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STATEMENT

The U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Government Printing Office issued the following statement regarding today's contract awards to four additional companies for the testing of technology for a new electronic passport:

"The goal of the State Department and the GPO is to provide Americans with the best passport in the world. To that end we are actively testing electronic passports that embrace a wide range of technologies available today in order to help us meet that objective. We are expanding the pool of products to test before making an official decision on which products to use."

Clarence Jellen
General Manager, Security and Intelligent Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office

FACT SHEET

--On October 8, 2004, the GPO awarded contracts to four companies to provide computer chips for testing a new electronic United States passport.

--The four companies and the value of the contracts awarded on 10/8/04 for testing in the first phase of the project were:

Axalto, Inc.	2 awards of \$107,770 each
Infineon Technologies, North America	\$82,823
BearingPoint/SuperCom, Inc.	\$108,317
SuperCom, Inc.	\$73,787

--Today, January 12, 2005, the GPO awarded contracts to four additional companies to provide computer chips for testing a new electronic U.S. passport.

--The four additional companies and the value of the contracts awarded today (1/12/05) for testing in the first phase of the project are:

ASK Contactless Technologies, Inc.	\$103,220
Electronic Data Systems Corp.	\$136,832
Oberthur Card Systems	\$111,752
OTI America Inc.	\$91,736

--As testing results are completed and a final vendor(s) is selected, the Department of State plans to begin issuing electronic passports to U.S. Government employees. The first electronic passports are expected to be issued late in the second quarter of 2005 with full deployment at all Department of State passport agencies in early 2006.

--The three-phase project involves GPO, Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

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