

WSVI-WZVI-Quarterly Issues and Problems Report
From October 1, 2019-December 31, 2019

WSVI TV returned to the air on September 20, 2019. On September 21, 2018 WZVI returned to the air in a testing mode at low power. It remains our goal to return to the air as soon as possible. To serve the public during this time Alpha Broadcasting attempted to maintain a 24/7 live stream of its programming incorporating many of its program elements. This report is prepared for continuity for the public file system and reflects some of the issues and concerns guiding our online and streaming coverage of our community.

Earthquakes Rattle the Virgin Islands

A series of earthquakes and aftershocks rattled through the Virgin Islands during Q4 raising many questions in our news programs by newsmakers and local residents about just how prepared the Virgin Islands to defend against hurricane and Tsunami destruction.

A moderate magnitude 5.2 earthquake rumbled through the U.S. Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico Friday evening. Initial reports suggest that many, if not most St. Thomas and St. John residents felt it but it was much less noticeable by the time it reached St. Croix. A large wave passed by soon after the initial shock, rocking boats.

The U.S. Geological Survey reports the quake occurred at 5:21 p.m. and was centered about 44 kilometers north of Road Town, British Virgin Islands.

The area is seismically active and typically experiences one or more tiny quakes, from magnitude 1 to around 3.5, nearly every day. But quakes of 5.2 are considerably less common. Quakes have caused tsunami in the region but have rarely been dangerous. More than a century and a half ago, on Nov. 18, 1867, a major tsunami killed five to six hundred people in the territory and smaller numbers in the BVI and Puerto Rico.

The USVI recently installed a number of tsunami warning sirens but they have been offline since last fall's hurricanes. A magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck much further away, near the Cayman Islands, on Jan. 9, resulting in a tsunami alert, which was canceled before it was issued in the territory. There was no damage to the territory from that quake.

2019 Hurricane Season

The 2019 Atlantic hurricane season, which ended in November 2019, was marked by an above average number of storms, including Hurricane Dorian, which impacted

the Virgin Islands, then moved on and devastated the Bahamas before hitting the mainland and causing flooding throughout the Carolinas.

The season produced 18 named storms, including six hurricanes of which three were “major” – Category 3, 4 or 5. NOAA’s outlook called for 10-17 named storms, five to nine hurricanes and two to four major hurricanes.

The result of the season was slightly over what had been predicted by the Tropical Meteorology Project at Colorado State University.

“The 2019 Atlantic hurricane season was well above average for the number of named storms, and near normal for the number of hurricanes and major hurricanes, according to the season-ending report from CSU.

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The National Hurricane Center noted that 2019 was the fourth consecutive year of above normal Atlantic hurricane season. The only other period on record that produced four consecutive above normal seasons was 1998-2001.

Also this year, according to the NHC, five tropical cyclones formed in the Gulf of Mexico, which ties a record with 2003 and 1957 for the most storms to form in that region. Of those, three – Barry, Imelda and Nestor – made landfall on the U.S. mainland.

Colorado State’s report included the following statistics for the season:

- No named storms formed in the Atlantic between July 12 and Aug. 20. This is the first time this had occurred since 1982.
- Ten named storm formations occurred in the Atlantic between Aug. 21 and Sept. 23. This ties the season with 1949 and 2010 for the most Atlantic named storm formation between Aug. 21 and Sept. 23.
- Hurricane Dorian’s maximum lifetime intensity of 160 knots was the strongest for any Atlantic hurricane outside of the tropics – that is, higher than 23.5 degrees north latitude.
- Hurricane Dorian was the strongest hurricane to make landfall in the Bahamas on record. The fact that the storm lingered more than a day before passing on added to the damage the island group suffered.

Water and Power Crisis in the US Virgin Islands

WSVI TV Continues to cover the ongoing energy and power crisis in the Virgin Islands. During Q4, Virgin Islands Senators gave a \$6 million bailout for the V.I. Water and Power Authority, Public Services Commissioners convened briefly to

approve an extension to a leased generator surcharge that was set to expire at the end of the month.

At a PSC meeting to consider WAPA's most recent base rate petition, members not only voted against a rate increase, but approved a decrease in electric and water Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause rates, which, according to WAPA, forced its propane supplier to cut deliveries to the utility on Dec. 21. At the end of the meeting, the PSC agreed to let the surcharge, set at 3.08 cents per kilowatt-hour, expire as previously decided without implementing the base rate hike, which was also included in WAPA's original petition.

But there was a turnaround on Friday as the PSC extended the surcharge for another three months, despite opposition from member Johan Clendinen, who said the surcharge, which is meant to cover maintenance on leased generators fueled by propane, was no longer necessary now that the supply had been cut off. Clendinen voted against the motion to extend, but others supported statements made by member David Hughes, who said that he had called the emergency meeting and put the surcharge extension on the table in light of WAPA's strained financial state.

"These bills don't stop because the propane stops flowing," Hughes said. These are leased contracts and operations and maintenance contracts, and they should be properly contained within the base rate when the discussions on the base rate conclude."

Tropical weather for 2017 impacts the Virgin Islands and WSVI-TV continues to provide local news even after its broadcast operations are impacted.

Two major Hurricanes struck the WSVI community during the quarter. The first was Hurricane Irma. Hurricane Irma was an extremely powerful and catastrophic Cape Verde-type hurricane, the strongest observed in the Atlantic since Wilma in 2005 in terms of maximum sustained winds. It was the first Category 5 hurricane to strike the Leeward Islands on record, followed by Hurricane Maria only two weeks later.

Hurricane Maria was regarded as the worst natural disaster on record in Dominica and caused a major humanitarian crisis in the Virgin Islands, as well as being the tenth-most intense Atlantic hurricane on record. The thirteenth named storm, seventh hurricane, fourth major hurricane, and the second Category 5 hurricane of the unusually active 2017 Atlantic hurricane season, Maria caused catastrophic damage across the Northeastern Caribbean, compounding recovery efforts in the already struck areas of the Leeward Islands, who were still recovering from hurricanes Irma and Jose just two weeks prior.

Originating from a tropical wave, Maria developed into a tropical storm on September 16 east of the Lesser Antilles. Remarkably favorable environmental conditions enabled the cyclone to undergo explosive intensification as it approached the Lesser Antilles. The system reached Category 5 strength on September 18 as it

made landfall in Dominica, resulting in catastrophic damage across the entire island. Thereafter Maria reached its peak over the eastern Caribbean with maximum sustained winds of 175 mph making it the tenth-most intense Atlantic hurricane on record.

WSVI-TV AND WZVI-TV licensed to Alpha Broadcasting Corporation were impacted by two back-to-back Category 5 hurricanes in the third quarter of 2017. As a result of Hurricane Irma, WZVI-TV in St. Thomas were forced to cease operations as of September 8, 2017. WSVI-TV in St. Croix was able to remain operational throughout this storm but was knocked off the air with severe damage after the second hurricane on September 20, 2017. WSVI and WZVI both sought Special Temporary Authority to remain silent while the television stations are being rebuilt along with the necessary infrastructure to resume operations. Therefore for the period of this report, both stations remain off the air.

As of October 10, at least 88 people are known to have been killed by the hurricane: Including 1 in the United States Virgin Islands. Maria wrought catastrophic damage to the entirety of Dominica, which suffered an island-wide communication blackout.

While WSVI-TV's on air operations were impacted by the storms, WSVI-TV continued broadcasting weather updates and local news via the internet and its social media outlets and is planning on returning to cable TV in October as it works to restore operations. The programming has also including daily briefings by the local Government and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

WSVI TV began extensive hourly updates on the tropical weather conditions of the Caribbean in Q1 2017. These reports were carried in Spanish and English with open captions for the hearing impair and using Charts from the National Weather Service in San Juan Puerto Rico. These programs were also broadcast on WSVI-TV's Facebook page and regular updates on rip currents and tides as well as a Marine Forecast were reported.



CHANNEL 8 REMAINS OPERATIONAL ON INTERNET THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD.

Channel 8 maintained contact with its viewers in the Virgin Islands and outside the territory through social media and online via its website at www.wsvi.tv.