U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIPLOMACY IN ACTION

U.S. Department of State to Host Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for El Paso Passport Agency

Media Note
Office of the Spokesman
Washington, DC
April 4, 2011

Under Secretary of State for Management Patrick F. Kennedy will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, April 8 at 10:00 a.m. to mark the official opening of the El Paso Passport Agency. Invited guests include the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Passport Services Brenda S. Sprague, Members of Congress, state and local officials, local community leaders, and members of the media.

Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the El Paso Passport Agency created more than 30 new jobs. The agency is located at 303 N. Oregon Street in the historic Anson Mills Building, a few blocks from the U.S.-Mexico border. The new agency alleviates the need for local residents with urgent travel plans to drive or fly to the Houston Passport Agency, approximately 750 miles away, or the Western Passport Center in Tucson, Ariz., approximately 300 miles away.

Changes to travel document requirements over the past few years demonstrated the need to expand the passport network into previously underserved areas. In recent months, the Department of State has opened passport agencies in San Diego, St. Albans, Vt., and Buffalo, N.Y., and public counters were added at existing passport centers in Portsmouth, N.H. and Hot Springs, Ark. A passport agency will also open in Atlanta in May 2011.

U.S. citizens who plan to travel within 14 days, or who have a life or death emergency, will now be able to apply in person at the El Paso Passport Agency, where both passport books and passport cards will be issued on site. Customers may also obtain additional visa pages on an expedited basis. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 1-877-487-2778 or TDD/TTY: 1-888-874-7793.

Media will have an opportunity to tour the facility and interview Under Secretary Kennedy along with passport officials from El Paso and Washington.

For press inquiries or to attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony contact **CAPRESSREQUESTS@state.gov** or call (202) 647-1488.

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