

Major container port envisioned for St. Croix

By **ALDETH LEWIN**
Daily News Staff

The Economic Development Authority, the V.I. Port Authority and the St. Croix Renaissance Group have formed a public-private partnership to bring a new industry to, and hopefully a boost to the economy of St. Croix.

The three entities signed a memorandum of understanding to work together to develop the south shore into a large-scale, international transshipment port.

"I call it project St. Croix," Economic Development Authority President and Chief Executive Officer Percival Clouden said.

Clouden said with the expansion of the Panama Canal — which will double its capacity by 2015 and allow larger ships through — more cargo shipping traffic will be moving through the Caribbean.

"St. Croix becomes a strategic location for a container port, transshipment port and bulk storage facility," Clouden said.

He went to look at the Panama Canal along with representatives from the Port Authority and the St. Croix Renaissance Group. They met with an executive of one of the largest container ports in Panama, who also visited St. Croix.

"They have expressed interest in assisting and guiding us through the development," according to Clouden.

On the south shore of St. Croix is the 1,244-acre industrial park owned by the St. Croix Renaissance Group. Part of that property includes a 45-acre parcel with a deep-water container port facility.



Daily News File Photo

The Economic Development Authority, the V.I. Port Authority and the St. Croix Renaissance Group are working together to develop a new port on St. Croix.

Adjacent to the privately owned port is the government's cargo facility, the Wilfred "Bomba" Allick Port. The authority's Gordon Finch Molasses Pier is also in the area.

"There are two adjacent ports that, when combined, can provide a significant asset for transshipment and containerization," Clouden said. The government also is keeping a close watch on a piece of the HOVENSA port, which is located in the same area.

The recently approved Fourth Amendment Agreement between HOVENSA and the V.I. government contains a clause about the use of the shipping lane in front of the property.

If HOVENSA has not been sold after a year, HOVENSA will give the government access to

the Limetree Bay Channel — but not to its dock facilities — while it operates a storage terminal business.

Clouden said use of that channel could add to the development of a transshipping port in the area.

"We have our eyes open on that depending on how the sale turns out," he said.

Clouden said the project could be a boon to the economy of St. Croix, which has suffered greatly since HOVENSA shuttered its doors.

The development could create 500 jobs and create ancillary businesses to serve the shipping industry, according to Clouden.

"It's just going to have a positive effect on the St. Croix economy," he said.

Now that the MOU is signed, the three entities must begin to meet and work out a plan for developing the area.

"It's not something that we're going to let fall through the cracks, because we're all on the same page," Clouden said. "This is needed, this is going to have a positive impact on St. Croix."

He said the loss of HOVENSA was a wake-up call, and the territory must diversify its economy and not rely on one industry alone.

"The Caribbean basin is a place where it's rich in opportunity," Clouden said. "With all the islands having the need to import, there's always the necessity for commerce via those means — water transportation."

He said the large cargo ships could come into St. Croix's port and break down their shipment, sending some containers off on a smaller boat, swapping out cargo. The ships would also need to refuel and provision.

"St. Croix has assets that are not being utilized," Clouden said. "We just need to get little teams together to work on special projects and bring them to fruition."

Gov. John deJongh Jr. said he supports the development plan.

"We are fortunate to have a range of port facilities that, to date, have been underutilized, but with changing market conditions and our focus on economic diversification, we are well positioned to take advantage of regional opportunities," deJongh said in a written statement.

For more information, contact the Economic Development Authority at **714-1700**.

— Contact reporter Aldeth Lewin at 714-9111 or email alewin@dailynews.vi.

Crown Bay merchants sponsoring holiday card decorating contest

Daily News Staff

The Crown Bay Center at the Monsanto Marine Terminal is hosting a Christmas card decorating contest for elementary school students this season.

The winners get a cash prize for

their schools and a festive holiday party for their class.

The contest is open to all elementary schools on St. Thomas, and the cards must depict a scene or show a local tradition of Christmas in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The deadline for submissions is

Dec. 13.

V.I. Port Authority Executive Director Carlton Dowe said the prizes are sponsored by the Crown Bay Center shops.

"The Port Authority and the merchants of Crown Bay Center are excited to engage our students in decorating our cruise port for the holiday season," he said. "We challenge them to create beautiful, unique images of our island. We hope that this contest encourages creativity and we are anxious to see the submissions."

The rules for the contest are:

- The holiday cards must be on an 8-inch by 10-inch sheet.
- Cards must maintain a holiday theme.

		The prizes	
	School	Students	
First	\$500	Blue Ribbon and class party	
Second	\$250	Red Ribbon and class party	
Third	\$150	Green Ribbon and class party	

- Artwork must be student's original idea and done by the student.
- Each school must submit all entries from their school at the same time. Entries must be labeled with the student's name, teacher's name and grade. Cards not labeled will be disqualified.
- All cards must be submitted to

the Crown Bay Center Management office. The mailing address is 8268 Crown Bay Center, 161-A Sub Base, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, 00802.

- All cards must be submitted through the school's administration on or before, noon on Dec. 13 to the Crown Bay Center management office on St. Thomas.

Setting the record straight

An article on page 5 of The Daily News on Monday misspelled the name of a Botany Bay home that won a regional design

award. Villa Whydah will win an International Property Award for Architecture Single Residence for U.S. Virgin Islands on Dec. 6.

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Calendar	31	Nation & World.....	8-21
Classifieds	inside	Opinions	22-23
Comics.....	32-35	Police Reports	5
Crossword	35	Sports	36-44
Cruise Ships	5	Sudoku	Classifieds
Horoscope	33	TV Schedule	30-31
Lottery Results	6	Weather	12

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