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Districtwide Outage Gives Way to Load Shedding as WAPA Battles Generation Instability Into Sunday Afternoon

WAPA's restoration efforts stretched from Saturday night into Sunday afternoon after a mechanical fault, unexpected generation loss and reduced capacity forced repeated outages and load shedding across the St. Thomas-St. John District.

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The Randolph Harley Power Plant in St. Thomas, USVI. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

ST. THOMAS — A districtwide power outage that struck the St. Thomas-St. John District on Saturday night stretched into late Sunday afternoon, as the V.I. Water and Power Authority

reported a mechanical fault, unexpected generation loss, reduced generation capacity and continuing operational instability at the power plant.

The outage disrupted the Roach-Francis gubernatorial [campaign announcement](#), complicated a [police homicide investigation](#), and left residents and businesses across St. Thomas and St. John dealing with repeated service interruptions that continued well beyond the overnight hours.

According to a series of updates issued by WAPA, the disruption began Saturday night as a districtwide outage affecting all customers on St. Thomas and St. John. WAPA initially said the cause was under investigation and that personnel were working to determine the issue and begin restoration efforts.

At 8:15 p.m., WAPA said restoration efforts were underway and estimated that service could be restored in approximately 30 minutes. However, by 9:46 p.m., the utility reported that restoration remained ongoing and identified the cause as a mechanical fault on Unit 27. At that time, WAPA said service had been restored to customers on Feeders 5A, 6A, and 8A, while plant personnel continued efforts to safely bring additional units online.

The outage occurred during a politically sensitive moment, as Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach and Senator Novelle Francis Jr. were holding their campaign announcement in St. Thomas. The interruption affected the livestream of the event and quickly became a campaign issue, with the Plaskett-Potter team criticizing the outage and linking it to long-running public frustration with WAPA and the territory's power reliability.

The outage also affected the work of law enforcement officers responding to and investigating a Saturday night homicide scene, adding another layer of difficulty to an already serious public safety incident. Residents and businesses across the island also experienced the disruption as WAPA worked through generation problems and phased restoration.

By 12:08 a.m. Sunday, WAPA said generation units Wartsila 6, 2, 1, and 4 had been safely brought online. As a result, service was restored to portions of the system, though some feeders were still operating under partial restoration. Plant personnel continued working to increase generation capacity and restore service to remaining customers.

At 12:30 a.m., WAPA reported further progress, saying service had been restored to Feeders 5A, 8A, 6A, 7A, 9B, 7E, 8B, 9E, 6B, and 10B. The utility also said partial restoration had been achieved on portions of Feeders 9C, 7C, and 7B, and that service had been restored to the Yacht Haven and Havensight Mall areas. WAPA said plant personnel were still working to restore service to any remaining affected customers.

But the recovery did not hold. At approximately 1:00 a.m., WAPA said the St. Thomas-St. John District was again experiencing a districtwide outage, this time because of an unexpected loss of generation at the Randolph Harley Power Plant. Plant personnel were working to bring generation back online and restore power to impacted customers.

WAPA later said full restoration was achieved at approximately 3:00 a.m. Sunday. However, by approximately 7:35 a.m., several feeders had lost power again because of reduced generation capacity. The impacted feeders were 7A, 8A, 8B, 10B, and 7C. WAPA said plant personnel were working to bring additional generation online as soon as possible.

The instability continued into late Sunday afternoon. In an update issued at 1:42 p.m., WAPA said the power plant continued to experience operational instability, requiring additional load shedding

to maintain system reliability. As of 1:35 p.m., the utility said Feeders 7A, 8A, 8B, 7C, 9C, 7E, and Mall were affected.

“Plant personnel continue to work diligently to stabilize generation and restore service, building on restoration efforts that have been ongoing throughout the night and into this afternoon,” WAPA said in its Sunday afternoon update.

The repeated outages underscored the fragility of the St. Thomas-St. John power system, with Saturday night’s mechanical fault followed by unexpected generation loss, reduced generation capacity and additional load shedding. The disruptions also came at a time when WAPA reliability is already a central public concern and is quickly emerging as a defining issue in the 2026 gubernatorial race.

For customers, the experience stretched from a full districtwide outage Saturday night into a second round of Sunday disruptions, with WAPA moving from restoration to partial restoration, then back into districtwide failure, and later into feeder-specific outages tied to limited generation capacity and operational instability.

As of WAPA’s 1:42 p.m. Sunday update, the utility had not announced full stabilization of the power plant, and crews were still working to restore service to affected customers while maintaining system reliability.