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China: Super Saturday Visa Program

Office of the Spokesman

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The U.S. Embassy in Beijing, along with four U.S. consulates general across China, is opening on Saturdays over the next few weeks to accommodate thousands of Chinese travelers seeking visas to visit the United States.

Trade, commerce, people-to-people exchanges, and tourism between China and the United States have grown dramatically over the past couple years. In 2009, U.S. consulates in China issued more than 487,000 visas to Chinese travelers. Sixty-six percent of these visas were for business and tourism. Growth in 2010 has been even more dramatic. China's 2010 visa load is up 28 percent over the same period last year.

"We're excited about the extraordinary growth in visa demand in China and what it means for our countries' deepening economic and interpersonal relationship," said Janice Jacobs, Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs. "We expect this trend to continue and are actively increasing staffing in our Embassy and consulates. We also introduced new technologies to improve our efficiency while providing more convenient procedures for applicants."

"While we're pleased about increased Chinese interest in traveling to the United States, we are not pleased by the increased wait times for a visa appointment," observed U.S. Ambassador to China Jon Huntsman, Jr. "We applaud the efforts of our Consular staff and the Bureau of Consular Affairs to think creatively and boost resources to help clear the backlog. I witnessed our team's dedication when I visited the Consular Section last week."

Pictures of the Ambassador's visit can be found at

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/44740126@N07/sets/72157624103373931/>

More information on applying for visas in China and the Super Saturday Visa program can be found on Travel.State.gov. Media inquiries may be sent to CAPRESSREQUESTS@state.gov

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