

VIRGIN ISLANDS

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VIRGIN ISLANDS ENERGY OFFICE

The energy efficiency and renewable programs administered by the Department of Planning and Natural Resources/Virgin Islands Energy Office are funded through a combination of funds from the United States Department of Energy, Exxon, and Stripper Well monies. The Division's mission is: "To promote energy efficiency and advocate the use of renewable energy technology for the public and private sectors, and residents of the Virgin islands through energy education, outreach, financial incentives, and technical assistance."



General Education Program

Two schools (an elementary, and a middle school) were selected to participate in the Adopt-A-School Program. Each participant was awarded a grant to purchase energy conservation literature for its curriculum, and retrofit its energy using system(s). A total of eighty-nine National Energy Education Development (NEED) based presentations were conducted to students throughout the Territory (three main islands).

The eleventh annual Junior Solar competition held in March 2006 again proved to be an extremely successful event as a total of 120 middle school students from 19 schools participated in the event. Students designed, built, and competed against each other in the Junior Solar Sprint races. Cars were judged in two categories, design and speed.

A research and education grant in the amount of \$20,000 was awarded to a public high school to research, develop, and produce a model for local production of alternate fuels.

The Antilles School, another grantee, completed its research and education power plant demonstration project.

UTILITIES

The Public Services Commission (PSC), at its December 2006 meeting, decided to approve the implementation of net metering by the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA). The PSC advised WAPA to prepare a document that outlines all the terms and conditions associated with net metering. The document, written and approved on February 9, 2007 allows residents to sell excess power generated by their solar or wind systems back to WAPA at its retail rate. WAPA in its policy for net metering stated: "This rider is available on a first-come, first-served basis, except that the aggregate capacity of customer-generators shall not exceed 5 MW's on the Island of St. Croix and shall not exceed 10 MW's collectively on the islands of St. Thomas, St. John, Water Island and other Territorial islands." Pursuant to the rider the capacity for each system cannot exceed 10 kilowatts for a residential or small commercial system. The net metering agreement was adopted for a one-year trial period.

The Virgin Islands Energy Office (VIEO) was instrumental in the process of having net metering implemented in the Territory. The process began back in 1999 when The Innovative Renewable Grant Program began where participants attended workshops conducted by the Florida Solar Energy Center (FSEC). Participants subsequently submitted project proposals/application and received \$20,000 grants from the VIEO to implement renewable energy projects. Seven of the ten systems funded meet the criteria and

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are approved for net metering. The VIEO Director made two presentations to the PSC in support of net metering. Due to the rising cost of fossil fuel on which Virgin Islands residents are 99.99% dependent, this major accomplishment is a giant step forward for residents of the Territory, VIEO, as well as to the utility company.

BUILDINGS

Through a partnership agreement with the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority, total of thirty-four (34) residential, small business, and government audits were completed in 2006. Based on a small sampling of participants for the first billing cycle following the audit, there was an overall reduction in consumption of 30,538 kilowatt-hours.

An extremely popular and successful program is the VIEO's Energy Economic Development - Rebate Program. For fiscal year 2006 a total of \$301,000 was rebated to residents who participated in the program based on their purchase of energy star appliances and products, and renewable energy products and equipment.

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