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DPW Names New St. Thomas/St. John Ferry

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – Following public vote and weeks of discussion, the Department of Public Works (DPW) is excited to announce the name of the new ferry for the St. Thomas/St. John route, “the Spirit of 1733.”

“We were overwhelmed by the public participation and support we received in selecting a name for the new ferry,” said DPW Commissioner Derek Gabriel.

Of the top five submitted names for the ferry, three of them carried themes of freedom. The top five names were: Queen Breffu, Spirit of 1733, The Emancipation, Ginger Thomas and Charlotte Amalie I. Both Queen Breffu and Spirit of 1733 were in reference to the 1733 slave rebellion, which was led by Breffu. The 1733 slave rebellion was noted as one of the earliest and longest slave revolts in the Americas.

“This rebellion is extremely significant. It’s not only local history but world history. This rebellion was long before anyone’s independence—long before Haiti independence and the US Independence. It was the first place in the western world for something like this to happen” Professor Olasee Davis, said when asked about Breffu and the rebellion.

The ferry’s name also falls in line with other commemorations that took place this year. In March, Congresswoman Stacey E. Plaskett, with the support of the Virgin Islands National Park, hosted a ceremony at Salt Pond in Coral Bay, St. John to recognize the permanent installation of a plaque at the peak of the Ram Head trail to commemorate the 1733 slave rebellion.

“It means a lot to us that the new ferry will be a lasting tribute to the rich history, tradition and culture of the Virgin Islands, particularly St. John. Residents and visitors will be reminded of that history every time they ride between the islands,” Gabriel added.

The new ferry is scheduled to be in the territory in 2025. The 300-passenger vessel is being built by Gulf Craft, LLC in Louisiana and is making considerable progress in construction.

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