

# BORDER NEWS

December 4, 2008

An update about projects along the San Diego/Tijuana Border

**New Radio Frequency Identification Technology (RFID)** is being installed at the Otay Mesa port of entry U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). RFID technology contains traveler information and is located on a chip embedded in SENTRI port passes, passport cards and enhanced drivers licenses. This chip is read using the RFID antennas. Construction began with installation of the Special RFID antennas on December 2, 2008. All 13 lanes will have RFID capabilities designed to identify travelers more rapidly resulting in reduced wait times at the border. During construction travelers may experience delays as two lanes will be closed at a time with each lane taking approximately two days to complete the installation of the antennas. Travelers should expect lane closures until December 19, 2008.

**SENTRI** members can now register their vehicle's license plates with CBP on line. All members must register or update their current license plate by going to <https://goes-app.cbp.dhs.gov>. Additionally SENTRI members may also update their contact information online at that same address. In Otay Mesa and San Ysidro, SENTRI users should update their information no later than January 2009. SENTRI users who have not received new cards due to relocation need to obtain this card from the CBP office. There are 12,000 cards waiting to be picked up.

**I-94 permit** processing procedures in Otay Mesa have changed to mirror those in San Ysidro. To obtain an I-94 permit, applicants will need to walk through the pedestrian crossing and into the office as opposed to going through secondary inspection. This new facility will have service 7 days a week for 24 hours with 6 windows for service. There will be room for overflow in the secondary inspection area. Please be advised that I-94 permits are no longer issued at the Mexican Consulate office

**Pedestrian SENTRI** continues to be underutilized with only 500-600 pedestrians per day. CBP reminds SENTRI pedestrians that they may go to the front of the line and use a separate SENTRI gate to cross.

**Increased enforcement** for SENTRI lanes is occurring. The US Attorney's office will prosecute all SENTRI violators.

**San Ysidro Port of Entry (SYPOE)** remodel has begun with Virginia Street buildings removed. Employee parking is expected to move to Virginia Street in

January. Feeder lanes at San Ysidro should be open in February or March. This will allow CBP to begin the remodel of the SYPOE.

**Thousands of Visas are due to expire** in 2009. The State Department has authority over the visas and they are looking into ways to address the anticipated onslaught of visa renewal requests. 190,000 expiring visas are from Imperial Valley.

**The concept of a remote parking facility** to eliminate emissions from trucks idling at the border is being studied by SANDAG. They are looking into a new program that Canada has put into place that allows cars to turn off their engines, park and not lose their turn in line when the wait time is more than 1 hour. SANDAG is investigating this possibility for the trucks at Otay Mesa.

**The cargo lanes** in Otay Mesa are being used for passenger vehicular traffic on Sundays. When this concept was first implemented there were not enough users in lanes to justify doing this on a regular basis. However, members of the Port Working Group requested another test and requested assistance from the City of Tijuana. During the next pilot the City of Tijuana directed passenger vehicles toward this port of entry. The amount of users justifies keeping it open. The Port Working Group wishes to express their thanks to the City of Tijuana and the State of Baja for redirecting traffic. Additionally, the Port Working Group wishes to express appreciation to CBP for their willingness to conduct another pilot and staff the cargo lanes.

**Director Dhillon** will retire in January 2009. A new Director of Field Operations has not been named to replace him. The Port Working Group is appreciative of his efforts to reduce border wait times during his career and wishes him well in his retirement.

This publication is intended to keep you current with the projects along the border. While every effort is made to inform you of the most recent events circumstances may change what is stated above. Border News is published by the Port Working Group comprised of individuals from the following organizations: South County Economic Development Council, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce, California Department of Transportation, Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce, San Ysidro Business Association, San Diego Association of Governments, General Services Administration, Customs and Border Protection Agency, State of Baja Tourism Office, Mexican Consul General's Office, Senator Boxer's Office.