

WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE

FACT SHEET

The Air Phase of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative went into effect on January 23, 2007. Based on reporting from our posts in Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean as well as media reporting, the implementation in the first week has been highly successful. Compliance rates, which were 94 percent for Americans and 96 percent for Canadians the week before implementation, reached 99 percent on the second day and have remained there. Most noncompliant passengers were boarded abroad for CBP processing at ports of entry while a few were sent to the nearest post to obtain emergency passports. The Administration's aggressive outreach campaign with the private sector as a full partner to inform the traveling public, the Department of State's issuance of record numbers of passports, and the Department of Homeland Security's policy of flexible enforcement during the transition phase have all contributed to this success.

Here are some facts:

- **Based on current workload statistics, Americans are coming into compliance with WHTI. We are experiencing heavy demand: weekly passport receipts for the last quarter of calendar year 2006 were 51 percent above the previous year.**
- **Last November, traditionally our slowest month of the year, we processed 1.1 million, vice 648,000 in November 2005, an increase of 67 percent. We are well on our way to documenting more than 16 million American citizens this fiscal year.**
- **Currently, 74 million Americans are documented with a U.S. passport, approximately 28 percent of our citizen population. And we are still turning these passports around within six weeks.**
- **We are able to do this because we have been planning for this eventuality for two years, ever since Congress passed this legislative mandate in December 2004.**
- **In that time we have hired more than 250 additional passport**

adjudicators and are hiring an additional 86 this year.

- **Our National Passport Center (NPC) is operating 24 hours per day and we have increased our footprint and operating hours at the other 16 passport agencies as well.**
- **We are also increasing our infrastructure by opening in April a mega-processing center in Arkansas to personalize as many as 10 million passports books/cards annually.**