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Port of El Paso RFID Technology Upgrades Complete

Technology Enhancements and Next Generation Travel Documents Mean More Secure, Efficient Borders

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El Paso, Texas - U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced today that technology upgrades are complete at the El Paso, Fabens and Columbus border crossings with Mexico, and that the port of entry in Presidio will be completed soon.

These locations are among the first new Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology deployments at 354 vehicle primary lanes in northern and southern border ports that account for 95 percent of all cross-border travel into the U.S.

"We are very pleased to announce our first vicinity RFID-enabled land ports of entry, and we thank the border communities for their patience during construction," said Assistant Commissioner Field Operations Thomas Winkowski. "The option of using an RFID-enabled travel document offers more efficient processing for travelers while meeting CBP's goal of securing the borders."



From left: El Paso Director of Field Operations Ana Hinojosa, U.S. Consul General Raymond McGrath, Foreign Service Officer John Brennan currently serving as a Senior Advisor in the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Assistant Commissioner Field Operations Thomas Winkowski.

The upgrades, which include new software, hardware, and the deployment of vicinity RFID technology, are being implemented as part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. WHTI, a plan to implement the statutory mandates of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004 and a 9/11 Commission recommendation, requires U.S. and Canadian citizens to present secure documentation that confirms identity and citizenship when entering or re-entering the United States from within the Western Hemisphere. WHTI will be implemented at land and seaports on June 1.

The technology works in tandem with new vicinity RFID-enabled documents, designed for

use at our nation's land and sea ports of entry. These documents include State Department-issued passport cards, CBP's trusted traveler program (NEXUS, SENTRI and FAST) cards, enhanced driver's licenses from participating states and Border Crossing Cards for Mexican travelers.

When read by CBP, an RFID chip embedded in these documents transmits a unique number to a secure database as the traveler's vehicle approaches the border, enabling CBP officers to verify the traveler's identity and citizenship more quickly than ever. No personally identifiable information is stored on the chip or transmitted when the RFID chip is read.

Facilitative technologies, such as RFID, provide CBP officers the ability to remain more attentive and vigilant during the inspection process, focusing more time and attention on travelers, with less time spent performing manual data entry queries.

CBP encourages individuals to apply for the new high-tech documents now to ensure that they have appropriate travel documents when WHTI goes into effect on June 1. Travelers can go to the WHTI Web site for more information. ([Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative](#))

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

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