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Gov't Offices in St. Thomas-St. John to Open at Noon as WAPA Reports Restart Delay at Wartsila Units

Acting Governor Tregenza Roach announced a noon opening for STT-STJ government offices as WAPA said Monday morning that safety mechanisms were delaying the restart of Wartsila units needed to restore service.

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An aerial view of the Randolph Harley power plant in St. Thomas, USVI. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

Government offices in the St. Thomas-St. John District will open at 12 p.m. Monday as power disruptions continue in the district and WAPA reports delays restarting Wartsila generation units needed to restore service to impacted customers.

The delayed opening was announced by Acting Governor Tregenza Roach following continued power disruptions across the St. Thomas-St. John District.

“Acting Governor Tregenza Roach has announced a 12pm opening of government offices in the STT/J district as a result of the power disruptions,” the public notice stated.

In its latest update Monday morning, WAPA said safety mechanisms built into the generation units were slowing restoration efforts.

“UPDATE 7:15 AM - WAPA ALERT:

STT/STJ — Due to a safety mechanism built into the generation units, WAPA plant personnel are experiencing a delay in restarting the Wartsila units. WAPA personnel continue their best efforts to safely restore service to impacted customers in the St. Thomas/St. John district.”

The notice applies to government offices in the St. Thomas-St. John District. No delayed opening was announced for St. Croix.

The latest delay follows a districtwide outage that began Saturday night in the St. Thomas-St. John District and stretched into late Sunday afternoon, with WAPA reporting a mechanical fault, unexpected generation loss, reduced generation capacity and operational instability at the Randolph Harley Power Plant.

The disruption began Saturday night as a districtwide outage affecting 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.

At 8:15 p.m. Saturday, WAPA said restoration was underway and estimated that service could be restored in approximately 30 minutes. By 9:46 p.m., however, 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.

By 12:08 a.m. Sunday, WAPA said Wartsila units 6, 2, 1 and 4 had been safely brought online, allowing service to be restored to portions of the system. At 12:30 a.m., the utility reported additional restoration on several feeders, including 5A, 8A, 6A, 7A, 9B, 7E, 8B, 9E, 6B and 10B, along with partial restoration on portions of Feeders 9C, 7C and 7B. Service was also restored to the Yacht Haven and Havensight Mall areas.

The recovery did not hold. At approximately 1:00 a.m. Sunday, WAPA reported that 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.

WAPA later said full restoration was achieved at approximately 3:00 a.m. Sunday. By approximately 7:35 a.m., however, several feeders had lost power again because of reduced generation capacity. The impacted feeders were 7A, 8A, 8B, 10B and 7C.

The instability continued into Sunday afternoon. In a 1:42 p.m. update, WAPA said the power plant was still experiencing operational instability and that additional load shedding was needed to maintain system reliability. As of 1:35 p.m. Sunday, affected feeders included 7A, 8A, 8B, 7C, 9C, 7E and Mall.

By Monday morning, WAPA's latest update showed that restoration challenges continued, with personnel reporting delays in restarting Wartsila units because of safety mechanisms built into the generation units.

The extended outage and repeated service disruptions have affected residents, businesses and public operations in the St. Thomas-St. John District. The outage also complicated public safety work, including a police homicide investigation in Lindbergh Bay on Saturday night.

WAPA said personnel continued working to safely restore service to impacted customers.

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