



USCIS MONTHLY

A Publication of USCIS Office of Communications

Volume # II

October 2008

A Message from USCIS Acting Director Scharfen

Faces of America

Constitution Week

DHS Strategic Plan

News You Can Use

Record Number Naturalizations

2008 National Preparedness Month

Construction Corner

Adopted Valor

Latest from the Leadership Journal

Fire Prevention Month

A Message from USCIS Acting Director Scharfen



I am pleased to report two important developments regarding ongoing USCIS transformation and modernization

efforts. This agency-wide drive to change the way we do business and develop a more efficient immigration system will both enhance customer service and national security.

The official opening of USCIS' Southeast Regional Office (SERO) in Orlando, Fla., allows USCIS to balance the immigration and citizenship workload in this area of the country. Originally conceived in November 2006, the SERO is now operational and in command of functions, activities and staff in the Districts under its purview.



The SERO leadership is responsible for district and field office operations including the management of approximately 929 government employees and contractors in the southeast region of the United States. The new operational structure gives the Domestic Operations Directorate balance in terms of overall size and geography to reflect the appropriate size and location of various offices.

Establishing this new office also gives USCIS a regional office closer to the Caribbean, and thus improves USCIS capability to respond to events in that area of the world.

We're also working on new ways to reduce identity fraud and enhance our security screening procedures. The USCIS Transformation Program Office (TPO) in cooperation with the Office of Field Operations is beginning a new pilot, Customer Identity Verification (CIV), to confirm customers' identity by comparing their biometric data to fingerprints and photos previously taken at a USCIS Application Support Center (ASC).

The CIV Pilots are taking place at the San Francisco, Calif; El Paso, Texas; Portland, Maine and Jacksonville, Fla. USCIS Field Offices.



Simulation of customer being photographed at counter.

Depending on the location, a customer's partial fingerprints and photo will be taken by the adjudicator at the time of adjustment of status interviews



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

or by the Immigration Information Officer at the front counter prior to the interview. Both mechanisms will result in the ability to instantly verify that the person who went to the ASC is the same person appearing for the interview. The results will also provide electronic warnings if the individual is wanted by law enforcement.

This pilot gives USCIS the opportunity to test various segments of electronic processing prior to an agency-wide release. In conjunction with other technology modernization efforts and the facilities revitalization initiative, USCIS is developing the most modern immigration service in the world. I look forward to making future announcements about continued efforts at USCIS to build a more customer-friendly and secure agency.



Jonathan "Jock" Scharfen,
USCIS Acting Director

Would You Like to Work at USCIS?

How would you like to work for an agency that changes lives everyday, invests time and money into the career development and growth of its employees, and comprises a diverse workforce providing unique opportunities? USCIS offers all that and more!

[Upcoming Recruiting Events](#)
[Current Job Openings](#)
[Career Descriptions](#)
[Federal Employment Benefits](#)
[Student Programs at USCIS](#)

USCIS opportunities are available nationwide, apply by visiting USAJOBS today!



Eduardo Uribe



Acting Phoenix Field Office Director Charles Harrell administers the Oath of Allegiance to stroke victim Eduardo Uribe, as Mr. Uribe's wife and Immigration Information Officer Abel Torres look on.

Determined to become a U.S. citizen as soon as possible, Eduardo Uribe arrived at his scheduled oath ceremony despite having just been released from the hospital after spending four months there recovering from a stroke.

He joined almost 1,800 other candidates, but USCIS officers noted that the strain and heat were too much for him. They assisted his wife in arranging for the paramedics after the ceremony.

Acting Field Office Director (FOD) Charles Harrell and Immigration Information Officer (IIO) Abel Torres made certain that the Mexican native didn't leave without fulfilling his dream. Harrell swore him in as a U.S. citizen before the large ceremony began.

Private Patricia Santiago



Pvt Santiago (front) is surrounded by Orlando Field Office Immigration Information Officers (all with prior U.S. Army service).

U.S. Army Private Patricia Santiago said she "wanted to be a Army military police officer," when asked the reason why she became a U.S. citizen.

Private Santiago became a legal permanent resident on May 24, 2000 as a spouse of a U.S. citizen. After working in various private occupations, Santiago joined the U.S. Army.

This type of military specialty in the U.S. Army requires U.S. citizenship. On May 6, 2008, Santiago applied for naturalization. Her application was expedited and approved for naturalization on August 27, 2008.

Senior Adjudications Officer Ely P. Borjal, an immigrant and veteran himself, administered the Oath of Allegiance to Private Santiago. As a U.S. citizen, she can now vigorously

pursue her goal of becoming a military police officer. She is currently undergoing training for a combat medic certification and will be stationed at Ft. Lewis, Wash.

USCIS Celebrates Citizenship Day and Constitution Week

[USCIS Welcomes More Than 39,000 New Citizens during Constitution Week and Citizenship Day](#)

Boston, Massachusetts

Judge Patti B. Saris administered the Oath of Allegiance to 3,082 new citizens on September 17 at the first naturalization ceremony ever held at Boston's Fenway Park. This ceremony commemorates Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, which honors the importance of citizenship and civic responsibilities and recognizes the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787.



Carlos E. Iturregui, Chief Office of Policy and Strategy, delivers remarks as Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, Meg Vaillancourt, Executive Director of the Boston Red Sox Foundation, and Tracy Renaud, USCIS Northeast Regional Director look on.

Ft. Lewis, Washington

Ft. Lewis, near Tacoma, Wash., was the setting for a Citizenship Day naturalization ceremony that saw 18 military members and six military spouses naturalized.

The U.S. Army provided a color guard and a small band that played

the National Anthem and other music during the ceremony. The 24 new citizens represented 13 nations. Army Brigadier General Peter C. Bayer Jr. was keynote speaker. District 20 District Director Anne Corsano and General Bayer handed out the certificates and posed for official photos with each new citizen.



District Director Anne Arries Corsano poses with new citizen PFC Cesar Diaz and Brigadier General Peter C. Bayer, Jr.

Washington, DC

Constitution Week and National Citizenship Day were celebrated early by the City of Alexandria, Va. as September 9, was proclaimed "Alexandria's Citizenship Day." For the fifth year, Mayor William D. Euille and the City Council have worked with the Washington Field Office to host a naturalization ceremony at City Hall.

Twenty eight applicants became new citizens and in addition to receiving their certificates, received complimentary copies of the City's proclamation that urged "all naturalized citizens to reflect on the many benefits of our federal constitution and the rights and responsibilities of American Citizenship."

Evidently the momentum of the occasion was not lost on a young

exuberant Vietnamese American who yelled loudly "I Love This Country" when he received his certificate. Mayor Euille presented USCIS District Director Sarah Taylor a commemorative copy of the proclamation to join the prior year proclamations on display at the Washington field office. Children from the audience joined District Director Taylor in leading the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.



District Director Sarah Taylor, Alexandria Mayor William Euille and Washington USCIS Officer Taeho Jinn.

DHS Strategic Plan



The Department of Homeland Security Fiscal Year 2008-2013 Strategic Plan is now available on the DHS web site. This Plan details the Department's Goals and Objectives based on the over arching direction stated in the National Strategy for Homeland Security. This Plan reflects the Department's varied

missions while charting a course to strengthen the Nation's security.

In particular, this Plan highlights the following:

- A risk-informed approach to homeland security
- An affirmation of the "all-hazards" nature of our mission
- An emphasis on countering weapons of mass destruction
- A focus on intelligence and information sharing
- An increase in partnerships and outreach effectiveness
- An enhancement in harmonization and unification of Department systems and processes
- An improvement in Departmental governance and performance

The nation continues to face serious challenges, both natural and man-made. But by executing the contents of the Strategic Plan, this agency will better prevent, detect, protect against, mitigate, and respond to any threats, and to adapt as those challenges evolve and change.

News You Can Use

September, 2008

[Two Categories of Special Immigrant Religious Workers to Expire on October 1](#)

09/19/2008

[USCIS Issues Reminder Regarding Filing of Forms Associated with Temporary Protected Status](#)

09/17/2008

[Frequently Asked Questions: Direct Mail Program Adds Form N-400, Application for Naturalization](#)

09/15/2008

[Joint Statement by Department of State Senior Coordinator for Iraqi Refugee Issues Ambassador James Foley and Homeland Security Senior Advisor for Iraqi Refugees Lori Scialabba](#)

09/12/2008

[USCIS Salutes America's Newest Citizens Ceremonies Held For 235 Military in Iraq and Kuwait](#)

09/04/2008

Los Angeles District Completes Record Number of Naturalizations in August



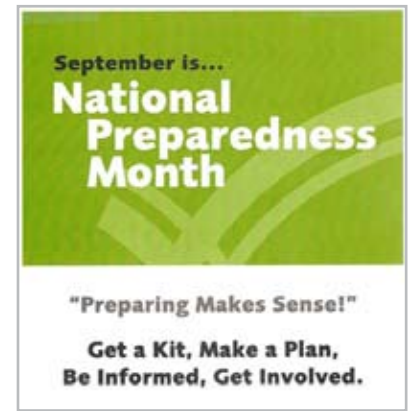
During August, the Los Angeles District naturalized 28,500 individuals, bringing the grand total of people naturalized during FY 2008 in Los Angeles to more than 136,000.

This is the largest number of applicants that USCIS LA has ever naturalized in one month. It is noteworthy that on August 28, the District naturalized 18,000 individuals during three ceremonies, including 24 military personnel.

Los Angeles District Director Jane Arellano attributes the success of the naturalization ceremonies to the dedicated employees who have

worked so efficiently and tirelessly including overtime and weekend work completing naturalization cases.

2008 National Preparedness Month



National Preparedness Month (NPM) is a nationwide effort sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security's Ready campaign and is held each September with the goal of increasing public awareness on the importance of preparing for emergencies at home, work and school.

Visit READY.GOV for helpful information and links to resources in your community. Please take a moment to get prepared and visit www.redcross.org for more information about preparing your own emergency preparedness kits.



Construction Corner

USCIS Breaks Ground in Lawrence, Massachusetts



USCIS Leaders and local officials “throw dirt” in Lawrence, Mass. On August 20, USCIS broke ground in Lawrence, Mass. for a new USCIS facility. The new Field Office will be constructed on Mill Street between Methuen and Canal Streets. The building will contain 26,300 usable square feet of space to accommodate approximately 63 employees. This new building will supplement (and not replace) the Boston Field Office. The Field Office will be a full service community office including an Application Support Center.

The building design reflects the historic architecture and materials of the mill buildings that line the Merrimack River. The building will have a spacious lobby and waiting room with extensive amounts of daylight entering the building from the perimeter windows. Additionally, the building will be designed and constructed to obtain a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating of Silver from the U.S. Green Building Council and an Energy Star rating.

This will result in a building that is energy efficient, helps preserve natural resources and provides a safe and comfortable environment for its residents.

The new Field Office will also serve as a revitalization project for the city as part of the Lawrence Gateway / Canal Neighborhood. The building will be constructed across the street from North Canal. Construction is expected to be completed in the summer of 2009 with occupancy occurring shortly thereafter.

Groundbreaking in Williston, Vermont



Chief of Staff Tom Paar, second from right, participated in the groundbreaking of the new USCIS facilities in Burlington

Ceremonial shovels of dirt were overturned on September 30 marking the start of construction on the new USCIS Training and Technology Center in Williston, Vt.

Having outgrown the current facilities at the John W. Clarke office building at 70 Kimball Avenue in South Burlington, the new two-story, stand-alone Training & Technology Center is being built to house both training and career development business operations and USCIS telecommunications support services.

Burlington, Vermont



USCIS Chief of Staff Tom Paar (left); Jan Lane, Chief of Security and Integrity (second from left); Ted Brady, Office of Senator Leahy (third from right); and Nancy Guilliams, Chief Administrative Officer (far right), manned shovels during the groundbreaking.

USCIS Chief of Staff Tom Paar joined USCIS and General Services Administration Leadership for a groundbreaking ceremony in Burlington, Vt. A new building lease has been awarded for the new Office of Security and Integrity, Personnel Security Division. It will be a single story with 26,609 rentable square feet with a rounded two story reception lobby for security screening of visitors.

The building will be built to a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, and integrate large amounts of natural light through the use of windows, an energy efficient building management system, and a second story clerestory above the building’s two wings. The new office will house one hundred employees along with support spaces for file storage and training.

The building is expected to be completed by November 2009.

Adopted Valor: Foreign Born American Heroes

Recently Returned and Soon to
Deploy Soldiers Naturalized



Private First Class Diego Lopez and his mother Maria Rios. Two young soldiers – one who just returned from Iraq and one who is headed there for the first time – became U.S. citizens at the USCIS San Antonio District Office on August 14.

Diego Lopez, 19-year-old soldier from Florida, came to the United States from Bolivia with his mother when he was nine. On August 14, he raised his right hand and took the Oath of Allegiance as his proud mother looked on.

“Thank God,” said his tearful mother Maria Rios after she watched her son become a citizen. “He is the only family I have, my only son. As an American citizen, he can do what he wants to do in the Army, and get his education. For me, that is the best legacy for him – being able to get his education.”



Specialist Bolanos and her boyfriend Juan Carlos Sanchez

Specialist Laura Bolanos, a 22-year-old soldier who came to California when she was eight months old, just returned to Fort Hood from a 16-month tour in Iraq.

Her boyfriend, Juan Carlos Sanchez, flew in from Los Angeles to be with her as she became a citizen. Her parents, Jose and Laura, listened via telephone from their Los Angeles home as Bolanos took the Oath of Allegiance administered by San Antonio District Director Mario Ortiz.

Bolanos wants to vote in the November election, and said being a citizen opens a path to a medical career (X-ray technician and possibly a registered nurse) that she wants to follow in the military. The ceremony was an important part of her immigration process. “I grew up in America, and have always felt like a part of this country,” she said.

Latest from the Leadership Journal

Visit the [DHS Leadership Journal](#) for the latest news and opinion from DHS decision makers.

Fire Prevention Month



October is designated as [Fire Prevention Month](#). Please take this opportunity to change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Please see these [Fire Safety and Prevention](#) educational resources for use at work or home.

