



## *THE CRUCIAN LEGISLATOR*

*"Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality."*

**-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

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### ***Report to the Community***

January 15, 2008

Dear Friends,

God's blessings to you and yours for a healthy and prosperous New Year! Welcome to ***The Crucian Legislator***. I most humbly report that in 2007 the members of the 27<sup>th</sup> Legislature strived to fulfill their roles to make laws, set spending limits, oversee government operations and act on constituent concerns during the eight Legislative Sessions convened as follows:

- March 20, 2007
- April 17, 2007
- May 29-30, 2007
- June 19-20, 2007
- July 19, 2007
- September 19-20, 2007
- October 18, 2007

- December 6-7, 2007

During these Sessions, as a body "*United in Purpose, Commitment and Vision*," we responded to the Territory's economic and social needs with a balanced course of action that put the concerns of our community first. As President, I made every effort to lead by example, work cooperatively, and maintain a spirit of decorum and dignity which the People of the Virgin Islands expect and deserve from this august body. To have done less would have been a disservice to you.

As a member of the Majority Caucus and Vice Chair of the Committee on Health, Hospitals and Human Services; member of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary; member of the Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture; member of the Committee on Housing, Sports and Veteran Affairs and a member of the Committee on Planning and Environmental Protection, I stood up to protect your interests and enhance our quality of life from a comprehensive approach. My personal legislative agenda focused primarily on capital improvements for the Island of St. Croix, the district from which I am elected. Inside this newsletter, you will read more about these accomplishments and others from the 2006-2007 Legislative Sessions. I can only continue to "*Run the Race with Purpose*" with your support. As always, I value your input. Please contact my Office at anytime for constituent services or to offer advice.

*Usie R. Richards*

**MAKING LAWS...All in a Day's Work,  
Senate President Richards is on the job!!!**

**December 6-7, 2007 Session**

- ✓ **Act No. 6976:** In conjunction with Senator Luis Patrick Hill, an Act to transfer the collection of and duties ancillary to the collection of real property taxes and the public user fees from the Department of Finance to the Office of the Lt. Governor.
- ✓ **Act No. 6977, Section 15:** Changed the authorization to acquire property in Estate Stoney Ground from the Dept. of Planning and Natural Resources to the Dept. of Property and Procurement.
- ✓ **Act No. 6979:** In conjunction with Senator Liston A. Davis, an Act to prohibit the operation of non-accredited degree granting post-secondary education institutions in the Virgin Islands.
- ✓ **Act No. 6981:** Mandate the Dept. of Housing, Parks & Recreation to submit a quarterly and annual Profit & Loss Statement on automobile races.
- ✓ **Act No. 6982:** Requires the Dept. of Housing, Parks & Recreation to submit a quarterly and annual Profit & Loss Statement on horse races.
- ✓ **Act No. 6984:** In conjunction with Senator Carlton "Ital" Dowe, an Act to provide for the establishment of the Retroactive Wage Commission, a letter of credit to use \$45,000,000 from the Insurance Guaranty Fund to execute the retroactive payments for Government Employees and retirees owed; and a \$500,000 appropriation to the Retroactive Wage Commission.
- ✓ **Act No. 6985:** An Act amending 4 V.I.C., Sections 31, 32, 34, 74a, 122, 124 and 126 relating to relations between the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands and the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands; providing for a deadline for full implementation of Act 6919 establishing the Magistrate Division of the Superior Court; and providing for other related purposes.
- ✓ **Act No. 6986:** An Act to honor and commend Emile "Gravy" Henderson, Jr., posthumously and to name the recreation

courts located at No. 2 Lagoon Street, "The Emile 'Gravy' Henderson Jr. Sports Complex."

**October 18-19, 2007 Session**

- ✓ **Act No. 6965, Section 5 (Overridden):** An Act mandating the Chief Judge of the Superior Court be responsible for the day to day supervision of that court.
- ✓ **Act No. 6970:** Established a new date for convening the Fifth Constitutional Convention.
- ✓ **Act No. 6971:** Provides for voluntary self-exclusion from licensed casinos.
- ✓ **Act No. 6973, Section 21:** Appropriated \$3,000,000 for road repairs at Estates Morning Star, Whim, Campo Rico, Glynn, La Grande Princess, Cane Carlton, Welcome Tulipan and Welcome Flamboyant.
- ✓ **Act No. 6973, Section 22:** Mandated funds appropriated for road repairs in Estate Grove Place remain available until expended.

**September 19-20, 2007 Session**

- ✓ **Resolution No. 1714:** A Resolution to honor and bestow VI Medal of Honor upon Marine Lance Corporal Shane L. Goldman posthumously for his ultimate sacrifice made on behalf of this community and the Armed Forces of the United States.
- ✓ **Resolution No. 1715:** A Resolution to honor and bestow VI Medal of Honor upon Army Specialist Jose Rosario Almestica posthumously for his ultimate sacrifice made on behalf of this community and the Armed Forces of the United States.
- ✓ **Resolution No. 1716:** A Resolution to honor and bestow VI Medal of Honor upon Private First Class Jason Nathaniel Lynch posthumously for his ultimate sacrifice made on behalf of this community and the Armed Forces of the United States.
- ✓ **Resolution No. 1717:** A Resolution to honor and bestow VI Medal of Honor

upon Army Staff Sergeant Kendall Thomas posthumously for his ultimate sacrifice made on behalf of this community and the Armed Forces of the United States.

- ✓ **Act No. 6959, Section 6 and 7:** Require all health and dental insurance carriers that contract services with the Government to maintain claim reserve funds in a banking institution in the Virgin Islands. The act requires compliance within 90 days.
- ✓ **Act No. 6960:** An appropriation of \$19,846,000 for the operation of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands.
- ✓ **Act No. 6961:** On behalf of CDP, LLC and Gloria P. Coursey, an Act granting a rezoning designation for Plot Nos. 294-A and Remainder 295 Estate Barren Spot, King Quarter, St. Croix from the R-2 (Residential-Low Density) to B-2 (Business-Secondary/Neighborhood) in order to develop a shopping center.
- ✓ **Act No. 6962:** On behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Cyrille Singleton, an Act granting a use variance for Parcels Nos. 59, 60 and 61 Estate Little Fountain, King Quarter, St. Croix from the R-1 (Residential-Low Density) zoning designation to allow for the operation of a bed and breakfast facility.
- ✓ **Act No. 6969 (2007 Budget Bill, Miscellaneous Section):** Appropriated \$30,000 to the Babe Ruth Developmental League; \$25,000 to the Twin City Basketball Association; \$100,000 to the Department of Education to St. Croix Education Complex for the purchase and installation of a wooden floor; \$100,000 to the Frederiksted Economic Development Association for sunset jazz activities; \$100,000 to the St. Croix Mission Outreach for transitional housing and supervised living assistance; \$100,000 to 10,000 Helpers for outreach workers and services to the homeless and mentally ill; \$75,000 to the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts for moderate and low income youth after school and summer program activities; \$75,000 to the Island Center for the Performing Arts for after school programs in music and the arts; \$175,000 for repair of a road annexing Hard Labor

Road in Grove Place; \$50,000 to the St. Croix Horse Racing Improvement Fund for the 2007 St. Croix Christmas Second Day Horse Races; \$10,000 to the Amateur Basketball Association for summer program activities; \$50,000 to the USVI Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students Association for administrative and training activities; and \$150,000 to construct guard rails at the eastern end of the La Grange Gut in Frederiksted.

- ✓ **Act No. 6969, Section 5(b):** Amended Act No. 6839 to appropriate the balance of the sum appropriated under that Act (\$237,363.84 or any other balance) to the Fifth Constitutional Convention for operating expenses. The sum appropriated to remain available until expended.
- ✓ **Act No. 6969, Section 12:** Repeals the personal use tax under Title 33 V.I.C., Chapter 3A.

#### July 19, 2007 Session



- ✓ **Act No. 6934, Section 5:** Appropriated \$500,000 to the Department of Education for removal of dilapidated bleachers and to purchase and install new bleachers at St. Croix Central High School.
- ✓ **Act No. 6934, Section 11:** Made adjustments to sums authorized under previous Community Development Block Grants to meet federal compliance standards.

#### June 19-20, 2007 Session

- ✓ **Act No. 6930:** In conjunction with Senator Liston A. Davis, sponsored an Act to prohibit unreasonable excessive and annoying noise levels.
- ✓ **Act No. 6931, Section 2:** An authorization of \$1,300,000 from the Community Development Block Grant to purchase approximately 44.5 acres in Estate Stoney

Ground for the purposes of constructing a multi-purpose indoor facility and other government facilities.

#### May 29-30, 2007 Session

- ✓ **Act No. 6923 (Overridden):** An Act appropriating \$400,000, in Fiscal Years 2008, 2009 and 2010, from the Internal Revenue Matching Fund to the Dept. of Education for the Summer Science and Humanities Enrichment Program.
- ✓ **Act No. 6928:** In conjunction with Senator Carlton "Ital" Dowe, Amended 3 V.I.C., Chapter 8, adding a Witness Protection Program; 23 V.I.C. providing non-retirement incentive bonuses to limited police officers and authorizing the Commissioner of Police to establish towing rates for vehicles towed upon the request of police officers; and an appropriation providing for the hiring of 150 police officers territory-wide.
- ✓ **Act No. 6929, Section 20:** Provided an appropriation of \$492,000 to the Dept. of Public Works for roadway and drainage improvements, and flood mitigation to Estates White Lady and White Bay.
- ✓ **Act No. 6929, Section 22:** An appropriation of \$696,000 to the Legislature for 2007 Summer Employment Program, Accumulated Leave Lump-Sum Payments, Employee Dispute Settlement Payments, NCSL Annual Dues and Upgrade of Elevators to meet code.

#### April 17, 2007 Session

- ✓ **Act No. 6918:** Granted an exclusive franchise to Aquatic Management, LLC dba VI Sea Trans to operate all public marine passenger ferry transportation service between St. Croix and St. Thomas and St. Thomas and St. Croix.
- ✓ **Act No. 6919:** In conjunction with Senator Liston A. Davis, sponsored an Act to provide for a Magistrate Division within the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands.
- ✓ **Act No. 6920:** In conjunction with Senator Liston A. Davis, an Act to prevent members of boards or commissions from

simultaneously serving as an employee of the respective board or commission.

- ✓ **Act No. 6921:** In conjunction with Senator Celestino A. White, Sr., an Act to require the heads of the Housing Finance Authority and the Department of Housing, Parks and Recreation to submit quarterly reports on the status of housing.
- ✓ **Act No. 6923:** Appropriated \$400,000 from the Internal Revenue Matching Fund to the Department of Education for the Summer Science and Humanities Enrichment Program.

#### March 20, 2007 Session

- ✓ **Act No. 6906:** An Act amending Acts no. 6858, 6758, 6676, 6432 and 6358 to reprogram funds and make various corrections relating to the Community Development Block Grant Program.
- ✓ **Act No. 6907:** On behalf of Hovenssa, an Act to rezone Remainder Matricular No.38, Estate Pearl, Queen's Quarter, St. Croix from A-1 (Agricultural one) to R-3 (Residential-Medium Density).
- ✓ **Act No. 6912:** On behalf of Red Sky LLC, an Act rezoning Plots Nos. 127-B and 127-C Estate Smithfield-Hesselberg and Two Brothers, West End Quarter, St. Croix, from W-1 (Waterfront-Pleasure) to R-3 (Residential-Medium Density).
- ✓ **Act No. 6915:** An Act honoring Fred Thomas for his contributions to the musical heritage of the Virgin Islands.

#### December 8, 2006 Session

- ✓ **Act No. 6903:** On behalf of Monique Samuel and Ian Chung, an Act rezoning Plot No. 70-C of Estate Wheel of Fortune, West End Quarter, St. Croix from R-3 (Residential-Medium Density) to B-3 (Business Scattered).

#### September 19 & 20, 2006 Session

- ✓ **Resolution 1706:** A Resolution honoring and commending the St. Croix Heritage Dancers, Inc. on their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of preserving and promoting our heritage, culture and dances.

- ✓ **Act No. 6868, Section 18:** Brought into conformity local laws related to the procedures for acknowledgement of Paternity and affirmation for children born out of wedlock.
- ✓ **Act No. 6868, Section 19:** Appropriated \$25,000 to the Babe Ruth Developmental Baseball League and \$25,000 to the Twin City Basketball Association for Mini-Basketball.
- ✓ **Act No. 6883, Section 1:** Amended the appropriation to be directed to the Festival and Cultural Organization of St. John, the Crucian Christmas Festival Organization and The Virgin Islands Carnival Committee, Inc.
- ✓ **Act No. 6884, Section 2:** Appropriated \$350,000 from the Transportation Trust Fund to pave roads in Estate Grove Place bordering plots 257 thru 277.
- ✓ **Act No. 6890, Section 1 Miscellaneous:** Appropriated \$50,000 to Ten Thousand Helpers and \$100,000 to Frederiksted Economic Development Association for Sunset Jazz.

**SENATOR RICHARDS: WORKING HARD FOR THE COMMUNITY EVERYDAY:**

- **SENATOR RICHARDS PRESENTS CULTURE BEARER AWARDS:**



The Usie Richards Political Action Committee sponsored its **Second Annual “Building a Nation by Preserving Our Culture” Awards Program** on October 28, 2007 at Rotary Club West. Nearly two hundred attendees joined us to honor four distinguished individuals (**Mrs. Leona Brady Watson, Mrs. Gloria Joseph, Mr. Dimitri “Pikay” Copemann and Mr. Wayne “Bully” Petersen**) for their outstanding promotions of Virgin Islands culture. The Awards Program also featured a Silent Auction and Fashion Show!

- **RECOGNIZING HONOR STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

The Office of Senate President Usie R. Richards presented ***Honor Roll Certificates*** to student achievers at public elementary schools on St. Croix for the 3<sup>rd</sup> marking period in 2006-2007 and the 1<sup>st</sup> marking period of 2007-2008.

- **PLAQUE PRESENTATION CEREMONY**



Under the direction of the Office of Senate President Usie R. Richards, a ***Plaque Presentation Ceremony*** was held to

honor outstanding members of the community in the St. Thomas/St. John District on December 20, 2007 and in the St. Croix District on December 21, 2007. The following individuals and organizations were commended by Resolutions adopted by the Legislature for their contributions:

December 20, 2007 on St. Thomas

- 27<sup>th</sup> Legislature
- The Late Theovald Moorehead
- Mr. Austin “Babe” Monsanto
- Rotary Club of St. Thomas
- Sebastian Majorettes
- The Late Edith de Jongh Woods

- 26<sup>th</sup> Legislature
- The Late Urman Victor Fredericks
- Milo’s Kings
- The Late Alva A. Swan
- Ms. Esonica Viera

- 25<sup>th</sup> Legislature
- Charlotte Kimelman

- 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature
- The Late Gerda Marsh

December 21, 2007 on St. Croix

- 27<sup>th</sup> Legislature
- Mr. Winfred Thomas

26<sup>th</sup> Legislature

- The Late Arthur Abel
- The Late Gregory Bennerson
- The Late Casper Holstein
- Ms. Sophia Johnson
- The Late Ethel McIntosh

21<sup>st</sup> Legislature

- Mr. Mapleton (Tarco) Lawrence
- Mr. Alfonso (Scipio) Thomas

**SENATE PRESIDENT RICHARDS: A PROVEN LEADER:**

Senator Usie R. Richards serves as Senate President of the 27<sup>th</sup> Legislature and therefore is Chairman of the Committee of the Whole.



Nationally, he is very active with the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL), the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) and the Council of State Governments-Eastern Regional Conference (CSG-ERC). Senator Richards is an At-Large Member of the Executive Committee of the NBCSL, serves as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair of the NBCSL Committee on Health and Human Services and a member of NBCSL Housing Committee. He is also a member of the NCSL Health and Human Services Committee and currently serves on the Executive Committee of CSG-ERC. During 2007 Senator Richards actively participated in the events of these organizations and remains successful in applying these experiences in the development of legislation and policies for the People of the Virgin Islands.

Senator Richards attended and participated in the following conferences to enhance his ability to adequately represent us at home and abroad:

- March 24-25, 2007 Arlington, VA NBCSL 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Colloquium on African American Health (Paid by NBCSL)
- May 31-June 3, 2007 Miami, FL NBCSL Promoting Healthy Lifestyles (Paid by NBCSL)
- June 10-13, 2007 San Juan, PR CSG National Committee and Task Forces (Paid by VI Legislature)

- June 28-29, 2007 Washington, DC NBCSL 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Housing Symposium (Paid by NBCSL & VI Legislature)
- September 13-15, 2007 San Antonio, TX NBCSL 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Health Disparities Conference (Paid by NBCSL)
- October 4-7, 2007 Indianapolis, IN NBCSL Annual Mental Health Conference (Paid by NBCSL)
- November 27-December 2, 2007 Phoenix, AZ NCSL 2007 Fall Forum (Paid by VI Legislature)
- December 12-16, 2007 Little Rock, AR NBCSL 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Legislative Conference (Paid by VI Legislature)

***COMMENTS FROM CONSTITUENTS ON SENATOR RICHARDS' LEGISLATIVE PERFORMANCE:***

Dear Senator Richards:

I want to thank you for bringing the "house to order." Following the process by the book is critical. In prior years, the rules of process were ignored and lent a feeling of lack of organization and formality that should exist in the legislature. We do watch which senator(s) yell and are disruptive and seem to block effective legislation because to them, it is a matter of who gets the credit vs. doing the people's business for the good of all who live in the territory. Thank you again, Senator Richards. I know you are one senator who is actively working on a daily basis and passing much needed legislation for all of us. **JL – St. Croix.**

Dear Senator Richards:

Thank you for finding ways to finesse the tax bill and add some amendments to improve the draft, while leaving room for further improvements, and review of revaluations before passage. **SC-St. John**

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