

**CONSULAR NEWS
SENEGAL & GUINEA BISSAU**

**U.S. Embassy Dakar, Senegal
April 2006**

Change in Hours

To better serve American citizens, the consular section is undergoing renovations. Due to space and resource constraints, we must temporarily limit our hours of service. Effective immediately, the American Citizen Services unit will have walk-in hours only from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Once the renovations are complete, we will announce expanded hours of service.

Town Hall Meeting - St. Louis

The U.S. Consul General, Beth Payne, will be in St. Louis on April 20. We would like to know if there are any American citizens in the area who are interested in attending a town meeting. We will hold a meeting on the evening of April 20 if there is sufficient interest. If you are interested in attending an American town meeting, please email consulardakar@state.gov.

Crime Watch

On Saturday, March 11, at approximately 9:00 a.m. at Avenue Pompidou in Dakar, thieves unzipped an American woman's handbag and stole her wallet and passport.

Always Carry Identification

On Sunday, March 12, an American citizen was detained at the police station in Point E from 4 a.m. to 3 p.m. because she did not have any identification. We would like to remind American citizens that all Senegalese law enforcement officials have the authority to challenge suspicious activity and to request personal identification. **Be aware that they may request personal identification even without cause, which is generally not the case in the U.S.** If you do not cooperate and provide identification, you may be detained for up to 48 hours without formal charges. We recommend that American citizens carry a photo identification card such as a driver's license and a copy of their U.S. passport at all times. We recommend that American citizens not carry their original U.S. passports unless they are traveling since that increases the likelihood that this valuable travel document will be lost or stolen.

April's Frequently Asked Question

To help you understand a variety of consular related issues, we will answer one frequently asked question in each month's Consular News. Please let us know what you think of this new addition and email your questions to consulardakar@state.gov.

Q. Why does the consular section use an exchange rate of 600 CFA?

A. The consular section must ensure that the U.S. Government never loses any funds by accepting local currency instead of U.S. dollars as payment for consular fees. All of the consular fees are posted in the consular waiting room and the fees are established only in U.S. dollars.

Each week, the Consular Section Chief chooses an exchange rate that is sufficiently above the current bank rate to anticipate fluctuations in the rate and to ensure that the bank rate never exceeds the consular section rate. As a result, our exchange rate will often be significantly higher than the bank rate. For the past few months, we selected a weekly rate of 600 CFA.

Voting Update

On Tuesday, June 6, 2006, there will be a special primary election in New Jersey's 13th Congressional District to fill the seat of Congressman Bob Menendez. Congressman Menendez was appointed to fill a vacancy as a U.S. Senator. This special primary election will be held in conjunction with the regularly scheduled state primary election. All members of the U.S. Uniformed Services, their family members and citizens residing outside the U.S. who are New Jersey residents from the 13th District who request a ballot for the primary will receive this special ballot automatically. Do this by completing and submitting a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), SF-76, as soon as possible, if you have not done so already in calendar year 2006. The Registrar of Voters must receive applications for registration and request for absentee ballot not later than Friday, June 2, 2006. If you wish to receive your ballot by fax, the Registrar of Voters must receive your absentee ballot request not later than Friday, June 2, 2006.

The online version of the FPCA is available from the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefpca.html.

Chapter 3 of the *2006-07 Voting Assistance Guide* contains further instructions. The New Jersey state pages are available at: <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/vag/pdfvag/nj.pdf>

The Registrar of Voters must receive voted ballots by close of polls on Election Day. You may submit the completed FPCA by fax using the following toll-free fax numbers for the U.S. and Canada: 1-800-368-8683, (703) 693-5527 or DSN 223-5527 (military). Also, at www.fvap.gov/services/faxing.html, there is a list of toll-free fax numbers from overseas countries for use by U.S. citizens. Citizens may receive the blank ballot via fax and return the voted ballot by fax. Citizens who desire to receive their absentee ballot by fax should provide their county election official with their complete commercial fax number, including country codes necessary when dialing from the U.S.

A citizen returning the voted ballot by fax which was either received by mail or by fax should refer to Appendix C of the *2006-07 Voting Assistance Guide* (located at www.fvap.gov/services/faxing.html for instructions and a cover sheet for use when transmitting the voted ballot by fax. Citizens should be sure to fax the entire ballot including any oath or signature required on the ballot-mailing envelope. After faxing, the ballot should also be returned by mail.

Consular Hours

Routine American citizen services are available Monday through Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Please come to window number two.

Emergency American citizen services are available during U.S. Embassy normal working hours. For an after-hours emergency involving an American citizen, please call 637-9566.

Have You Left Senegal or Guinea-Bissau?

If you have left Senegal or Guinea-Bissau, please e-mail us at consulardakar@state.gov so we can remove your name from the warden registration database. If you would like to remain on the newsletter mailing list, please indicate this in your e-mail.