas, VITEMA worked alongside the V.I. Office of Homeland Security – prior to its consolidation under VITEMA – to develop an exercise that would test emergency managers' capabilities.

On May 20, 2009, emergency service coordinators and other key players participated in a Virgin Islands Tsunami Exercise to assess territory's evacuation, housing, and communications capabilities. VITEMA is using the lessons learned from the exercise to develop best practices and to guide planning efforts.

VITEMA, in collaboration with FEMA Caribbean Area Division, also planned and coordinated the Earthquake Rapid Visual Screening Training for engineers and technical staff. The course focused on performing preliminary damage assessment in the event of an earthquake. Twelve departments and agencies were represented which resulted in 26 students receiving certificates of completion.

In August 2009, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) awarded VITEMA a \$42,000 grant to begin work on tsunami preparedness in the territory and enhance emergency response to such an event. VITEMA

hired retired University of the Virgin Islands professor and oceanographer Roy Watlington as a consultant to help coordinate the technical and scientific aspects of tsunami preparedness including: inundation modeling and mapping, identification of evacuation routes, installation of signage and a program of staff training and public education about tsunami risk and response in the selected areas.



Mr. Watlington assisted VITEMA with organizing and convening the core membership of the U.S. Virgin Islands National/State Working Group for tsunami preparedness. VITEMA's ultimate goal is to develop a level of territorywide tsunami awareness that will match the preparedness of advance U.S. communities that have achieved "Tsunami Ready" status.

VITEMA, in coordination with FEMA, also participated in GAP Analysis meetings to identify gaps and to update the disaster preparedness plan. Several areas were reviewed including: VITEMA — communications; department of Property and Procurement — logistics; Department of Human Services — mass care; Virgin Islands Police Department, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources and Virgin Islands Rescue — enforcement, search and rescue, temporary power, and transportation evacuation. A consolidated report for the territory was submitted to FEMA.

Maintaining Communications.

During FY2009, VITEMA's communications staff worked to ensure that communications can be maintained within the territory during a disaster. The communications staff conducted weekly FEMA National Radio System (FNARS) radio checks and, with the mobile emergency operations center vehicle, provided support to numerous activities including the Crucian Christmas Festival, Agriculture Fair, St. Thomas Carnival, St. John Fourth of July Carnival festivities, Summer Splash 2009 and the Democratic Governors Association Conference. VITEMA's communication staff also participated in training exercises, such as the Virgin Islands National Guard's weeklong hurricane preparedness exercise held in June 2009.

VITEMA also updated the FEMA/USVI communication emergency annex as well as the Tactical Interoperability Communication Plan and the State Communication Interoperability Plan.

Community Emergency Response Team & the Citizens Corps Council — Fostering a Culture of Preparedness.

To foster a culture of preparedness, VITEMA invested much of its energy in FY2009 to providing first responder training to volunteer members of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). CERT is a national grassroots effort to encourage citizens to become their own



Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers receive first responder training.

first responders in times of disasters. In the event of major disaster, first responders usually cannot meet the overwhelming demand for their services.

Factors such as the number of victims, communications failures, and road blockages could prevent people from getting emergency services at a moment's notice through local emergency communications system. People may have to rely on each other for help in order to meet their immediate life-saving and life-sustaining needs.

VITEMA trained 35 Civil Air Patrol members and private citizens during a three-workshop held in September 2009. All of the participants were certified as CERT volunteers. VITEMA actively recruited volunteers at local businesses such as Innovative. Twenty Innovative employees filled out applications to become CERT volunteers.

In FY2009, VITEMA also initiated plans to create TEEN CERT, a new concept working its way across the U.S. VITEMA is working the V.I. Department of Education to jumpstart the program. VITEMA's training division began developing on a CERT Network to allow CERT members to communicate with fellow volunteers and emergency managers.

Plans are ongoing to create a Territorial Citizen Corps Council. Names were sent to a selection committee for review and are awaiting approval before being sent to Governor de Jongh for final approval. VITEMA managers continued to participate in CERT and Citizen Corps Council activities nationally and regionally in anticipation of a local chapter in the territory.

Forging Public-Private Partnerships & Strengthening Regional & Federal Ties.

VITEMA conducted a workshop held in May to develop a framework for public-private partnerships to mitigate the crippling effect of disasters on the economy. VITEMA signed the first-ever Declaration of Principles and Memorandum of Understanding formalizing partnerships with the St. Thomas and St. Croix Chambers of Commerce and the Caribbean Central American Action (CCAA).

CCAA is a private organization that promotes economic development in the Caribbean Basin and throughout the western hemisphere.

Partners in the agreement agreed that a coordinated response by all sectors plays a key role in the ability to recover and return to normal business operations as quickly and efficiently as possible.



The signatories agreed to:

- jointly increase awareness of best practices in disaster management using presentations that review historical disasters;

- guide the planning process with the assistance and consultation of disaster management agencies such as VITEMA;
- develop a template for future planning, identifying private and public sector resources;
- improve the quality and timeliness of public-private sector communications.
- ensure development of and support for a plan on how to address the needs of first responders and their families.

The CCAA and Chambers of Commerce also agreed to operate in accordance with the territory's Emergency Management Plan, supporting the generally accepted incident command system for direction and control.

Fortifying Regional & Federal Ties.

VITEMA also continued to strengthen its ties with its regional and federal partners to garner best practices and to share critical emergency management resources.

During FY2009, VITEMA has hosted FEMA officials and managers in the Virgin Islands for various trainings, such as visual screening for earthquakes, and to review of emergency preparedness plan. VITEMA has also traveled to FEMA headquarters to discuss critical issues such as logistics and pre-staging assets in the territory.

In July 2009, FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate met with Governor de Jongh and VITEMA State Director Mark Walters at FEMA headquarters in Washington, D.C., to further discussions



VITEMA Director Mark Walters (middle), FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer for Hurricane Omar Marianne Jackson with FEMA Logistics Administrator Col. Eric Smith (left).

on how FEMA could best support the territory's preparedness and response to emergencies and disasters. The meeting was the continuation of an important dialogue to ensure preparedness needs are discussed and that territory and federal teams continues to work toward solutions.



Gov. de Jongh and VITEMA Director Mark Walters meet with FEMA Region II officials at Government House, St. Thomas.

The following month, Governor de Jongh and VITEMA met with FEMA Region II officials, including Deputy Regional Administrator Michael

Moriarty, Region II Disaster Operations Director Dug Salley, and External Affairs Director Kristina Simpson, at Government House on St. Thomas.

The high-level meeting focused on the Administration's proactive approach to emergency management posture and disaster response training in the territory. The meeting was especially significant given the coincidental arrival of Tropical Depression Ana and Hurricane Bill to the region that week.

VITEMA and FEMA co-hosted training for all VI government Public Information Officers. The all-day session was an opportunity for PIOs to receive training on risk management and crisis communications, with an emphasis on providing strategic communications and other support in the event of a disaster.

In FY2009, VITEMA also coordinated and hosted a disaster housing meeting with officials from FEMA Headquarters, FEMA Caribbean Division, Pacific Area Office and the State of Hawaii on their efforts to develop a disaster housing strategy for sheltering, interim and permanent housing. The VI Department of Housing was also invited to attend.

VITEMA has also facilitated with FEMA, a staff exchange program with New Jersey's Office of Emergency Management, which is recognized nationally for their management of Homeland Security grants. VITEMA utilized the regional partnerships to help itself develop more robust grant management and develop a system that would avoid issues that have plagued the grants program in the past.

Homeland Security.

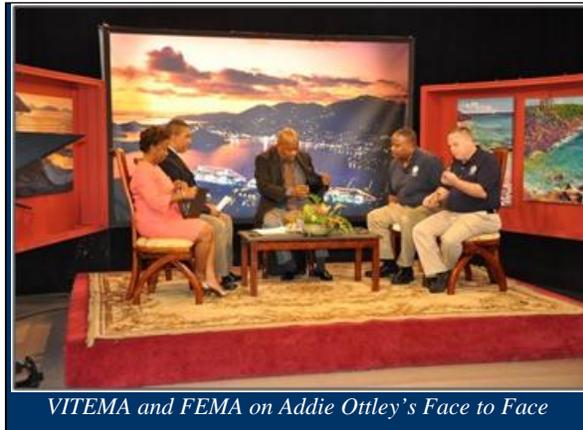
The VI Office of Homeland Security dedicated much of its time in FY 2009 to organizing the USVI Nuclear Radiological Prevention Committee, comprised of the VI Police Department, VI Fire Service, Department of Planning and Natural Resources, VI Port Authority Police, USVI Rescue – all first responder agencies. The Committee developed a Domestic Nuclear Radiological Prevention Program, drafted Conceptual Operations Plan (Con Plan) and outlined a draft Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). Both the Con Plan and the SOP finalized and presented to the Homeland Security Executive Council for concurrence and forwarded for the Governor's review and approval.

Along with the VI Tsunami Exercise, Homeland Security also coordinated advanced Special Weapons & Tactics (SWAT) Operator's Training, the Active Shooter Training and the Tactical Operations Course for the VI Police Department and the VING's 23rd Civil Support Team. Tactical Operations Course was held in May 2009. OHS also developed the Enhanced Threat and Risk Assessment, which was also held in May.

Community Outreach.

A high priority for VITEMA during FY2009 was continuing our efforts to heighten awareness in the territory about the need to be prepared for all types of disasters. To that end, VITEMA officials appeared numerous times on radio and television talk shows and staff members consistently made presentations to schools and senior citizen groups on hurricane and earthquake preparedness.

Both the VITEMA Director and Assistant Director dedicated their time and effort to media interviews in both districts including: Holland Redfield “Straight Talk” radio talk show, Alvin G newscast on Isle 95, Lee Carle on WSTA and Channel 8, News 2-TV2, WTJX news magazine, online with The Source, Roger Morgan’s Free Speech on Paradise Radio 93.5 FM, Andre Ottley’s We the People radio program, Eric Ackerson “On the Water” radio program, Abdul Ali’s radio program, Sam Topp’s “Topp Talk,” “Face to Face” with Addie Ottley, in both the Daily News and St. Croix Avis newspapers, before the St. Thomas/St. John Fellowship at the Roy L. Schneider Hospital and the V.I. Hotel & Tourism Association. VITEMA staff also participated in the Health Disaster Fair held at the Evelyn Marcelli Elementary School on St. Thomas.



VITEMA staff also conducted several educational and informational emergency/disaster awareness presentations for the students attending the 4H Summer programs at the University of the Virgin Islands-St. Croix campus, at public and private schools and to the general public at Al McBean Center, St. John Community Center, the Home Depot, Joseph Aubain, and Addelita Cancryn Junior High School.

VITEMA officials also participated in VI Department of Human Services’ town hall meetings held on St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John. The purpose of the town hall meetings was to update the community of the FEMA Individual Assistance Programs.

In May, VITEMA also held a Disaster Preparedness Expo on Sat. Croix to provide another medium for the dissemination of knowledge and information to our citizens, visitors and the general public.

On Sept. 17, 2009, the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Hugo, VITEMA hosted a Day of Prayer and Remembrance Service, allowing residents to share their memories of the devastating hurricane.

Legislative Testimony.

VITEMA testified at legislative hearings throughout FY2009 to provide an overview of re-organization and the implementation of the 9-1-1 emergency communications system. The VITEMA Director also provided testimony on Sen. Simeon Sprauve’s bill on the Uniform and Emergency Volunteer Health’s Practitioner’s Act, at Sen. Craig Barshinger’s hearing on the need

for GIS mapping, and at the Committee of the Whole on the Administration's stimulus funding, which included funding for emergency management, at a Legislature Special Session.

Challenges.

VITEMA continues the build-out of its headquarters on St. Thomas. One of the major challenges faced in FY2009 was completing the build out of the E911 center to meet IBM's deadline, while the remainder of the facility was still under construction. However, through careful planning and construction, VITEMA was able to meet the deadlines for the build out and implementation of the 911 center and we are on target to complete the rest of the VITEMA's construction by January 2010.

A significant challenge for 911 Emergency Communications Center is addressing the emergency needs of residents whose wireless providers do not have sufficient towers to blanket the territory. Some cell phone users making emergency calls to our local ECC are out of range for their wireless providers, and instead their calls are picked up by Puerto Rico's emergency communications system. To act proactively on this matter, VITEMA has arranged for meeting the Puerto Rico's call center management on formalizing a protocol on how to manage emergency calls originating from the Virgin Islands and procedures to transfer them back to the Virgin Islands ECCs.

VITEMA's outstanding bills, which go as far back as 1998, remained unresolved in FY2009 and have had a detrimental effect on the agency's ability to do business with certain vendors in the territory. This may become a critical consideration during a time of disaster. In addition, one vendor has taken legal action against staff for procurements that were made. VITEMA has initiated some payments within its current resources but cannot completely eliminate the debts without additional financial resources.

To address this matter internally, VITEMA has instituted financial controls to prevent the misuse of financial resources in the future. Henceforth, the Director must approve every request to expend funds, and will do so only after the expenditure has been deemed valid by the financial staff, and the funds verified as available.

Conclusion.

This annual report summarizes our accomplishments, activities and challenges faced throughout FY2009. Fiscal Year 2010 poses even greater challenges as we continue to enhance and improve our ability to prepare for, respond to, recover from and mitigate all-hazards — but we also anticipate achieving similar successes in meeting our goals.

Appendix 1—FY2009 Preparedness & Mitigation Grants

Grant Program	Purpose	Award
Emergency Operations Center	To improve the territory's emergency management and preparedness capabilities by supporting flexible, sustainable, secure and interoperable EOCs. The grant provides funding for construction or renovation the government's EOC	\$1,000,000
Driver's License Security	To prevent terrorism, reduce fraud and to improve the reliability and accuracy of personal identification documents that states and territories issue	\$661,690
Buffer Zone Protection Program	To safeguard critical infrastructure sites and key resource assets, such as the power plants, through planning and equipment acquisition	\$200,000
Port Security	For HOVENSA LLC to protect its critical port infrastructure from terrorism, to enhance maritime domain awareness and risk management capabilities, to protect against improvised explosive devices and other non-conventional weapons, to conduct training and exercises and to support the implementation of the Transportation Worker Identification Credential(TWIC)	\$97,243
Interoperable Emergency Communications	For planning, training, exercises and equipment to carry out initiatives identified in the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans, and improve interoperable emergency communications for responding to natural disasters and acts of terrorism	\$62,715
FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation	Christiansted Underground Electrical Distribution	\$2,758,928
FEMA Flood Mitigation	St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, St. Thomas	\$82,000
FEMA Disaster Mitigation Planning	One-time grant to develop a Territorial Pre-Hazard Mitigation Plan	\$187,500
NOAA Tsunami Preparedness	To begin work on tsunami preparedness in the territory	\$42,000

Appendix 2—FY 2009 Meetings, Conferences, Training & Exercises

October

1 Tactical Communication Plan Exercise
16 Emergency Management Council Meeting, St. Croix
28 – 29 Formal Benefits Cost Analysis Training, St. Thomas

November

19 GIS Conference, St. Thomas

December

15 – 18 U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security - Grants Management Conf., Washington D.C.

January

19 – 22 North Command Caribbean Community Pandemic Influenza Workshop, Jamaica
26 – 30 FEMA Logistics Meeting, FEMA Headquarters, New York

February

7 Climate Change Conference, St. Thomas
7 – 14 FEMA National Grants Review, Arlington, Va.
8 – 13 Regional Interagency Steering Committee, Forensic Science Center, N.J.

March

4 – 8 National Emergency Management Association Conference, Alexandria, Va.
8 – 13 Continuity of Operations Strategic Planning Conference, Kansas City, Mo.
9 – 13 USNORTHCOM J4 Logistics & Engineering Conference, Colorado Springs, Co.
19 Emergency Management Council Meeting, St. Thomas
23 – 27 Vigilant Guard Puerto Rico Exercise (FEMA-donated generators delivered)

April

2 Tropical Disaster Workshop, St. Thomas
2- 3 NOAA Tsunami Exercise, St. Croix Emergency Operations Center
15 – 17 Emergency Operations Center Training, St. Croix & St. Thomas

May

13 – 15 Tait & Kenwood Radio Communications Training, St. Thomas
20 – 21 VI Tsunami Exercise (tested emergency evacuation, housing & communications capabilities)
21 – 22 FEMA-VITEMA GAP Analysis (update emergency plan and identify gaps), VI

June

25 – 26 Logistical Capability Assessment Tool Training, St. Thomas

July

28 – 29 FEMA Point of Distribution Training, VITEMA, St. Thomas

August

5 – 6 Earthquake Rapid Visual Screening Training (for engineers & technical staff), VI

September

12 – 14 Community Emergency Response Team Training
16 – 17 Hazard Mitigation Application Workshop, VITEMA, VI

October

14 Supervising For Effective Performance by GVI Chief Labor Negotiator, VI

Appendix 3—Omar Public Assistance to Government Agencies & Non-profit Organizations

Agency/Non-Profit Organizations	Category of Assistance	Amount Approved
Agriculture Department	Parks, recreational & other, debris removal	\$44,252
Bureau of Corrections	Security, debris	41,051
Public Works Department	Debris removal, roads & bridges, security, parks, recreational & other	2,406,521
Education Department	Building & equipment, debris removal, security	369,800
Housing, Parks & Recreation Dept.	Parks, recreational & other, debris removal	218,033
Internal Revenue Bureau	security, building, equipment	5,653
Juan Luis Hospital	Debris removal, security	10,594
Magen's Bay Authority	Debris removal	11,564
Office of Management & Budget	Building, equipment	2,523
Planning & Natural Resources Dept.	Debris removal, building & equipment, security	813,656
Property & Procurement Department	Building & equipment	2,047
Schneider Regional (Myrah)	Building & equipment	1,095
School of Good Sheppard	Debris removal	1,301
St. Croix Country Day School	Debris removal, security	4,300
St. Croix Swimming Association	Security, debris removal	2,804
Territorial Public Defender	Security, building& equipment	18,583
VI Housing Authority	Debris removal	7,106
VI Housing Finance Authority	Utilities, security, debris removal, building & equipment	31,668
VI National Guard	Security	35,872
VI Port Authority	Debris removal, building & equipment, parks, recreational & other	30,143
VI Public Television	Security, building & equipment	11,040
VI Superior Court	Security	17,366
VI Waste Management Authority	Utilities, security, debris removal	1,689,543
VI Water & Power Authority	Utilities, security, debris removal	1,404,955
VITEMA	Security, building& equipment	108,844
TOTAL		\$7,238,386

Appendix 4—Generators Installed at Critical Facilities

ST. CROIX	
LOCATION	KW
Property & Procurement Dept. – Main Office	100
Bureau of Information Technology – Cotton Valley	50
VI Fire Service – Grove Place	50
VI Port Authority – Fire Station	50
Bureau of Information Technology – Blue Mountain	50
VI Port Authority – Marine Facility	60
Bureau of Information Technology – Recovery Hill	60
Bureau of Information Technology – St. Georges	50
Bureau of Information Technology – Mount Steward	40
VI Port Authority – Procurement Office	50
ST. THOMAS	
Bureau of Information Technology – Benner Hill	50
Bureau of Information Technology – Mountain Top	40
VI Port Authority – King Airport	50
Bureau of Internal Revenue - Cinema One	60
VI Agriculture Department - Abattoir	54
VI Port Authority – Sand Fill	60
Public Works Department – VITRAN	84
VI Port Authority – Blyden Terminal	80
Bureau of Information Technology – Flag Hill	80
Public Works Department – Heavy Equipment	50
VI Education Department – CAHS (Shelter)	425
Property & Procurement Department – Main Office	425
EDP	65
AQ Building	245
Gramboko Building	80
ST. JOHN	
VI Port Authority – Enighed Pond	60
VI Port Authority – Marine Facility	50
Bureau of Information Technology – Mamey Peak	50
Bureau of Information Technology - Bellevue	50
Bureau of Information Technology – Hansen Bay	55
VI Education Department – Clarice Thomas Annex	72
Emmaus Moravian (Shelter)	60
VI Education Department – Julius E Sprauve School	100
St. John Methodist (Shelter)	40
VI Education Department – Guy Benjamin School	50