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Search

Sections

Front Page

Business

Caribbean Forum

Classifieds

Education

Entertainment

Features

Health

Immigration

Legal

Letters

Op-Ed

Sports

Technology

Top Ten Articles

Travel

Weather

Departments

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News from the Caribbean as of Saturday February 24, 2007

### First USVI taxi and tour guides gain certification

Thursday, December 14, 2006

by Susan Mann  
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ST JOHN, USVI: Does basketball great Michael Jordan really have a home on the north side of the island of St Thomas in the US Virgin Islands? Did American actor and heart throb Johnny Depp buy property there? Did Black Beard's castle really belong to him? What information and advice should visitors to the USVI receive about the crime rate?



The first graduates of the new USVI Taxi and Tour Guide certification program participate in a ceremony held on St Thomas

To date, the accuracy of the answers and the information provided to the public may vary significantly. A new educational programme has just been launched to change that.

The University of the Virgin Islands, under the auspices of the Department of Tourism and the USVI Hotel and Tourism Association, and the Caribbean Hotel Association is making available a new training and certification

programme for qualified taxi and tour guide employees.

On Sunday, seventeen graduates were the first successfully to complete the new certification programme designed specifically for the taxi and tour industry.

"It was an excellent and informative programme," said graduate Bruce Flamon. "Coming from Chicago I learned a lot of history and was able to get the facts first hand. We're already putting the information we learned in class to work."

Members of the class worked hard to ensure they received certification, and those who saw a need for more uniformity in addressing the needs of tourists were also instrumental in its development. The aim of the programme is to enhance visitors' experiences and to ensure that accurate information about the history and culture of the islands is imparted to visitors.

Graduates attended nightly classes, which instructed them on Customer Service, Virgin Islands History and Culture, Points of Interest, and Presentation Skills. In addition, they were required to pass a 100 question exam and and deliver an in-class oral presentation.

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February 24 ▶

**This date in the Caribbean**

	<p>Do you know of an important event in or relevant to the Caribbean that occurred on this date? If so, please send us an <a href="#">e-mail</a> with the details.</p>
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"If you are going to do tours and serve as ambassadors to the Virgin Islands, then this course is a must," said graduate Orlando Donadelle. "Other islands are getting in gear with their plans for tourism. We have to make a conscious effort to improve the taxi and tour industry."

The graduates have already come together to form a Certified Tour Guide Association.

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