

# Governor Speaks to Solar Graduates

Gov. John P. deJongh Jr. highlighted progress that the V.I. Energy Office, under his direction, has made when he spoke at graduation ceremonies Jan. 7 for the first class of a solar training program.

Twenty-six students were recognized at Government House for completing the intensive, 20-week course, sponsored by the Energy Office, the Department of Labor and the Department of Education.

It was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The course will include on-line training, hands-on training in the class room and on-the-job training.

The course, which is now being conducted on St. Thomas, is designed to give residents who complete it the opportunity to become employed in the solar industry especially in the installation of solar water heaters. During the training students assist in installing solar water heaters on government buildings or buildings



**Gov. John P. deJongh Jr speaking at the graduation ceremony at Government House on St. Croix.**

owned by non-profit agencies. Many solar water heaters are expected to be installed in the Virgin Islands as part of the ARRA stimulus funds.

Gov. deJongh pointed out that these newly minted solar water heater installers were going to play a part in the new program he was officially kicking off at the graduation ceremony.

The program, funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, will give loans to residents who want to install solar water heaters. Instant rebates to cover 50 percent of the total equipment and installation costs up to \$2,500 will be available to cover the remaining balance. This program will target 1000 residents and small businesses.

## Energy Office Expands Rebate

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and more information are available on the Energy Office website [www.vienergy.org](http://www.vienergy.org). This program is referred to as the Energy Star State Appliance Rebate Program.

Consumers must be residents of the Virgin Islands (valid income tax documents or ID may be required as proof of residency). Products must be purchased from a vendor in the U.S. Virgin Islands that possesses a retail business license. Products must be installed in



**Energy Office staff member Leila Muller presented details about the Rebate Program on St. Thomas and St. Croix during February..**

the U.S. Virgin Islands. Recycling is required for all items. In this specific program there is a limit of one rebate per product per household. Using this specific program, however, places no restraints on residents using other rebate programs offered by the Energy Office. Rebates are not available for government purchases or discretionary grant program grantees.



# The Blast

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## Energy Office Expands Rebate Program to Freezers, Dishwasher,

The Energy Office, as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, is able to once again expand its rebate program. The Energy Office will be giving 30 percent rebates on ENERGY STAR dishwashers, freezers, heat pumps and tankless gas water heaters.

This is the first time rebates have ever been offered on dishwashers and freezers and they are being offered for the replacement of older appliances with energy efficient appliances. This is also the first time rebates have been offered on heat pumps and tankless gas water heaters. They must be replacement



**Vendors and Energy Office Staff listened to a presentation by Leila Muller about the new rebate programs rules.**

purchases. The old freezers and dishwashers must be recycled. The rebates are limited to \$599 for these items.

Consumers must apply for rebates within 30 days of

purchase. Rebates will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis, and will be issued to consumers within 45 to 60 days of receipt of complete application. Applications

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## Solar Panel Rebate Formula Changes

The Virgin Islands Energy Office is changing its rebate formula for solar panels from \$3.50 per watt to 50 percent of the purchase price.

Federal regulations state the funds from the American Recover and Reinvestment Act of 2009 cannot

be used to rebate more than 50 percent of a product. So, the Energy Office is giving residents the highest allowable rebate when federal funds are being used.

The Energy Office regrets any problems that this necessary change may have caused residents.

**Inside:**

**Articles on grants, housing summit and new VI Weatherization Program**

### Virgin Islands Energy Office

No. 45 Mars Hill, Frederiksted  
U.S. Virgin Islands 00840-4474

Telephone: (340) 773-1082

FAX: (340) 772-0063

[www.vienergy.org](http://www.vienergy.org)

# Building Green Big Topic for Virgin Islands

Surveying the Landscape of Green Building Practices in Affordable Housing was a seminar topic at the Housing Summit sponsored by the Virgin Islands Housing Authority at Carambola Beach Resort on January 27.

Bevan Smith, Jr., Director, V.I. Energy Office was joined in a panel discussion by Onaje Jackson, President of Sustainable Systems and Design International; Sara Farrar-Nagy, Sr. Project Leader, National Renewable Energy Laboratory; and Richard Borck, owner of



**This energy efficiency house was built on St. Croix Last year.**

Premier Homes.

While Smith focused on the financial incentives offered by the Energy Office for builders wanting to “Go Green”; the other panelists went through the strategies of energy efficiency and its benefits.

Farrar-Nagy said the first thing to consider when building an energy efficient home is “siting.” She said that often with good siting, one can avoid the need for air conditioning. She also added that shading elements could also play a key part in keeping a building cool. Another key element to consider, according to Farrar-Nagy, was making the building solar ready.

Following up on those points, Borck said that it was important to have south facing roofs where solar panels could be placed to get the best sunshine.

Jackson, looking out over the audience of about 50 people, said that a few years ago this topic would

have never attracted such a large audience and he was glad that “energy has gone mainstream.” Jackson also discussed payback on investments in energy efficiency and alternative energy. He said some payback was immediate while other larger investments like a photovoltaic systems could take five or seven or even more years to pay for itself.

Smith talked about the “no money down” solar water heater program that the Energy Office had recently initiated and about the Energy Star rebate program that had been expanded with funding from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. He added that some ARRA funds would be used to improve the efficiency of the Virgin Islands government. Specifically, he said that the Water and Power Authority was being granted money to improve the efficiency of street lighting and DPW to retrofit traffic signals to LEDs.

## Virgin Islands For the First Time Gets Weatherization Funds

The Virgin Island Energy Office at the end of 2009 was awarded \$566,172 of a projected \$1.4 million in Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to weatherize 430 homes over the next three years.

Bevan Smith Jr. Energy Office Director, stated “The Virgin Islands Weatherization Assistance Program (VIWAP) will provide services for the elderly (60 years or older), disabled, families with children five years old or younger, and those households with high energy burdens or energy use. The Energy Office has

designated 3 percent of its weatherization funding to address health and safety issues in the homes, including gas and electrical safety”.

While the stateside weatherization program has been around for 35 years, this is the first time the federal government has funded the program in the Virgin Islands. The Virgin Island program will focus on energy efficiency in the home.

For information on applying for the program go to [www.vienergy.org](http://www.vienergy.org) or call 773.1082.s

## Summary of V.I. Energy Office Discretionary Grant Program

**Incentive Type: Discretionary Grant**

**Eligible Projects: Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Projects**

**Eligible Sector(s): Not-for-Profit Organizations**

**Grant Amount: \$50,000 Maximum**

**Terms: Competitive; 5% match Grant Requirement**

**Point of Contact: Joseph Daniel, Energy Operations Coordinator  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands  
340-774-3320**

**Program Overview:** To pursue its mission of promoting energy efficiency and advocating renewable energy technology in the territory, the Virgin Islands Energy Office (VIEO) offers a Discretionary Grant to enable not-for-profit organizations the opportunity to implement Energy Education Outreach, Solar Outdoor Lighting and Energy Efficiency Building Retrofits projects.

This competitive grant program targets Not-For-Profit organizations and the funding is derived from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

**Goal/Objective:** To assist not-for-profit organizations to reduce their energy consumption and combat rising energy costs, which will in turn impact the Territory’s effort to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels. Create jobs.

**Implementation Plan:** The plan is to identify and reach out to not-for profit organizations through a marketing program that will involve print and audio media advertizing supported by web page and direct staff promotion, aimed at encouraging participation in the program.

The VIEO will solicit grant proposals from Not-for-profit organizations as they compete with each other for funds to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Proposals that demonstrate energy savings create jobs or lead to job retention, fits within the VIEO mission of promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy and leads to a reduction in energy consumption will be viewed favorably.

## Rebates and Grant Applications no online

The Virgin Islands Energy Office has PDF fill-in forms now available on its website at [www.vienergy.org](http://www.vienergy.org). The forms available include applications for rebates, grants, and loan applications. These forms should make it much more convenient for residents to access the aforementioned applications.

The new process allows residents to fill out the forms on their computer. However, since all the applications need accompanying documentation, they will have to be physically delivered to the Energy Office. The Energy Office was able to expand its rebate and grant programs and add a solar water heater loan program with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The Energy Office is also for the first time

receiving federal funding for a Weatherization Assistance Program. The VI WAP goal is to improve energy efficiency for low-income families, particularly for the elderly, people with disabilities, and families with children under five years old. In a couple of weeks, the Energy Office will have an application on its website for residents who want to apply for that program.

All applications will remain available at the Energy Office for those who don’t have access to a computer.

For more information call the Virgin Islands Energy Office, a division of the Governor’s Office, at 773-1082 on St. Croix, and 774-3320 on St. Thomas and St. John.