

WSVI-WZVI-Quarterly Issues and Problems Report
From January 1, 2023-March 31, 2023

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.

Atlantic Hurricane Season impact the US Virgin Islands and surrounding areas

Channel 8 news daily covered the early forecasts and predictions about the Atlantic Hurricane season 2023 to give the community an opportunity to prepare accordingly. AccuWeather forecasters issued early predictions for the 2023 Atlantic hurricane season that expect activity to be lower than the majority of seasons since 1995.

Following a prolific pair of hurricane seasons in 2020 and 2021, last year's storm activity in the Atlantic Ocean fell short of those record-breaking totals after just 14 storms formed off the back of a slow start to the season. Forecasters said coastal cities could bank on a similar frequency of tropical storms and hurricanes in the coming months.

Current projections show the 2023 season will have between 11 to 15 named storms, with four to eight of those storms reaching hurricane strength. One to three of those hurricanes will reach devastating Category-3 status of at least 111 mph.

"We are also projecting two to four direct impacts on the United States, including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands," AccuWeather Senior Meteorologist and hurricane expert Dan Kottlowski said in a release.

While storm activity is primed to be less frequent than recent years, last year proved a mild season can still bring destructive power. Hurricane Ian became one of the deadliest and costliest storms to ever hit the United States.

AccuWeather forecasters said Florida, which was battered by Ian, remains at greater risk for storm activity than other parts of the country.

Hurricane season officially starts on June 1, but activity is already brewing in the Atlantic Ocean.

"Based on climatology and an evolving El Niño pattern during August through October, the highest chance for direct and significant impacts will be from the Florida Panhandle around the entire state of Florida to the Carolina coast," said

Kottlowski. "There appears to be a lower chance for direct impacts over the western Gulf of Mexico and for the Northeast U.S."

Channel 8 began broadcasting programming presented by the territorial emergency management system VITEMA with its director Daryl Jashen urging residents to be prepared by taking particular steps. These programs were aired in the Channel 8 12 daily local news shows and during our special Covid coverage. Particular attention was paid to Covid related precautions that were being prepared for Virgin Islands Shelters by VITEMA

BASIC PREPAREDNESS TIPS

Know Where to Go

If you are ordered to evacuate, know the local hurricane evacuation route(s) to take and have a plan for where you can stay. Contact your local emergency management agency for more information.

Put together a Disaster Supply Kit

Your disaster supply kit should include a flashlight, batteries, cash, first aid supplies, medications, and copies of your critical information if you need to evacuate.

Take pictures of your important documentation and email them to your secured email to ensure you are able to access them, keep copies and files on a flashdrive that you can carry with you on your house or car keys.

If you are not in an area that is advised to evacuate, and you decide to stay in your home, plan for adequate supplies in case you lose power and water for several days and you are not able to leave due to flooding or blocked roads.

Pet Emergency Kits

In an emergency, your pets will be even more dependent on you for their safety and well-being. Your family's disaster plans must include your furry family members too.

Communicate

Talk with your family about what to do if a hurricane strikes. Include emergency plans for elderly and disabled family members. Discussing hurricanes ahead of time helps reduce fear, particularly for younger children. Make an emergency communication plan (visit ready.gov Make a Plan) and ensure all household members are aware of the plan.

WSVI-TV devoted extensive coverage the tropical weather predictions as it does every year.

Disaster Preparedness in the Virgin Islands

Channel 8 News promoted attendance at and aired extensive excerpts from the USVI's Governor's Americans with Disabilities Act) ADA Office and the Department of Human Services have partnered with VITEMA, VI Association of Independent Living, Disability Rights Center of the VI, VI University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD), and many other government, disability and aging partners in the community hosted a territory-wide "Disaster Preparedness in a COVID-19 Environment Expo" for adults with disabilities and independent senior citizens.

Apart from the ADA Office and the Department of Human Services, participating agencies include the Department of Health, VI Association for Independent Living, Disability Rights Center of the VI, VIUCEDD, FEMA, VITEMA, VIPD, Department of Public Works, VI Fire Services, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, American Red Cross, WAPA, VIYA, AARP, viNGN, St. Thomas and St. Croix Rescue, and other divisions.

The event highlighted local health and disaster preparedness efforts by these entities to include critical information you may need in the coming months, registration for free services, COVID-19 testing, education on monkeypox, sandbag distributions, 'go bags' and what should be in them, procedures to both secure and store medication and equipment before, during and after disasters, emergency radio demonstrations for people with and without hearing impairments, and much more. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), along with other health and disaster preparedness resources, will be distributed at each station and light refreshments and lunch will be provided.

The Virgin Islands Department of Health published information for our viewers that is specific to the Virgin Islands. We have incorporated this information into our broadcasts.

Staying with Friends or Family

If you plan to stay with friends or family outside your household when you evacuate from a storm, talk to them about how to protect yourselves and those you are staying with from COVID-19:

Does either household have someone at high risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, including older adults or people of any age who have certain medical conditions? Make sure everyone knows what they can do to keep them safe from COVID-19. Consider taking rapid COVID-19 tests if possible before sharing living spaces. This is especially important before gathering with individuals with certain medical conditions, older adults, those who are immunocompromised, or people who are not up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines, including children who cannot get vaccinated yet.

Ventilate the home to the extent you can. If you have power, you can use fans and portable HEPA air cleaners, and run your HVAC fan continuously. After the storm passes, if it is safe to do so, you can open windows and doors.

Follow everyday preventive actions, including covering coughs and sneezes, washing your hands often, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Know what to do if someone in your family or in the household you are staying with becomes sick with COVID-19.

Covid 19 in the Virgin Islands

While Covid numbers in the Virgin Islands are down quarter over quarter, economic suffering continues to be an issue. WSVI-TV provided extensive coverage weekly throughout the quarter to the Virgin Islands government update. USVI Government Communications Director Richard Motta announced that assistance will be made available through the Department of Human Services.

During weekly broadcast updates aired on Channel 8, Commissioner of Health Justa E. Encarnacion expressed gratitude to the Virgin Islands Community for their continued attention during COVID-19 and urges everyone to remain vigilant as active cases are rising throughout the Territory. Though increases in numbers is expected based on national trends, Commissioner Encarnacion wishes to reinforce the importance of the critical messages and overarching requirements provided to the public during the pandemic.

WSVI-TV has been broadcasting four half hour programs everyday since March 15, 2020 focusing on the Covid 19 crisis and the unique challenges faced by the Caribbean community of which the Virgin Islands is part. While all American based media viewed in the Virgin Islands focuses largely on the Covid crisis in the lower 48 states, the social, economic and health issues in Latin America and the Caribbean are of particular relevance to people in the USVI. Additionally, Channel 8 airs 20 public service announcements daily from agencies such as the Caribbean Public Health Authority, the World Health Organizations, the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta and the Virgin Islands Department of health.

Additionally, WSVI has been reporting through 12 local news broadcasts daily news of the following developments.

Channel 8 news carried news of the Department of Health's concern that researchers and news sources have published that the mortality rate for COVID-19 in the U.S. Virgin Islands could top the world in per capita pandemic deaths.

Channel 8 news carried news of the U.S. Virgin Islands is reinforcing critical public health messaging like symptom-monitoring, infection prevention and ways to avoid the spread of disease into our territory. The health department is monitoring the health trends in the Virgin Islands community on a daily basis to help identify any possible cases of COVID-19.

Additional Public Health Threats in the US Virgin Islands

While much of the coverage on WSVI was given over to Covid 19, researchers recently discovered the severity of the dengue fever prevalence in U.S. territories in the Caribbean, with a study revealing that more than half of kids in the U.S. Virgin Islands have had the illness and this has been covered extensively by us in alerting the public to a resurgence of dengue fever.

Last month, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released an updated report on the dengue fever cases among children and adolescents in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

After examining blood samples from more than 350 children aged 9 to 13 in the area between April and May 2022, the research team found that about 51% have had dengue fever based on the antibodies present in their blood.

Testing for a prior infection is needed because a second dengue infection is more dangerous and deadlier than the first bout. Also, only those who have had a prior infection could receive the dengue vaccine.

In the U.S., the only vaccine approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is Dengvaxia. It was approved by the agency in 2019 and became available last year for children aged 9 to 16 who have had a previous infection, according to USA Today.

Puerto Rico also witnessed a spike in cases last year. It recorded more than 800 cases, up from 2021's 509. It is worth noting that dengue is endemic to the two tropical U.S. territories in the Caribbean Sea.

"Diseases like dengue are increasing in many impoverished communities. Communities in the global south contribute to climate change much less — orders of magnitude less — than developed countries. And yet, they're bearing the burden," Dr. Gaurab Basu told the news outlet.

Basu is a primary care physician and health equity fellow at Harvard University's Center for Climate, Health and the Global Environment.

Based on CDC data, cases and hospitalizations across Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are highest among children and teens aged 10 to 19. About 44% of kids and adolescents in Puerto Rico have had dengue infection.

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.



Natural Disasters effective the Virgin Islands and its neighbors

Earthquakes Rattle the Virgin Islands

A series of earthquakes and aftershocks rattled through the Virgin Islands during Q1 2023 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. The local Virgin Islands Emergency Management Agency (Vitema) used Channel 8 to promote a text message service provided to the public to advise on all significant earth tremors.

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.