

Lt. Governor's Office Partners with UVI on Street Addressing Project

For Immediate Release No. 001-12

January 3, 2012

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The Office of the Lieutenant Governor has joined with the University of the Virgin Islands, Eastern Caribbean Center (UVI-ECC), in a historic partnership to advance the territory's street naming and addressing project. This partnership will culminate in the development of a protocol for implementation of a street addressing system throughout the territory that is consistent with national standards. The Office of the Lieutenant Governor and UVI-ECC have contracted Applied Geographics and Spatial Focus, both nationally recognized leaders in geospatial infrastructure development, to evaluate the territory's existing addressing environment and develop proposals for standardizing the addressing system.

Presently, the territory does not have a comprehensive street naming and addressing system. The benefits of a street addressing system include improving the efficient use of GPS technology, full functionality of the emergency 911 system, and expanded postal delivery to Virgin Islands homes. Implementation of street addressing is expected to not only improve the delivery of service provided by emergency first responders, but also support the providers of services such as utilities and transportation that both residents and visitors depend on. These service providers would no longer have to rely solely on using local landmarks for directions.

Many local entities, to include the Departments of Planning and Natural Resources, Public Works, Police, WAPA and Innovative already collect geospatial information and other data that is relevant to addressing but do not share the information. Last month, the Lt. Governor's Office and UVI-ECC convened a workshop with public and private sector agencies to discuss the collaborative efforts needed to accomplish street addressing. The workshop, which included a presentation led by Applied Geographics and Spatial Focus, was a precursor to individual meetings that would take place with the agencies to assess the extent of their geospatial data as well as their data collection methods.

Lt. Governor Francis encouraged workshop attendees to freely participate in the discussion. "The success of the

street addressing project hinges on your support and involvement," he told the group. Dr. Frank Mills, Director of the Eastern Caribbean Center, spoke about the relationship of street addressing to many local initiatives, including the collection of census data. "Street addressing would enable UVI to be more effective in collecting census data, and it is also critical to how we administer many programs and services throughout the territory," Mills stated. "When we send workers into the field, we need to know that they are going to the right household."

Applied Geographics has previously been involved in crafting the territory's GIS Strategic Plan and is familiar with the historical and cultural elements that must be taken into consideration in developing an addressing plan. "Geography is local," said Martha Wells of Spatial Focus. "There is not a one size fits all approach when it comes to addressing. Any system must respect the culture and people, who will live with and use the addresses."

The workshop and study were made possible through a grant from the Department of the Interior, in the amount of \$66,000. This project is the implementation of a goal from the 2010 Virgin Islands Geospatial Infrastructure strategic plan and part of the Virgin Islands Geospatial Information Council's effort to improve the delivery of service to the public through the effective and efficient use of geospatial technology.

Virgin Islanders are reminded to continue to submit their street name recommendations to the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. Street naming guidelines and submittal forms are available on the Lieutenant Governor's website, www.ltg.gov.vi.

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