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# CBP Preps Traveling Public for Enhanced Pedestrian Entry System

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**El Paso, TX** – U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers working at the Paso Del Norte (PDN) international crossing in El Paso have initiated work on a system which will result in more efficient processing of arriving pedestrian traffic. The pilot project uses biometric data (fingerprints) to expedite the pedestrian entry process. It is expected to launch later this year.

“This system provides CBP a higher confidence level in identifying the traveler through enhanced biometrics,” said Hector Mancha, CBP El Paso port director. “There are many benefits to be realized including more efficient processing because we are eliminating manual data entry.”

The system requires a set of high quality fingerprints to be on file and linked with an entry document. In order to increase the population of travelers that will have access to this system a team of CBP officers is currently positioned at the PDN pedestrian area and will spend the next two weeks collecting biometric data from frequent border crossers. Non-U.S. citizens who have an older border crossing card or legal permanent resident card (issued before 2008) or those who have not applied for an I-94 travel permit in the last three years will need to submit their biometrics to participate in this pilot project. If a traveler has been identified as having biometrics on file they will have already been added to the database and there will be no need for the traveler to resubmit.

The new system will use RFID and biometric data to expedite the entry process. Three existing pedestrian lanes (11-13) will be used during the system pilot. Those lanes will be equipped with a gated system in which a travelers’ RFID enabled document will be read and fingerprints scanned before they approach the inspection station. The CBP officer working the primary inspection booth will receive results of the biometric verification and all required information before the pedestrian arrives at the inspection station.

“It is expected that this system will speed the entry process while also enhancing overall security,” said Mancha.

The pilot is tentatively slated to begin in November 2011. While anti-terrorism is the primary mission of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the inspection and facilitation of travelers is closely aligned with this mission and is highlighted through the implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. The new gate system reinforces the WHTI concept as all travelers must have a WHTI-compliant document to use the lanes to include the U.S. passport card, trusted traveler card (SENTRI/NEXUS/FAST/Global Entry), or RFID-equipped border crossing or permanent resident card.

*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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