NTRC

NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY COMMISSION
UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND (USF)
2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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1. BACKGROUND

The Universal Service Fund was established under Section 42 Telecommunications Act (Cap 418) of the Revised Laws of St. Vincent and the Grenadines of 2009. The Fund is managed by the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) – which collects, disburses and makes relevant decisions with regards to the proper and effective management of the Fund.

1.1   What is the Universal Service Fund?

The Universal Service Fund (USF) is a fund which is used by the NTRC to compensate any telecommunications provider that is required to provide or promote Universal Service.

Universal Service includes the provision of:

- Public voice telephony
- Internet access
- Telecommunications services to schools, hospitals, similar institutions and the physically challenged
- Other services by which people access efficient, affordable and modern telecommunications

The Fund will encourage efficient access to, and use of telecommunications networks and services throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines with special focus on rural, under-served and maritime areas, and with the goal to help promote social, educational and economic development.

The Fund will also ensure the reasonable availability and affordability of basic and advanced telecommunications services, where the commercial telecommunications market is unable to deliver such services in a financially viable manner independently; and also to the physically challenged, elderly and indigent communities.

The Fund will also provide support for the introduction and expansion of telecommunications services to schools, health facilities and other organizations serving public needs.

1.2   Who contributes to the Universal Service Fund?

As set forth in the Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund Contribution) Order 2008, all telecommunications providers shall contribute to the Universal Service Fund. In terms of due dates for payments of these contributions, Section 5 of the Contribution Order states that within forty-five (45) days of the reporting year, the contributor must pay and provide supporting documents used in the calculations. Parliament may also appropriate funds for use by the USF. Grants and donations may also be made to the Fund by individuals or legal entities.

1.3   Management of the Fund

Effective September 16, 2008, the Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations 2008 was gazetted and came into operation. The aim of these Regulations is to provide for the efficient and effective management of the USF. The Regulations govern the way in which the Fund operates. Along with these Regulations, there are Universal Service Guidelines issued under Section 7 of the Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations to facilitate the proper operation of the Fund. These guidelines are an indication of the policy and procedures that must be followed in the operation of the Fund.

The USF plays an integral role in the development and technological innovation of the telecommunications sector and of the country as a whole.

2.   SWOT ANALYSIS

2.1   Strengths

- The NTRC has been able to utilize the funds available for the seven projects which have been implemented since 2010.

- The projects which have been implemented by the USF positively impacted the lives of many Vincentians as it relates to access to affordable telecommunications services. This includes access to free Wi-Fi, access to subsidized internet, access to payphones, access to associate degree programs in Cyber Security and Software Development and the ability to communicate at sea via the GMDSS system.

2.2   Weaknesses

- The NTRC has not signed any new contract for projects since 2012. This is primarily due to the lack of the necessary financial resources to implement new projects.

2.3   Opportunities

- In 2017, the USF was able to source external funding from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) in the form of a Grant. Similar avenues will be explored in 2018.

2.4   Threats

- With the emergence of Cyber Crime and Cyber Terrorism, the chances of individuals, organizations or networks being affected increases due to the availability of the numerous open Wi-Fi spots in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

3.   CRITICAL ISSUES

The one critical issue which has been affecting the USF is the issue of declining revenues. The decline in revenues have prevented the implementation of new projects in 2017.

4.   4.SECTOR REVIEW

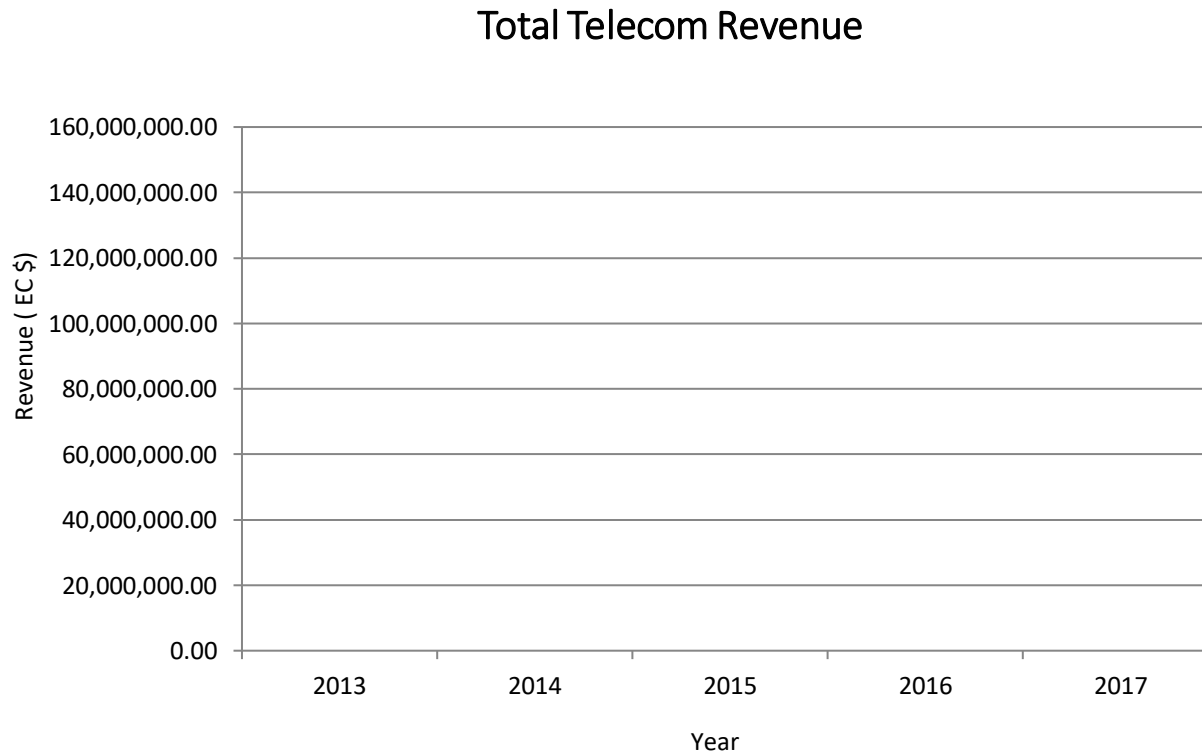### 4.1Telecommunications Revenue

Total Telecom Revenue

Fig 1. Shows data from the NTRC Annual Report 2017

The revenue generated by telecommunications operators decreased by a margin of 4% in 2017. This was due to a reduction in domestic revenue for mobile service as well as a marginal reduction in Cable TV revenue and Fixed line revenue.

4.2   Financial performance of the Universal Service Fund

Revenue

For the year ended December 31, 2017, the Universal Service Fund was budgeted to receive a total of One Million, Three Hundred and Ninety Eight Thousand Six Hundred and Seventy Three Dollars ($1,398,673.00) from telecommunications service providers, and interest on the account was projected to be Six Thousand Dollars ($6,000.00) and other income of Eighty Thousand Dollars ($80,000.00). The actual revenue received by the Universal Service Fund in 2017 was One Million, Four Hundred and Thirteen Thousand and Ninety Five Dollars ($1,413,095.00).The additional revenue relates to outstanding fees settled by the Telecom Providers. A total of Seven Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy Three Dollars ($7,873.00) was received as interest on the account. Other income of Seventy Thousand Dollars ($70,000.00) was received from the CDB as a contribution to our annual MyApp summer programs and Eleven Thousand Dollars ($11,000.00) was received from Sponsors for our annual i[2] competition.

Expenditure

Recurrent:

For the year ended December 31, 2017, the USF projected to spend Four Hundred and Fifty Eight Thousand, One Hundred and Fifty Two Dollars ($458,152.00) on recurrent expenditure. However, Four Hundred and Thirty Two Thousand and Ninety Five Dollars ($432,095.00) was actually spent.

For the year ended December 31, 2017, the USF budgeted to spend One Million, Eight Hundred and Ninety Two Thousand, and Four Hundred and Seventy Seven Dollars ($1,892,477.00) for payment on projects. However, One Million, Two Hundred and Twenty Thousand and Ninety Dollars ($1,220,090.00) was actually spent. The Maritime and the Police and Health Center projects ended in 2017 and were tendered out in 2017. These new projects are currently in their negotiation phase and are expected to be in place by the second quarter of 2018.

Conclusion

The performance of the USF over the 2017 financial year was satisfactory.

4.3   Projected revenue for 2018

The Fund is projected to receive just under Two Million Dollars in 2018. This consists of contributions from telecommunications service providers of One Million, Eight Hundred Thousand, Five Hundred and Fifty Five Dollars ($1,800,555.00), and an interest on the Fund's account of Two Thousand, Five Hundred Dollars ($2,500.00). This projection for the interest amount is as a result of the expected project payments in 2017 which will significantly decrease the amount of funds available for the USF.

USF Revenues
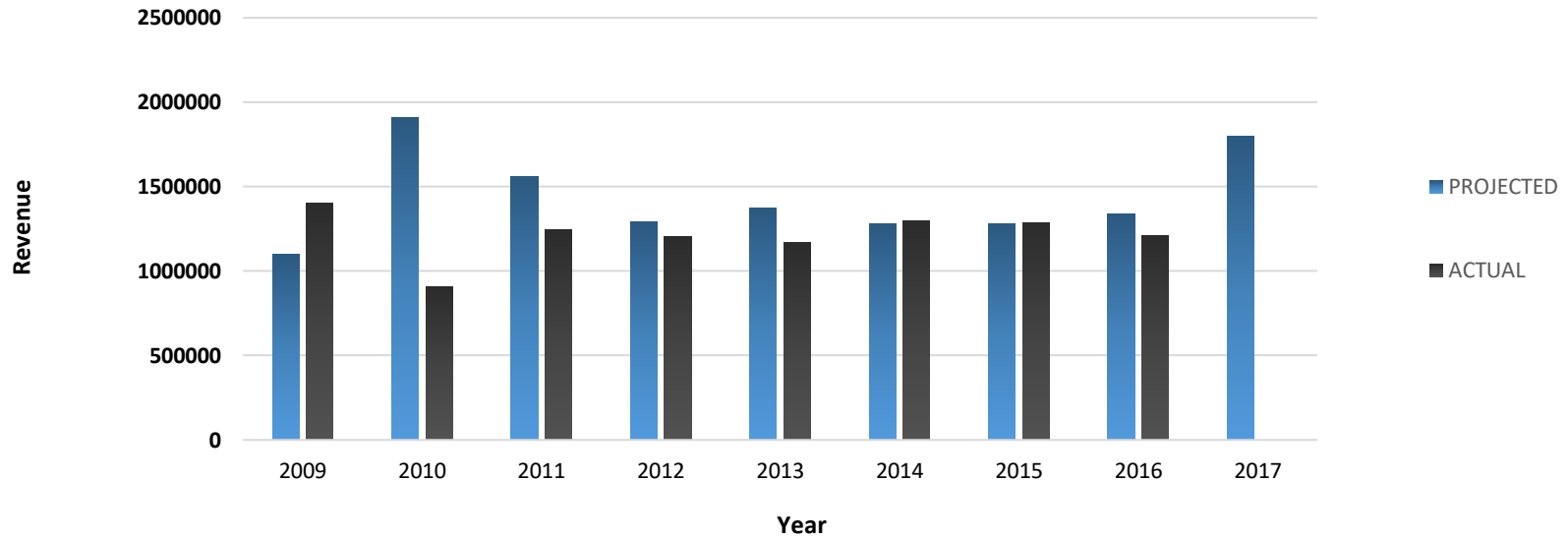
5.   HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FOR 2017:

The NTRC continues to expose its staff to relevant courses and seminars that would benefit the organization, both in the short and long term despite the limited resources available.

The USF Administrator has successfully completed a Masters in Project Management Program in April 2017. This program was done online via the University of International Corporation.

The following online training programs were also completed by the USF Administrator in 2017 via Cousera;

- Building Leadership Skills
- Solving Complex Problems
- Wireless Communications and Emerging Technologies
- International leadership and Organizational Behavior

The USF Administrator also attended a United States Telecommunications training Institute (USTTI) course 17-244 on Mobile Broadband: Addressing the 1000x Data Challenge sponsored by QUALCOMM Incorporated. This training was conducted in San Diego, California, USA.

6.   PUBLIC AWARENESS

The NTRC held the following events during 2017:

1. **Town Hall meetings**

   On October 18, 2017 the NTRC held a Town Hall meeting in Fitz Hughes where persons were educated on the Dispute Complaint Resolution process and were given demonstrations on how to complete the relevant forms along with the functions and work that the NTRC is engaged in.

2. **Radio and Television presentations**

   These were conducted to inform the general public of the NTRC's MyApp Summer Program, the Fifth annual i^2 competition and other events carried out by the NTRC during 2017.

3. **Facebook and Twitter campaigns**

   In an effort to reach a wider and more substantial audience on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram social media platforms, the NTRC held various competitions and made numerous updates on our social media pages to engage the public.

4. Career Fairs

In the month of May 2017, the principal of the Kingstown Preparatory School invited the NTRC to share information on cybersecurity to their Grade 6 students.

5. Launching of the NTRC's Vincy Prices App

On Thursday March 30, 2017 the Vincy Prices App, which allows consumers to compare prices of food items at the main supermarkets in SVG was launched at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Conference Room. This app was put forward by the team ECU's from the St. Vincent Grammar School in the i^2 competition in 2014.

6. School Visits

In an effort to increase the number of entries for the Fifth annual i^2 competition, the NTRC visited various secondary schools that never participated in the competition since inception. The presentations at the school events revolved around the NTRC's i^2 competition over the years, the different phases in the competition, how to register for the competition and the rewards of entering the competition.

7. Fifth annual i^2 competition
On September 7, 2017 the NTRC launched the fifth annual i2 competition. This competition was a forum that challenged students to develop and present projects in the form of Ideas and/or Mobile Applications from both the public and private sectors of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to facilitate the implementation of a new system or improve existing systems within those sectors.

The 2017 competition was restructured to obtain entries from the public for persons under the age of 35 years. Prior to this, the competition only accepted entries from students who attended secondary, technical and tertiary schools across St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The 2017 competition consisted of two categories which included the Secondary Category and the Open Category.

In 2017, there was an increase in the number of entries for the competition. A record breaking number of fifty (50) entries were received compared to twenty-five (25) entries which were received for the 2016 competition.

The schools that entered the secondary level were Petit Bordel Secondary School, Mountain View Adventist Academy, Union Island Secondary School, St. Vincent Girls High School, St. Vincent Grammar School, Emmanuel High School Mesopotamia, Central Leeward Secondary School and the St. Joseph Convent Kingstown.

The Open Category saw participation from thirteen (13) teams from the public.

For the first time in the history of the competition, entries were received from the Emmanuel High School Mesopotamia and Central Leeward Secondary School. The finals of the competition concluded on November 15, 2017 at the

Methodist Church Hall. The winners of the various categories of the competition were as follows:

-Secondary Mobile Application Category: "Astra" from the St. Vincent Grammar School.

-Secondary Idea Category: "PBSS Inventors" from the Petit Bordel Secondary School.

-Open Category: "NL2".

8. Broadband Plan Consultations

The Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology in collaboration with the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) through the World Bank funded Caribbean Regional Communication Infrastructure Program (CARCIP) developed a draft National Broadband Plan for St. Vincent and the Grenadines that covered the years 2017-2021. The plan was developed to address the critical gaps in broadband Internet as a means to stimulate private sector investment, innovation, affordable pricing, increase speeds and to improve quality of service for our citizens.

The Consultations were held to discuss the Government's intent to ensure nationwide access to reliable and affordable high speed broadband networks. The aim of the consultations was to gather feedback from the general public before the draft plan was finalized to incorporate the public feedback in the final plan. The consultations were held on the following dates and locations:

1. Layou - January 31, 2017
2. Georgetown - February 2, 2017
3. Canouan - February 7, 2017
4. Bequia - February 9, 2017
5. Kingstown - February 16, 2017.

9. The Yearly Financial Assistance Program

In 2017, the NTRC developed a yearly program where financial assistance was given to one Primary school student and one Secondary school student. The program targeted those students attending schools in the rural areas as well as the Grenadine Islands. The financial assistance program will continue for the foreseeable future.

10. The ECTEL EC Bill Roadshow

For the period May 17—18, 2017, the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL) in collaboration with the NTRC hosted a roadshow in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The roadshow was designed to further elaborate on the new suite of legislation that was developed by ECTEL which include the Electronic Communications (EC) Bill. The Electronic Communication Bill is being proposed to repeal the current Telecommunication Act.

The ECTEL team which comprised of the Managing Director Embert Charles, Director of Technical Services Andrew Millet and General Counsel Deborah Bowers met with several stakeholders. The ECTEL team met with the Cabinet of Ministers on May 17, 2017. Additionally, the team met with the Civil Society Organization and the Telecommunications Service Providers on May 18, 2017.

11. The Civil Society Presentation Event

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) collaborated with the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) and held a Civil Society

Presentation event on Tuesday, May 9, 2017 at the Frenches House Conference Room. The aim of the event was to increase the knowledge of how the internet is governed locally and globally and its impact and interrelationships across all sectors of the economy to its users and providers. The main sessions of the event focused on the summary and readout from ICANN 58 meeting that took place in Copenhagen, Denmark in March 2017.

12. The IXP signing ceremony

On Thursday, November 30, 2017, the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC), hosted the signing of the Internet Exchange Point (IXP) agreements between Digicel and Flow at a ceremony held at the NTRC's Conference Room located on the second floor of the NIS Building, Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

The IXP is important as it makes the internet better for consumers and without an IXP, local internet traffic between customers on different ISP networks (e.g. Digicel and Flow) must leave St. Vincent and the Grenadines on one network and return on another network. With an IXP, local traffic on different networks no longer need to leave St. Vincent and the Grenadines, rather, it would be exchanged locally at the IXP.

In addition, sending traffic back and forth increases costs and latency, and so, having our own IXP is a boost and St. Vincent and the Grenadines can have benefits that can lead to a more developed e-society and can urge the local ISPs to develop server farms to offer local hosting of websites and other cloud applications.

At the end of the ceremony, both country managers signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Internet Exchange Point

Governance Agreement. These documents outline the rules on how the IXP is managed and the rules on how traffic should be passed.

7. TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECTS

In 2017, due to the financial limitations that were experienced by the USF, no new contracts for USF projects were signed. However, the USF to date, ensured that the services and equipment under our existing projects are in place and functional with minimum down time.

7.1 Internet Project

The first project undertaken by the NTRC in SVG was called the Internet Project, and was signed in with telecommunications provider LIME, at a cost of Four Hundred and Twenty-Seven Thousand, Six Hundred and Eight Dollars and Ninety-Eight Cents ($427,608.98). Twenty-eight (28) rural locations were outfitted with wireless internal and external internet access points with minimum speeds of 8 Mbps. These locations included thirteen (13) Learning Resource Centers, nine (9) rural schools and six (6) Community Centers. This project was commissioned on July 6, 2011, and ran for a period of five (5) years. This project was combined with another project, the Community Center Project and was retendered in the third quarter of

2016. The Commission is in the final stage of negotiation with this project and it is expected to be signed in the first quarter of 2018.

7.2   Payphone Project

The second project is called the Payphone Project and was signed with LIME in 2011, at a cost of One Million, Four Hundred Thousand, Five Hundred and Seventy-Five Dollars and Forty-Five Cents ($1,400,575.45). Twenty-five (25) payphones were installed at various locations across SVG – including tourism sites, beaches and at points along the main road. Internet access was also provided at the tourism sites and beaches at a minimal cost. Overt vandal proof security cameras were also installed at selected tourism sites and at the beaches to minimize the threat of vandalism to the payphones, as well as to provide some security for visitors to these locations. All of the equipment has been installed and the project was commissioned in January of 2017.

7.3   Schools Project

The third, and largest project is the Schools Project. This project provides high-speed wireless internet services to all one hundred and seven (107) educational institutions with speeds of up to 20 Mbps. This contract was signed in 2011 by the telecommunications provider

Cable and Wireless, and the project was commissioned in 2012. The project is expected to come to a close in 2017. The new project will see the continuation of the services at all of the location in the previous contract with improved speeds. This contract is estimated to be in place by the second quarter of 2018.

7.4   Maritime Project

The fourth project, which is the VHF Maritime Project, this project was commissioned on November 20, 2012 and was implemented to provide access to both emergency and non-emergency communications in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of St Vincent and the Grenadines and saw the implementation of a GMDSS system in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The project was executed for a total cost of One Million, One Hundred and Twenty Five Thousand, Seven Hundred and Eighty Dollars ($1,125,780.00) and was being maintained for a period of five years. Five Hundred and Forty Thousand Dollars ($540,000.00) of this amount was accessed from the World Bank for the purchase and installation of the equipment. The remaining Five Hundred and Eighty Five Thousand, Seven Hundred and Eighty One Dollars ($585,781.00) was paid by the Universal Service Fund for the maintenance of the services and equipment over the 5 year period.

GMDSS stands for Global Maritime Distress and Safety System and is a set of safety procedures, types of equipment and communication protocols used to increase safety and make it easier to rescue distressed ships, boats and even aircrafts. GMDSS provides for distress alerts, distress relays, search and rescue, on scene communication and location services. This system is mandatory for all ships subject to the Safety of Life At Sea (SOLAS) convention of

1974. The basic concept of this system is that the Coast Guard, as well as vessels in the immediate area of a ship in distress, will be rapidly alerted to the emergency so that they can assist with minimum delay time. Digital Selective Calling (DSC) is one of the most important aspects of this GMDSS system and is a standard for sending pre-defined digital message via the pressing of one button. Noting this, the NTRC identified and implemented this project to improve the VHF maritime coverage around the country.

Under this project the control system was installed at the Coast Guard Base while three antennas and three transceivers were installed at the Mt St Andrews remote site. These two locations are also linked via a 2Mb leased circuit.

Under this project, several training sessions were held in 2016 in collaboration with the St Vincent and the Grenadines Coast Guard Services with fishermen in various communities informing them of the system and use of the VHF DSC enabled radios. This project was tendered out in 2017 as the current contract which was in place came to an end in 2017. The new contract will see the continuation of the maintenance of the services and equipment under the project. The contract is expected to be in place by the second quarter of 2018.

7.5   Police and Health Center Project

The fifth project is the Police and Health Center Project. This project provides wireless internet access at all twenty-nine (29) Police Stations and forty-two (42) Health Centers throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines at a minimum speed of 8 Mbps. The cost of this project is Seven Hundred and Eleven thousand, and Fifteen Dollars

($711,015.00), and was implemented by Karib Cable for a period of two (2) years. Thirty-one (31) computers were also installed at various clinics, and fourteen (14) computers were installed at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital. The Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines (RSVG) Police Force Training School was also outfitted with ten (10) computers to assist the recruits and other officers with their research work. This project also came to an end in 2017 and a project for the continuation of the maintenance of the services was tendered out and a contract is expected to be in place by the second quarter of 2018.

7.6   Community Center Project

The sixth project implemented is the Community Center Project. This project provides wireless internet access at eleven (11) Community Centers in various communities throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as a Learning Resource Centre, and seven (7) group institutions and public venues, all at a minimum speed of 20 Mbps. The contract for this project was signed in 2012 with Karib Cable, at a cost of One Hundred and Nineteen Thousand, Five hundred and Three Dollars and Twenty-Nine Cents ($119,503.29), and is being implemented for a period of two (2) years. The project was commissioned on March 4, 2014. Under this project, the newly established Salvation Army Children's Home will also be outfitted with six (6) computers and internet access to assist with the development of the children's ICT skills. All residents from the various communities, where these project sites are located, will have access to the wireless internet on a 24/7 basis.

This project was combined with another project, the internet project and was retendered in the third quarter of 2016. These two projects

were amalgamated due to the fact that they provided the similar services at similar locations. In addition to this, both projects were coming to an end and the NTRC saw it advantageous to merge the two projects which would save administrative cost over the long run. The Commission is in the final stage of negotiation with this project and it is expected to be signed in the first quarter of 2018.

7.7   SMART Project

The seventh and last project that was undertaken by the NTRC is the SMART Project. This project facilitated the necessary infrastructure and platforms at SVGCC to enable it to offer its existing and new courses online and in real time. Another component of this project is that three hundred and forty (340) households currently benefit from subsidized internet access at a price of ten dollars ($10) per month for a maximum of two (2) years. Additionally, a state-of-the-art computer lab containing thirty-five (35) high powered computers, including twenty (20) Apple Mac computers, were handed over to the Division of Technical Education, SVGCC. This project is being executed at a total of One Million, Six Hundred and Ninety-Eight Thousand, Nine Hundred and Ninety-Four Dollars ($1,698,994.00), and is being implemented by LIME. This project was commissioned on September 25, 2014.

The programs at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College which include the Associate Degree in Cyber Security and an Associate Degree in Software Development are in operation now and the programs are based at the Division of Arts and General Science in Villa.

8.   OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE USF

8.1   My App Summer Program

For the third consecutive year, the NTRC held its third annual MyApp Summer program in the summer of 2017. Due to the positive feedback received from the public for the first two programs, the program was extended to two locations which included Petit Bordel and Union Island. Previously, the program was held at only one location. The program in Petit Bordel ran from the period July 24, 2017 – August 25, 2017. Whereas, the program in Union Island ran for the period July 24, 2017 – August 18, 2017. A total of twenty (20) students attended each program. The objective of the NTRC's MyAPP Program is to teach participants between the ages of 13-18 who may or may not have previous exposure on how to code and design applications. The program introduced participants to ways in which they can portray their acquired skills in larger incentive forums, such as, the Annual NTRC's i2 Competition in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The program was made possible through the sponsorship received from the Bank of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Digicel and Cable & Wireless.

8.3: Regulations

The following regulation was Gazetted in 2017:

- Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund Contribution Order) Regulations S.R.O. #4 of 2017. This provision will see the contribution rate to the USF being incrementally increased from 1% to a maximum of 2%.

9. STATISTICS

9.1 Fixed Line Subscriptions

Figure 3 shows a comparison in Fixed Line Subscribers for Cable & Wireless and Karib Cable. In 2017, Cable & Wireless and Karib Cable recorded a decrease for Fixed Line Subscribers.

Fixed Line Subscribers

| | Dec '11 | Dec'12 | Dec '13 | Dec '14 | Dec'15 | Dec'16 | Dec'17 |

C&W   Karib Cable
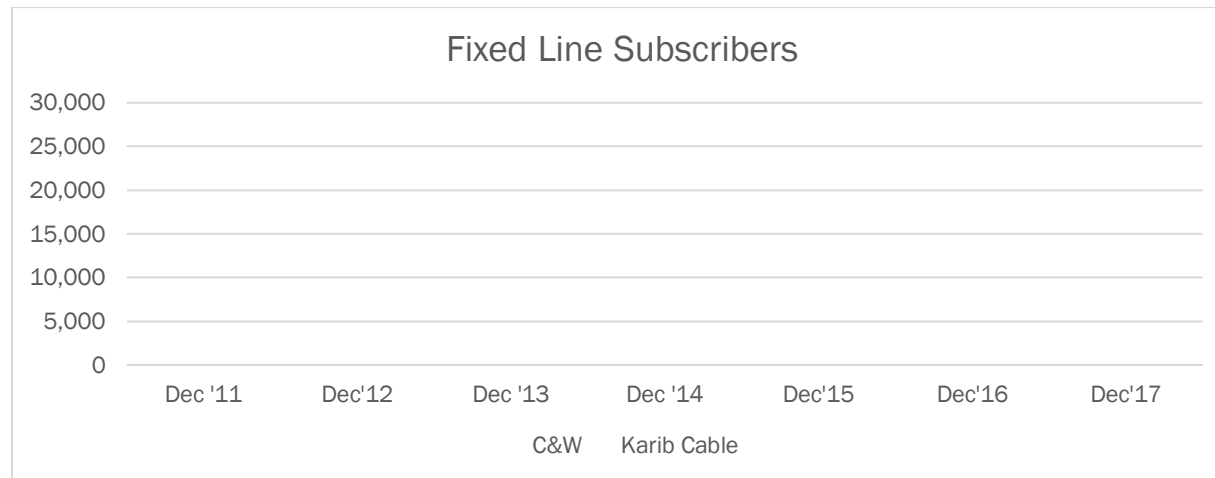
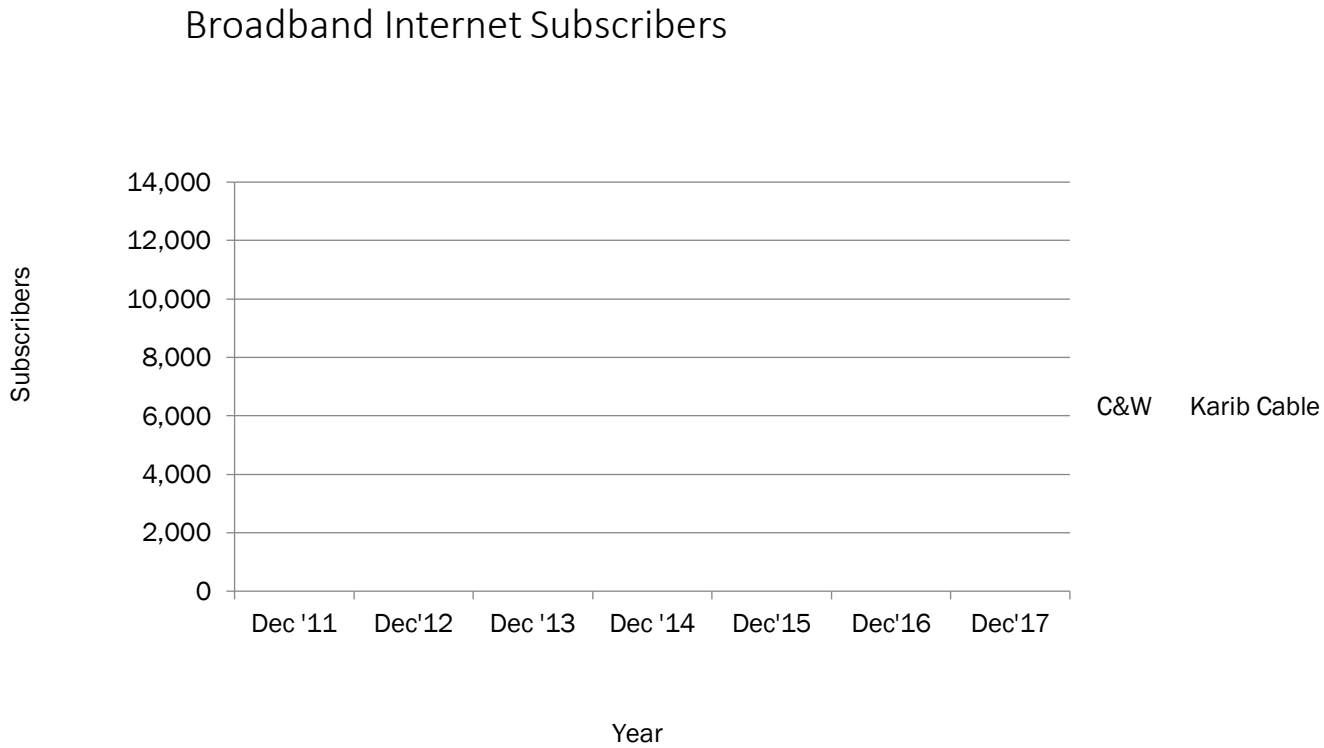*Fig 3. Shows data from the telecommunications providers in SVG*

9.2   Broadband Internet Subscribers

Figure 4 below shows the number of Broadband Internet Subscribers from 2011 to 2017 on a whole. There has been a slight decline in 2012, however there has been an increase in the Broadband Internet Subscribers from 2013.

Broadband Internet Subscribers
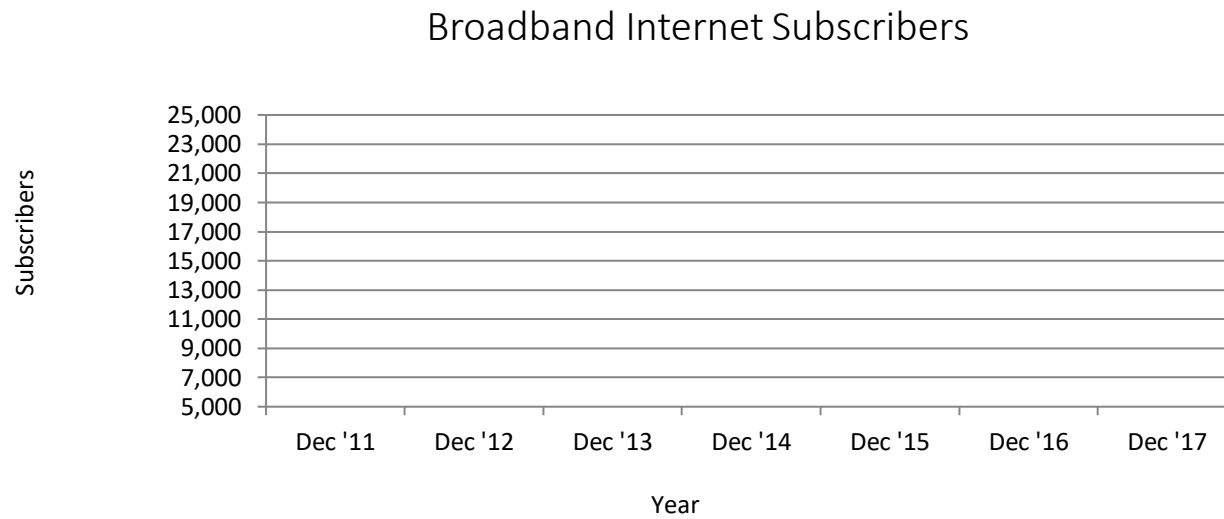
*Fig 4.Shows data from the telecommunications providers in SVG*

Figure 5 shows the number of Broadband Internet Subscribers per provider. Cable and Wireless experienced a slight decline in broadband subscribers in 2017, however there was an increase in broadband subscribers for Karib Cable within this year.

Broadband Internet Subscribers

Fig 5. Shows data from the telecommunications providers in SVG

9.3   Portable Computers

Figure 6 below depicts the number of portable computers entering St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In 2017, 4761 laptops were imported in SVG. This is a 23% decrease from the year 2016 which saw 6189 devices being imported.
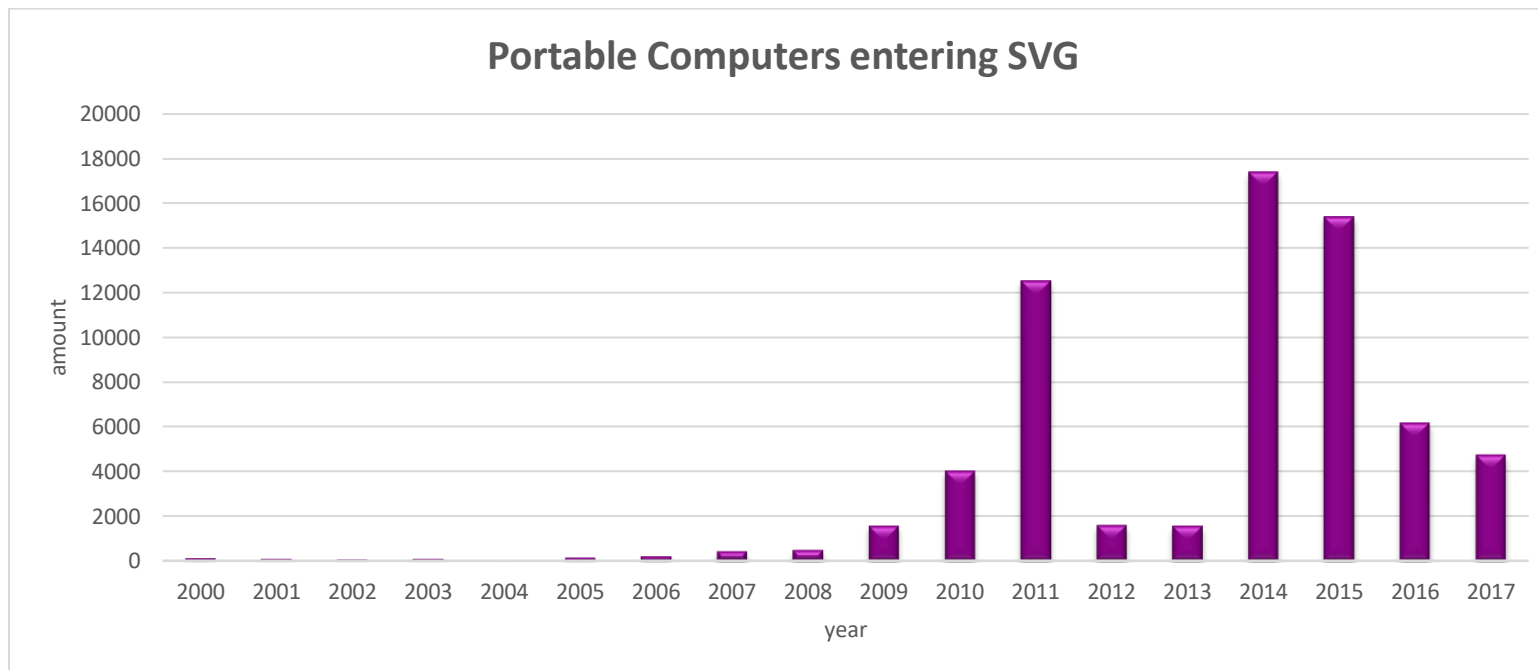
Fig 6. Shows data from the Customs and Excise Department

9.4   Desktop Computers

Figure 7 below shows the number of desktop computers entering the country. The graph shows that there has been a decrease in the number of desktops being imported. In 2016, there were 1,665 units which were imported compared to 1,438 units for 2017. This represents a 13.11% decrease in the figures for 2016.
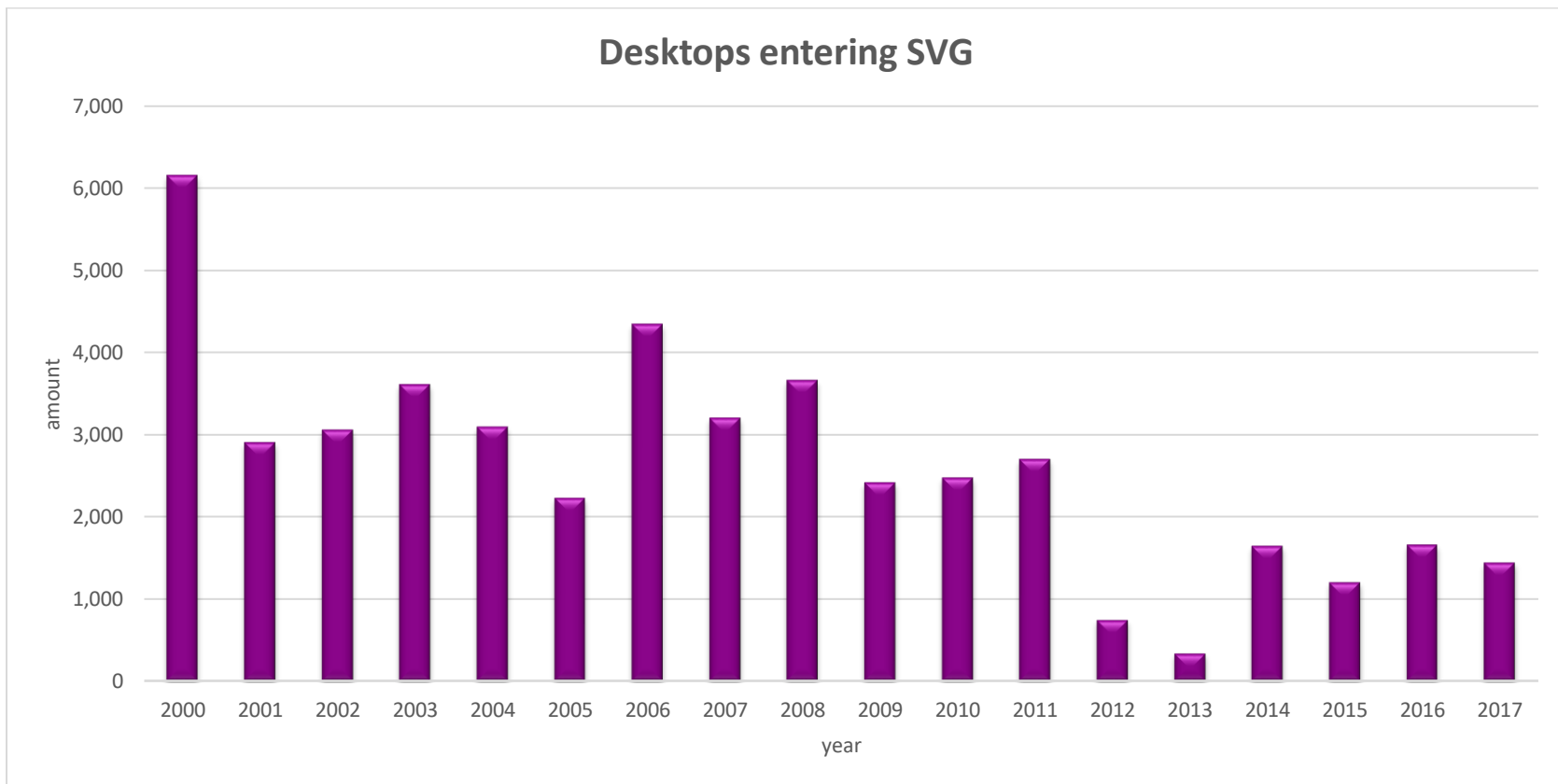

Fig 7. *Shows data from the Customs and Excise Department*

9.5   Mobile phones

Figure 8 below shows the number of mobile phones entering the country. The graph shows that there has been a decrease in the number of mobile phones being imported. The figure decreased from 32,522 in 2016 to 27,277 in 2017, showing a 16.12% decrease in the number of mobile phones imported in the year 2017.
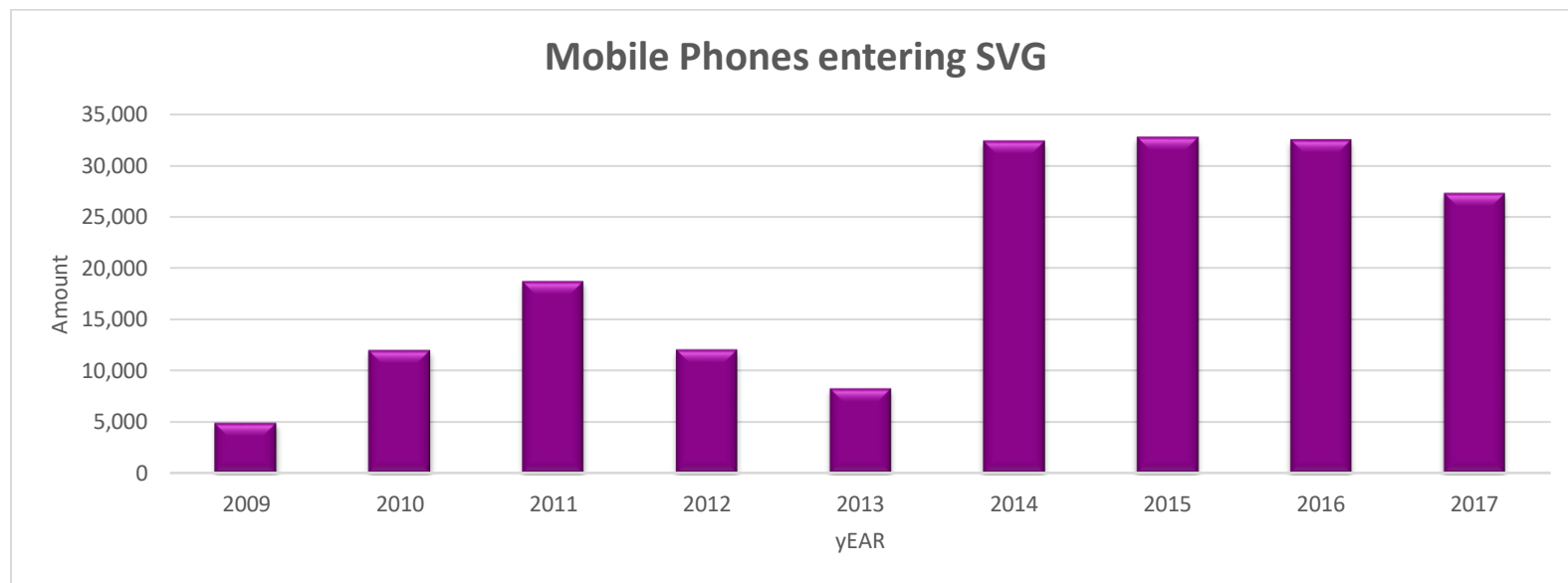

Fig 8. *Shows data from the Customs and Excise Department*

10.   BROAD RESPONSE STRATEGIES

The 6th edition to the I Squared Competition will be held in 2018.

The USF will continue its field work activities in the various communities island wide. This activity not only generates project ideas from the public but also helps to educate the general public about the NTRC, the USF and the various projects which the USF has implemented.

The USF will continue to monitor the activities of the projects which have implemented. These projects are of vital importance to various sectors of our society and the proper functioning of the services and equipment under each project is very important.

The NTRC will be identifying new project to implement by the USF.

11.   RESULT INDICATORS 2017

1. **The 2017 Operating Plan will be established. This plan will set out the objectives of the Fund for the operating year 2017.**

   This objective was completed. The USF 2017 Operating Plan was established. This plan outlined the priority goals of the USF for the year.

2. **The USF will be working on seeking funding from international donor organizations for two projects which have been developed. The USF will be working along with the regional NTRCs so that we can all benefit from these projects.**

   This objective was not complete as the USF was unable to find a funding agency to fund the projects which were developed for external funding. This task will be worked on in 2018 as we intend to revise and reduce the scope of works for the projects.

3. **Projects which have been implemented thus far under the USF will be routinely visited to ensure that the services and equipment being paid for are present at the various locations**.

   This objective was completed as the various sites under the projects implemented by the USF were visited periodically to ensure that the services and equipment are functional.

4. **Public awareness activities will continue, and will include school discussions at various schools, community discussions, radio and television presentations.**

   This task is complete as four (4) Town Hall meetings, various radio and television presentations and several schools visits were done in 2017.

5. **The USF will ensure that the commissioning process for the Payphone Project is finalized within the first half of 2017.**

This objective is complete as the payphone project was officially commissioned in January of 2017.

6. **The retendering of the schools project will be undertaken in the second quarter of 2017 as the current contract for this project will be coming to an end.**

This objective is complete as the Schools project was tendered out and a new contract is expected to be in place by the first quarter of 2018.

7. **The retendering of the Police and Health center project will be undertaken in the second quarter of 2017 as the current contract for this project will be coming to an end.**

This objective is complete as the Police and Health Center project was tendered out and a new contract is expected to be in place by the first quarter of 2018.

8. **The retendering of the Maritime project will be undertaken in the fourth quarter of 2017 as the current contract for this project will be coming to an end.**

This objective is complete as the Maritime Center project was tendered out and a new contract is expected to be in place by the first quarter of 2018.

12. OBJECTIVES FOR 2018

1. The 2018 Operating Plan will be established. This plan will set out the objectives of the Fund for the operating year 2018.

2. The USF will be working on seeking funding from international donor organizations for two projects which have been developed. The USF will be working along with the regional NTRCs so that we can all benefit from these projects.

3. Projects which have been implemented thus far under the USF will be routinely visited to ensure that the services and equipment being paid for are present at the various locations.

4. Public awareness activities will continue, and will include school discussions at various schools, community discussions, radio and television presentations.

5. The USF will ensure that the new contract for the Schools project is entered into.

6. The USF will ensure that the new contract for the Community Access project is entered into.

7. The USF will ensure that the new contract for the Police and Health Center Project is entered into.

8. The USF will ensure that the new contract for the Maritime Project is entered into.

13. AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS