



Media Note  
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## Department to Open Second Passport Mega-Center in Tucson in Spring 2008

As part of its preparations to meet the American public's need for passports, the Department of State is pleased to announce our intention to open a new passport center in Tucson, Arizona. The Tucson Passport Center is scheduled to open in the spring of 2008. It will be a dedicated passport production facility which, at full capacity, will be able to print up to 10 million travel documents annually for Americans traveling abroad.

The Department has contracted Stanley, Inc. to construct and operate the center, under direct Department oversight. Stanley already operates a similar mega-processing center in Hot Springs, Arkansas, with the capacity to produce up to 10 million passports and travel documents, annually. The two centers were authorized under a \$164 million, 10-year contract awarded in October 2006.

The mega-centers in Tucson and Hot Springs reflect the Department's dynamic, new approach to the production of passports for Americans. Our other 17 domestic passport agencies will electronically transmit approved applications to the two mega-centers, which are dedicated solely to printing and mailing out large quantities of passports. This allows the passport agencies to focus on customer service and adjudicating more passport applications.

"The search for a second location led us to Arizona, and we are very pleased that we could find both a well suited site and an able workforce in the beautiful Tucson area," said Ambassador Maura Harty, Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, the bureau that oversees passport operations for the Department of State. Stanley will immediately begin construction of the Tucson Passport Center, and will hire more than 150 full-time and part-time employees in the next 12 months.

The Department is opening these two new centers in response to the anticipated rise in passport demand as a result of the new passport rules of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). WHTI regulations already require Americans to have passports or other approved documents to enter, re-enter or depart the United States by air, and we expect in 2008, WHTI will be extended to travel in and out of the United States by land and ferry. Details on applying for passports are at [travel.state.gov/passport](http://travel.state.gov/passport).

In the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, the Department issued a record 18.4 million passports, an increase of over 50 percent from the previous year. In light of the new passport requirements, the Department anticipates issuing even more passports this year. The Tucson Passport Center will be an important part of our plans to meet the needs of the American public with timely and efficient service.

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