



Press Release

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USCIS WILL OPEN CNMI OFFICE IN MARCH *The Application Support Center Will Offer Expanded Services*

SAIPAN, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will open an Application Support Center (ASC) in Saipan in March 2009. The grand opening ceremony will take place on March 10, 2009 at the new office in the TSL Plaza in Garapan.

“We are very excited about opening our office in the CNMI,” said USCIS Honolulu District Director David Gulick. “This will allow the people in the CNMI to provide their fingerprints and other biometrics without having to travel to Guam.”

Applicants for biometrics will be scheduled beginning March 2nd. This first week will be used to work out all that is entailed with opening a new office. The opening of the ASC is the culmination of months of work to ensure that those in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) will be able to obtain information from USCIS. In addition to the traditional function of fingerprinting services, people will be able to make appointments through www.uscis.gov to see an Information Officer at the ASC for general immigration questions. The customer service line (800) 375- 5283 is also now accessible toll-free from the Commonwealth. And, the most current information about federal immigration in relation to the CNMI can be accessed via the USCIS Press Room at www.uscis.gov.

Currently U.S. immigration law only applies to immediate relatives of U.S. Citizens as defined within the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). U.S. immigration law in general will be applied to the CNMI, with the Transition Period currently scheduled to begin on June 1, 2009. On May 8, 2008, President Bush signed into law Public Law 110-229, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act (CNRA) of 2008. Title VII of this law amended P.L. 94-241, the Act approving the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States. Title VII extends certain provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) to the CNMI for the first time in history.

USCIS is the agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) responsible for delivering immigration benefits. Proposed regulations concerning CNMI are currently in the clearance process.

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