U.S. Department of Justice
Immigration and Naturalization Service

INS Communique

Volume 20, Number 5 **May 1997**

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CITIZENSHIP USA: *Our Reach Exceeded Our Grasp*

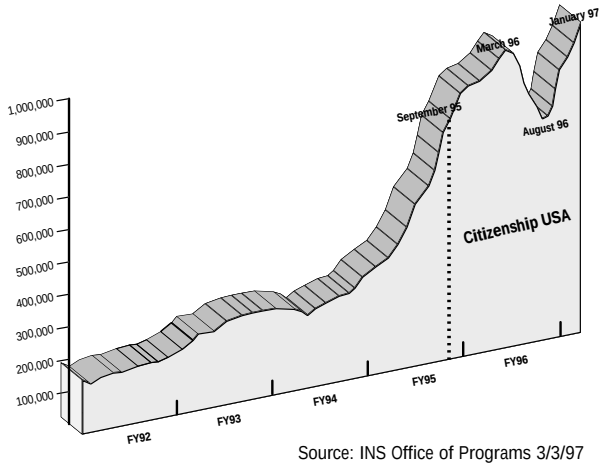
Reprinted here are the summary remarks of INS Commissioner Doris Meissner before the oversight hearing on Citizenship USA *held March 5, 1997, by the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Security, International Affairs and Criminal Justice and the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims.*

The Importance of Citizenship

The naturalization program is of enormous importance to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and to the Nation. The grant of citizenship is the most important benefit INS can bestow. Unfortunately, this program had suffered from serious problems for many years. Therefore, as I said it would be at my confirmation hearing in 1993, one of my primary goals as Commissioner has been to give the naturalization program the attention it had lacked for so long, in other words, to put the "N" back into INS.

Let me be clear about the origins of *Citizenship USA* — neither politics nor electoral considerations influenced the design, implementation, or operation of *Citizenship USA*. We created *Citizenship USA* in order to address unprecedented increases in citizenship applications, to eliminate unconscionable backlogs, and to return to our historical 6-month standard for processing applications. *Citizenship USA* achieved its goal of backlog reduction and timely processing by hiring an additional 900 employees, opening nine new offices, and automating certain parts of the process — not by lowering standards or fostering a rush to citizenship.

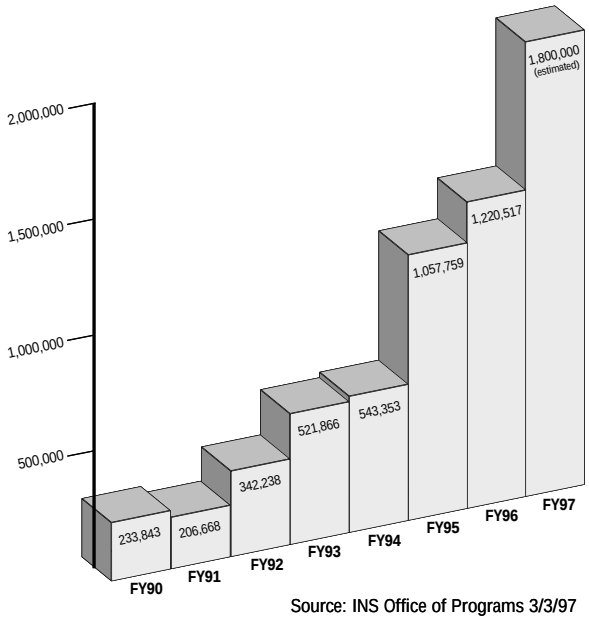
Citizenship Applications Pending



Source: INS Office of Programs 3/3/97

At the same time, the volume of applications we have handled and continue to receive strained already outmoded procedures that have led us to make four critical changes in our system.

Citizenship Applications Received



Source: INS Office of Programs 3/3/97

First, we have eliminated the possibility that naturalizations can occur before we have received the results of the FBI's fingerprint check. That is to say, we now confirm in 100 percent of the cases whether any fingerprint record exists with the FBI. Our new procedure, effective November 1996, replaces the fingerprint policy that had been in place since 1982. That policy called for waiting 60, then 120 days, and then proceeding when we received no report from the FBI.

Second, we have instituted a quality assurance program to ensure that procedures are being followed completely and uniformly in all INS offices. The quality assurance measures involve random monthly checks of every INS office and documented proof that all steps were followed.

Third, the Department of Justice has contracted with the management consulting and accounting firm of KPMG Peat Marwick to oversee a comprehensive audit of all naturalization cases from last year and to review the implementation of new quality assurance procedures. We will take swift action to revoke the citizenship of any persons found to be wrongfully naturalized.

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New citizens celebrate following a recent naturalization ceremony.

TESTIMONY

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Fourth, the Department of Justice is letting a contract for a complete redesign of the citizenship process, to take place over the next 2 years. We expect this effort to help us replace our paper-based processes with modern, reliable automated procedures.

History: Growth in Applications

Before 1992, we received about 300,000 naturalization applications yearly. As you can see, applications have quadrupled in the intervening years and we expect 1.8 million applications this year. The increases have resulted from a variety of factors, including the near equality in cost of replacing a green card and applying for citizenship, eligibility for citizenship of those legalized following Congress' 1986 reform legislation, anxieties among immigrants about measures such as Proposition 187, and the effects of welfare reform on legal immigrants.

By 1995, we had a backlog of 800,000 applications. Some applicants were waiting 2 to 4 years. This was unconscionable. We had an obligation to process their cases.

With Deputy Commissioner Chris Sale looking on, Commissioner Meissner testifies before the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and State in early April, presenting INS' formal budget request for FY98. Also testifying were Mary Ryan (right) of the State Department's Office of Consular Affairs and Anthony Moscato, head of the Executive Office of Immigration Review. (Photo by Mitch Katz, HQ Office of Public Affairs)

Goal of *Citizenship USA*

The goal of *Citizenship USA* was to reduce backlogs and achieve timely adjudication of naturalization applications. At no time did political or electoral objectives guide the creation or implementation of *Citizenship USA*. INS first briefed staffers from the National Performance Review in February 1996, 11 months after the program was conceived and

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One of the 96 young citizens at March's Circus Naturalization Ceremony in Washington, DC, stands with Ringmaster Dinny McGuire in the middle of the center ring. (See page 5)

New Rule Eases Naturalization Testing for Disabled Applicants

The Service published a regulation in mid-March that will provide exemptions for some naturalization applicants who have physical or mental disabilities that make them unable to take either the English language or civics tests required before a legal resident can become a citizen of the United States.

This rule is the product of more than two-and-a-half years of cooperative interagency development among INS, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Social Security Administration, and other agencies responsible for developing the language of regulations pertaining to persons with disabilities. First published as a proposed rule in August 1996, the final rule incorporated more than 225 initial public comments submitted by immigrant assistance groups, organizations that assist people with disabilities, health professionals, and other concerned individuals. It remains open to further public comment.

Announced by Acting Assistant Commissioner for Naturalization Terrance O'Reilly at a headquarters news conference, the new regulation will provide a testing exception to any person "who is unable because of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment or combination of impairments which has lasted, or is expected to last at least 12 months, to demonstrate an understanding of the English language...or a knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of the history and the principles and form of government of the United States." Specific examples of physical or mental impairments were not included in the regulation to increase the flexibility of its application.

According to O'Reilly, both physicians and clinical psychologists will be utilized to certify (under penalty of perjury) that the disability is authentic to avoid abuse of the system. "If there is truly a disability," he said at the press briefing, "these [testing] requirements can now be waived. No ifs, ands, or buts." All applicants must, however, still be able to understand the oath of citizenship before being officially made citizens, he said.

TESTIMONY

Continued from page 3

6 months after it was publicly announced and begun. We did not pursue any suggestions made to us that would have relaxed or waived the legal requirements for citizenship or otherwise have undermined the integrity of the naturalization process. On the contrary, we strengthened and improved our citizenship program.

We received bipartisan congressional support for our efforts to keep up with increased applications, to reduce backlogs, and to return to the historical six-month processing timeframe.

Lessons Learned

Our efforts in *Citizenship USA* have taught us some hard lessons. We had aimed for a balance — to divide our effort between meeting the growing workload and moving forward with necessary process reforms. In hindsight, it is clear that our reach exceeded our grasp.

Our policies and procedures were written in a different era. Our system — paper-driven and supported by outmoded hardware and software — was not built to handle the extraordinary demands being placed on it.

Despite the many improvements we made, we were still relying on a presumption that no FBI record existed if an FBI response was not received within 60 days. That presumption masked other weaknesses in the handling of fingerprints which are now apparent.

We solved a set of chronic problems that had plagued the naturalization system by accepting applications by mail, centralizing the handling of fingerprint cards, increasing automated support, and developing a certification program for fingerprint takers. In retrospect, however, it is clear that the core weakness was the 60-day fingerprint policy. I regret that we did not address it earlier. We have now changed our policy and practice, and can prevent such errors from occurring in the future.

Conclusion

It is important that Congress and the American people have confidence in the integrity of the naturalization process. The number of applications is still increasing. We expect 1.8 million this year, an increase of 50 percent over last year.

The mistakes INS made resulted from relying on outmoded practices to meet urgent and overwhelming demands. We have corrected those mistakes and have put into place a series of new measures to prevent them in the future. I have always been committed to an immigration policy that makes the most long-term sense, not one that serves temporary expedients. The adjustments we've made correct the system's vulnerabilities. I look forward to implementing improvements which will further strengthen the naturalization process.

Doris Meissner
Commissioner

'Greatest Show on Earth' Hosts Children's Naturalization Ceremony in Washington

While Commissioner Meissner may be the head of INS, it was Ringmaster Dinny McGuire who was in charge during the Washington, DC, district's adopted children's naturalization ceremony held March 27 at the city's National Guard Armory with the help of Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Washington, DC, District Director William J. Carroll (left) stands next to Eric Holder, as Commissioner Meissner presents the certificate of citizenship to Sue Curda and her daughter Natalie. Curda is INS' assistant commissioner for planning at Headquarters. (Photo by Ernestine Fobbs, HQ Public Affairs)

A first of its kind, the citizenship ceremony featured all the things that make the circus such a favorite: acrobats, three huge rings, and lots and lots of clowns, which seemed to be the favorite feature for the 96 children from 18 different countries who became United States citizens.

"I always wanted to be in the circus," Washington District Director William J. Carroll said during the presentation. "But I thought it would be as the strong man. I guess this is the closest I'll ever get."

The ceremony was also attended by Eric C. Holder, currently the United States Attorney for Washington, DC, and designee for the Deputy Attorney General post recently vacated by Jamie Gorelick.

The Commissioner did try to sound a somewhat more serious note, only to be overwhelmed by the occasion. "I can't think of a more festive atmosphere than the circus to welcome America's newest young citizens," she said during her keynote statement, as a parade of clowns dusted the podium at which she stood and other colorfully costumed performers hovered in the background. "Welcome to your new, larger family — the family of the United States of America."

After the ceremony, the children were invited to meet and mingle with the clowns and other performers, try their hand at juggling, and test their balance by walking the "low" wire.

Special thanks to Christine Neville who contributed to this story.

"I can't think of a more festive atmosphere than the circus to welcome America's newest young citizens"

— Commissioner Doris Meissner

A friendly looking clown gives a congratulatory hug to a happy new citizen. (Photo by Mitch Katz, HQ Public Affairs)

INS Global Team Attends Conference in Hungary

INS' Vienna, Austria, field office sponsored and hosted a conference on regional alien smuggling from March 18-20 at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Budapest, Hungary.

Attended by members of the Headquarters Office of International Affairs (including Director Phyllis Coven), Field Operations, and Intelligence, the U.S. Border Patrol Academy (represented by Chief Charles Huffman), the Rome district office (including District Director Joseph Cuddihy), and delegations from 21 countries including Germany, Poland, Canada, Croatia, Lithuania, Austria, Australia, Hungary, and Holland, the conference focused on the problems that alien smuggling represents in each jurisdiction. In addition, pre-existing information on international alien smuggling was codified and cataloged, and liaison/information channels were identified and provided to the conference participants. Finally, an incident report was developed for sharing intelligence at the international level.

Specific topics addressed during the conference through presentations included: the INS Headquarters' view on selected global issues; the State Department's view on similar issues; the work of the International Organization for Migration and the International Organization for Migration Policy Development; relevant reports from outside the INS/Vienna jurisdiction; and country-specific issues relative to alien trafficking from within the INS/Vienna jurisdiction. In addition, data sharing capabilities and limitations were addressed and improvement strategies developed.

"This conference was a significant first step in achieving an enforcement posture that will facilitate information sharing and foster cooperative investigations of an international nature," a senior INS representative in Vienna said at the session's conclusion. "The unprecedented nature of the conference is expected to produce tangible results in enforcement operations relevant to [international] anti-smuggling efforts."

Participants in the Regional Alien Smuggling Conference, including six INS representatives, stand in front of the Law Enforcement Academy in Budapest, Hungary.

INS overseas administrative officers held their annual meeting in Washington, DC, in early March. The focus of this year's meeting was preparing for the deployment of over 50 new overseas employees as part of the Office of International Affairs' Global Reach initiative. Pictured with Deputy Commissioner Chris Sale are (front row, l. to r.): Susan Copeland, administrative officer, Rome, Italy; Alicia Prado, administrative officer, Mexico City, Mexico; John Cummings, HQ Office of International Affairs; (back row, l. to r.): Ines Hori, Mexico City district; Phyllis Figurowski, staff assistant; Elizabeth Haydon, administrative officer, Bangkok, Thailand; Esther Jones, program administrative assistant; Fred Bunke, program specialist, Skip Boettcher, administrative program specialist; and Paul Sheehan, chief of administration. (Photo by Rick Kenney, HQ Public Affairs)

Commissioner Attends Migration Conference in Panama

Continuing INS' participation in the effort to more fully understand and address worldwide migration-related problems, Commissioner Meissner represented the Service at the Second Annual Regional Conference on Migration held in Panama City, Panama, on March 11-14.

Designed to provide a forum where international migration issues can be addressed, this year's conference was attended by representatives from the United States, Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama, as well as members of the International Organization for Migration, American Development Bank, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

This year's conference reviewed progress made with respect to the agreements reached at the first regional conference, held last year in Puebla, Mexico. Themes including the root causes of migration, treatment of migrants, efforts to counter organized migrant trafficking were discussed, and a Regional Consultation Group was established to help advance the implementation of certain agreed-upon commitments. A Coordinating Committee was also established to act as an international liaison to help ensure the expeditious exchange of information needed to implement the Plan of Action that has been drafted to address recognized migration concerns.

Specific agreements from the Mexico conference that were expanded upon in Panama focused on:

- the human rights of migrants and the need for information dissemination on the risk that migrant trafficking represents;
- trafficking in migrants, including the status of penal legislation and the need to pursue traffickers;
- linkages between development and migration patterns;
- immigration policies, including the security of immigration documents and policies regarding the issuance of visas;
- cooperation in the areas of institutional and information system modernization and training; and
- international cooperation for the return of migrants, including ensuring the basic needs of migrants who are in custody.

"[The countries involved] all recognize we have a shared common interest," Commissioner Meissner said after the conference. "Most of the countries in the region have now become transit countries for migrants from all over the world. We are a migration Nation and we want it to be so. But we want it to be safe and legal."

Take Time to Celebrate Public Service Recognition Week

Each day more than 25,000 Americans go to work for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), making up an important segment of the 20 million workers nationwide who call themselves public servants. While these dedicated employees provide a variety of essential services in law enforcement and administration of government benefits, they and other Federal workers do not always receive the recognition they deserve for their commitment to on-the-job excellence. Accordingly, INS is proud to join other Federal agencies in the 1997 Public Service Recognition Week celebration on the National Mall in Washington, DC, during the second week of May.

As part of this celebration, INS is setting up its exhibit from Thursday, May 8, through Saturday, May 10, with the theme of recruitment. With INS continuing to grow every day, we want to do all we can to help visitors learn more about the exciting career opportunities we have in immigration officer corps positions. In addition, special hands-on activities are being developed for Friday, May 9, which has been designated "Kids' Day."

For all of our duty stations, Public Service Recognition Week is the perfect time to show our pride as public service professionals, to reaffirm the value of the career paths we have taken. It's a good time also to honor our own outstanding employees and their valuable contributions in service to the Nation. The work you do is very important, and Public Service Recognition Week has been set aside to recognize that fact. I hope you take advantage of it, participate in local observances, and enjoy the recognition you deserve. On behalf of all the people who benefit from the services you perform every day, let me be the first to say, "Thank you very much!"

Doris Meissner
Commissioner

Service Record Improving for FOIA Processing

According to the Office of Files and Forms Management within the Headquarters Office of Management, as of February 23, 1997, Central Region statistics (jurisdictional offices of Dallas Administrative Center) showed that the on-hand caseload of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests was 919. This number represents a 37.5 percent decrease from the on-hand balance for the region 1 year ago, while the number of FOIA requests received increased by over 43 percent during the same period.

On the national level, comparing 1995 with 1996 (the last complete year for which numbers are available for all of INS) there was a 19 percent increase in receipts, and a corresponding 22 percent increase in completions, from 90,950 to 111,000. Over that time, there was also a three percent decrease in the total number of pending cases, and a reduction in the time it took to process those cases as well.

INSIDE MOVES: *INS Investigations in the Interior*

Alien Smuggling: *A Desperate Passage*

The moonless desert night is cool. Juan Bustamonte and his 10 companions perspire and shiver in the darkness, and wait. The soft sound of rustling paper and plastic bags holding the belongings of his companions seems crisp and sharp, and there is anxious shifting in the still night.

From a distance the sounds of a smooth engine rumble and gravel and dirt crunch under turning wheels. As the sound approaches, the smell of dust drifts through the clear air.

Juan swallows dryly. His hand brushes against the butt of the pistol stuffed in his waistband. It could be "la migra." If it is, he will abandon the others and slip back into the darkness in the confusion. Like the coyote, he knows the area, its low spots, rock piles, washes and gullies.

The vehicle comes to a stop a short distance away. Dust plays in the beams of the headlights. Juan hears the door open and a familiar voice breaks the night air. He realizes he has been holding his breath as released air flows from his lungs and his tense muscles relax. Tonight the Border Patrol loses and he wins.

Things move quickly. The others scramble into the big Chevy van and soon head for the interstate and Chicago, or Atlanta, or Des Moines, or somewhere. Juan turns and heads for home. He smiles. He will sleep late tomorrow.

The international traffic in illegal aliens is a multibillion dollar industry involving millions of human beings. Hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens currently are being moved by international criminal smuggling syndicates throughout the world. The United States is a primary destination of this traffic. The smuggling pipeline stretches from Asia, across Europe, and through Central America and the Caribbean to the United States. Alien smugglers operate individually or as part of sophisticated international smuggling rings. Most of the illegal aliens in the Untied States enter at the Mexican border. Substantial numbers also enter through airports. A smaller, yet significant, number cross the United States'-Canadian border or arrive by seagoing vessels.

Enhanced border enforcement operations such as "Operation Hold the Line" and "Operation Gatekeeper" along the Southwest border are forcing illegal border crossers to resort to alien smugglers. The smugglers are using more remote and inhospitable terrain in attempts to avoid heavily patrolled sections of the border.

Although apprehensions of illegal aliens have increased dramatically along the Southwest border, there is ample evidence of continued smuggling of illegal aliens to the interior since there is no indication of a shortage of labor for businesses that traditionally have relied on illegal alien labor.

Citizens of Mexico constitute the bulk of illegal entrants. Ninety-eight percent of aliens apprehended after entering without inspection (EWI) are Mexican nationals; however, the promise of a new life in the United States feeds the highly lucrative smuggling pipeline from nearly every far-flung corner of the earth: China, Russia, Hungary, Egypt, Ireland, Nigeria, Pakistan, India, and Korea.

Like travel agents, alien smuggling operations offer a variety of smuggling packages, routes, and conveyances. Smuggling operations often are conducted in segments so that onward interior movements are disconnected from the previous stage, making investigation and prosecution of all the participants in the criminal enterprise difficult.

Countering the efforts of this myriad of criminal entrepreneurs are INS special agents assigned to district offices and Border Patrol sectors who investigate, arrest, and bring to trial those involved in the illegal traffic of human cargo.

In early 1996, INS Intelligence data revealed a significant increase in alien smuggling in Colorado, Nebraska, and Kansas. In February 1996, with the cooperation of the Colorado Highway Patrol, the Denver district initiated a large-scale smuggling investigation known as "Operation Mountain Passes." In a 1-month period, from February 29 to March 28, 1996, an astonishing 1,238 smuggled aliens were apprehended. This project, while focused in Colorado and resulting in the apprehension of many aliens and the successful prosecution of numerous principals in smuggling enterprises, also developed evidence of the extended tenuous smuggling connections involved in moving aliens from points on the Mexican border, to interior staging areas, to final destination points in the West, Midwest, Southeast, and Northeast, including Illinois, Florida, Georgia, New York, and New Jersey.

During fiscal year 1996, there were 5,358 smuggling cases completed. Nearly 600 involved smuggling organizations transporting more than 100 aliens per month. While the remaining 4,759 cases involved individuals or groups that smuggle fewer people, they nevertheless account for substantial numbers of aliens who are brought into the United States illegally.

The promise of jobs remains the magnet that induces aliens to leave their homes and risk their lives at the mercy of the harsh natural elements of terrain and climate and smugglers' callous disregard of human suffering, whose fees can be several hundred, or even several thousand dollars, depending where on the globe the trek begins.

Despite more than 68,000 apprehensions of smuggled aliens and more than 2,600 individual prosecutions resulting from smuggling investigations during fiscal year 1996, increasing demands for cheap labor, notably in the Midwest, East, and Southeast guarantee that alien smuggling will continue with tenacious persistence, even as agents relentlessly pursue and prosecute violators.

Illegal Employment: *The Magnet Del Norte*

Maria Fuentes wakes well before sunrise. Others in the rundown room she shares are also stirring. Soon they will begin another long day. After an arduous trek from her native home in Guatemala, she made her way to New York City, but the land of opportunity still remains elusive and far away. Arriving with little money and only a few clothes in a small bag, she took the first job she could find in New York City's garment district. She was hired and went to work the same day. "What's your name? How old are you?" were the only questions asked before she was handed a broom to sweep bits of thread and fabric from the floor, remnants of the cloth that became shirts, blouses, skirts, and pants, made and packed by other illegal immigrants in this cramped little factory. Maria and her coworkers toil at their tasks: sweeping, packing, pressing, and sewing 10 to 12 hours a day or more. Electrical wires hang from the ceiling. The workroom is crammed with cloth, boxes, machines, and people. Ventilation is poor. The only relief comes from a few small fans. The pay is meager and barely covers the necessities of life. If she complains, there is the threat of exposure or worse for her and the others.

Despite a myriad of laws against them, sweatshops have made a remarkable comeback in America, and have evolved almost entirely into work inhabited by immigrants, many illegal. Operators of these sweatshops, like others who profit from cheap illegal alien labor, pay in cash below minimum wage, give no additional compensation for overtime, deduct fines and missed days from the salary, ignore unhealthy and unsafe working conditions, and sometimes dish out harsh, even brutal, treatment.

In 1996, the New York City district office, in cooperation with the Department of Labor, initiated a special investigative effort to combat these abuses as part the employer sanctions pilot project. Inspections were conducted at 150 worksites, most of them garment

Omaha World-Herald

55 Detained In INS Raids At 2 Plants

Official Says Agency Targeting Industries

By Rick Ruggles
World-Herald Staff Writer

55 Detained In INS Raids

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

An Increase in Immigration Of Skilled Workers Is Urged

By a Wall Street Journal Staff Reporter

INDIANAPOLIS — To compensate for the nation's aging labor pool, a leading think tank is urging U.S. employers to press for "enlightened immigration policies" that give preference to people with marketable skills and education.

In its soon-to-be-released "Workforce 2020" study, the Hudson Institute estimates that the work force growth rate will slow to about 1% a year by 2000 as college-educated baby boomers begin to retire. This will result in growing shortages of highly skilled workers, undermin-

THE WASHINGTON POST

INS Agents Raid Redskins Stadium Site, Take 19 Alleged Illegal Workers

By Wendy Melillo

"In this area, construction sites are ... one of our most troublesome areas."

shops. During this effort, more than 1,800 illegal aliens were apprehended. There were 244 Notices of Intent to Fine (NIFs) issued totaling $4,900,000. Of the fines issued, 100 resulted from substantive hiring violations.

Prosecutions were initiated against four employers who subjected workers to substandard conditions or attempted to shield unauthorized workers from detection by INS. In one case worked jointly with the Department of Labor's Racketeering Division, prosecution is pending against an employer who used Polish masonry workers without paying them the prevailing wage or providing them with the necessary safety equipment. Prosecution also was initiated against three garment factory owners who shielded their employees from detection during worksite enforcement operations by encouraging them to flee or otherwise secreting them during the operation.

This remarkable initiative was conducted with a workforce consisting of special agents and immigration agents, 80 percent of whom had a year or less experience in employer sanctions work. They achieved record numbers of cases completed, NIFs issued, and unauthorized workers apprehended at the worksite.

With relatively few agents dedicated to worksite, INS continues to aggressively pursue violators of the employer sanctions provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act. In an arena that contains more than 8.5 million businesses, efforts are focused on identifying, investigating, and penalizing serious violators through administrative sanctions or criminal prosecution. During fiscal year 1996, Investigations completed 4,720 lead-driven employer sanctions investigations. Of these, 1,024 resulted in NIFs being issued that will total $12,573,061 if collected in full.

More than 100 criminal investigations were completed. During the year 24 defendants were convicted in criminal court proceedings. Also as a result of employer sanctions inspections and investigations, nearly 14,000 illegal aliens were apprehended.

The INS strategy combines border control efforts with interior operations aimed at businesses employing illegal alien workers. The objectives include: reducing employment opportunities for illegal aliens, reducing the use and marketability of fraudulent documents, protecting the rights of citizens, lawful permanent residents and other aliens with employment authorization, and, in conjunction with other Government agencies, deterring abusive practices perpetrated by unscrupulous employers.

Immigration Fraud: *The Tangled Web*

Chow Li left China 2 years ago after agreeing to pay a smuggler $2,500 to get to San Francisco. He has worked at a number of jobs: landscaper, house painter, janitor, day laborer, waiter, and now cook. The money he makes now is much better than in the beginning, and his economic future looks even better. He has paid his debt to the smuggler and is thinking of his wife and child who remain in China. The future, however, may not be so bright. The new immigration law has made everyone nervous and more cautious. More employers want to see documents. Chow Li knows of a man who will sell him a counterfeit resident alien card and a social security card for $120. These counterfeits probably will satisfy an employer, but he worries that he might encounter a law officer who may recognized them as counterfeit. He wants to stay in the United States and eventually bring his wife and son. He knows another man who has told him that, for a price, the government can be fooled into giving him a legal status and real documents. Both options have risks. The latter is much more expensive and at some point will certainly bring him face to face with the INS; if successful, the potential offered by having real INS documents and a record that appears legitimate makes it an option to consider seriously.

Immigration fraud has increased dramatically in recent years and currently pervades all aspects of INS responsibility. As INS has bolstered and expanded its border control and worksite enforcement programs, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of aliens resorting to fraudulent means to enter and remain in the United States.

In general, immigration fraud falls into two broad categories — document fraud and benefit application fraud. Document fraud involves the illegal manufacture, sale, purchase, or use of identity documents to circumvent the immigration laws. Benefit application

Investigations' activities often involve undercover surveillance work. Here, Supervisory Special Agent Roberto Ramos fits Supervisory Special Agent William Schlifke with a concealed miniature body voice transmitter.

fraud involves the willful misrepresentation of a material fact to gain an immigration fraud benefit in the absence of lawful entitlement.

INS raids video company in biggest Bay Area bust

THE BALTIMORE SUN

Prosecutors open attack on alleged global fraud ring

3-year probe links phony bank accounts, two slayings in region

"There's a growing pattern of con games, scams and fraud here. They are working in a highly organized way."

Of the two categories, benefit application fraud poses the greater threat to the integrity of INS approval procedures for granting legal status. With benefit application fraud, an ineligible alien who successfully passes through the INS adjudicatory process receives a valid, Service-issued alien registration receipt card and the likelihood of detection is reduced significantly. In contrast, a smuggled or otherwise illegal alien who does not choose this path must constantly keep a "low profile" or use fraudulent documents to avoid detection. Reliance on fraudulent identity documents continues to subject the alien to the risk of detection, especially when confronted by immigration officers.

Benefit application fraud encompasses naturalization, political asylum, permanent residence based on marriage and other family relationships, legalization, amnesty, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), education, and employment-based immigrant and nonimmigrant categories. In addition to the wide range of INS programs affected, the sheer volume of fraudulent applications relating a single benefit fraud scheme can be enormous, and the structure of the criminal conspiracy complex.

"Operation Desert Deception" is such a case. The investigation targeted an immigration consulting business that filed applications to qualify illegal aliens under the extended amnesty program. Of the 22,000 applications filed by the firm, nearly 5,500 were admittedly fraudulent and more than 4,400 others were suspected of being fraudulent. As a result of the investigation, 54 individuals, including the national president of the League of United Latin American Citizens, were prosecuted successfully. The Government estimates that these individuals received in excess of $9 million in fees for filing the fraudulent legalization applications.

Alien criminals and terrorists manipulate the benefit application process to facilitate expansion of their illegal activities such as crimes of violence, vice, narcotics trafficking, and terrorism.

The investigation and prosecution of complex fraud cases is labor and time intensive, often requiring many months of work by several agents to patiently follow leads, review hundreds of documents, conduct interviews, identify principal conspirators, gather and assemble evidence, and bring the case to trial for successful prosecution.

During fiscal year 1996, Investigations was able to complete 6,455 fraud cases, 5,623 of which were benefit fraud investigations. Included in the overall number of completions were investigations of 87 organizations and 696 facilitators.

Organized Crime: *Sex, Lies, and Videotape*

Natasha can recall clearly how it all started, her quick fall from a glamorous fantasy into hell. The ad in the paper in her Ukrainian home town invited pretty and talented young women to enter a contest to become models and dancers. The opportunity for fashion modeling and performing as a dancer in musical reviews beckoned and seemed to offer so much more than her drab and dreary home town. For those chosen, a future of travel, style, elegance, and comfort was to be the reward. She was one of the lucky chosen few and soon found herself on a train that took her from her home to Moscow. She and the other young women were met at the train station by tough looking chaperons who supposedly were there to protect her and the others in the troupe from harm. She should have known something was not right when they took her passport, "to expedite travel arrangements." They accompanied her and the others to Berlin where she was soon put to work, not in a musical chorus line, but in a striptease club in the city's red light district. The modeling jobs were not haute couture. She was taken to Mexico on a false tourist visa and later smuggled into the United States and on to Los Angeles. Ultimately the woman she was forced to become working for an escort service was a faraway and remote cry from glamour, style, and elegance.

A relatively new and disturbing trend is Russian criminal organizations or "Russian mafia," trafficking in women. Highly organized traffickers obtain false documents, assumed identities, and arrange phony marriages and other fraudulent immigration status so the young women who are often recruited by being told they have modeling jobs can enter other countries in Europe or be brought to the United States. Accounts tell of meager food, sleeping on dirty floors after working all night as go-go dancers without pay, and rape and other violence to force young women into bars, massage parlors, and brothels.

For example, last spring Montgomery County, MD, police raided a massage parlor full of Russian women, most of whom were present illegally in the United States. When interviewed by INS special agents, the women said their journey began with an advertisement in a St. Petersburg newspaper for high-paying jobs abroad as au pairs and waitresses. Instead they found themselves forced into prostitution and sleeping on the massage tables at night.

In Russia, women have become a common smuggled commodity of criminal organizations, along with enriched uranium and drugs.

A major weapon against organized crime in all its guises is INS participation in task force criminal investigations with other Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies.

The Organized Crime and Racketeering Strike Force (OCRSF) has existed since the 1960s. Historically, INS has, as requested by the Department of Justice, selectively assigned representatives to offices that exhibited the greatest need for INS expertise and jurisdiction. In April 1995,

Pictured above and on the following page, special agents arrest suspected members of a Jamaican gang during an operation conducted in cooperation with the New York City Police.

Frank J. Marine, deputy chief of the Organized Crime and Racketeering Section, Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice, said "INS has made invaluable contributions to recent successes of several highly significant investigations and prosecutions, particularly in Boston, New York, Newark, San Francisco, and Los Angeles." Marine declared that continued INS participation in the Justice Department's Organized Crime Program is essential.

A major impetus in INS' involvement in task forces was its inclusion in the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) in 1986. The OCDETF program has proven an efficient, effective force in fighting major narcotic trafficking organizations that prey on every facet of society. The success of the OCDETF program is the result of interagency coordination and cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of these organizations. Analysis of the structure of narcotics trafficking organizations indicates that a large percentage of the principals and active members are criminal aliens. INS participation in the OCDETF program provides the dual benefits of greatly improving the likelihood of success in these multiagency OCDETF investigations while allowing the Service to address the issue of alien involvement in drug trafficking and violent crime.

In 1992, Attorney General William P. Barr added more emphasis by directing INS to work with other agencies to attack violent gang activity, primarily involving aliens, in urban areas. The purpose of these Violent Gang Task Forces (VGTF) is to engage in law enforcement operations against alien gangs and gang-related activity and to bring the full weight of the immigration laws to bear against serious violent offenders. The VGTFs disrupt and dismantle criminal alien gangs through the identification and prosecution of their members and associates. After prosecution and conviction, INS can physically remove alien gang members from the United States through deportation. Since the program's inception, special agents assigned to VGTFs have arrested more than 8,000 criminal alien gang members.

While there is no national mandate, many districts have responded to the spirit of the Administration's "Anti-Violent Crime Initiative" by directly participating in local task forces that address the enforcement needs of the particular area.

Within the counter-terrorism arena, whether the tragic bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City or other terrorist threats, INS, with its unique statutory authorities under the Immigration and Nationality Act, combined with an established network of foreign informants and experience with foreign nationals inside the United States, can provide invaluable support to the Nation's counter-terrorism efforts.

Particularly through participation in the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), INS has been effective and often crucial to the success of terrorist-related investigations involving aliens as suspects or targets. As was shown in the World Trade Center bombing case, terrorist organization members often knowingly or unknowingly violate immigration laws such as smuggling, false statements, asylum and naturalization fraud, marriage fraud, passport and visa fraud, and the sale of counterfeit identification documents. Through aggressive prosecutions of INS violations, the effectiveness of low-level members of these groups can be neutralized and may result in the identification of their leaders and the disruption of the organization as a whole.

Enhanced Enforcement: *The End of the Road*

Manuel Gomez was starting the first day of his prison sentence after a felony conviction for robbery. Intake processing at the Alhambra Arizona Correctional Facility in Phoenix is a loud but orderly affair with names and numbers being called, interviews being conducted, identification and file data verification, medical screening, and bed number assignments. He waits, does what he is told, and answers when spoken to by an official. Life on the inside is simply defined, disciplined, monotonous, and lasts for a long time.

Now he sits across from an immigration agent answering questions about when, where, and how he came to the United States. He entered the United States from Spain with his parents 10 years ago when he was 12. Unlike most of the others he has met while in jail, he has a resident alien card. The immigration agent is filling out a form and taking notes as they speak. He is told he will be fingerprinted and photographed again. He is being processed for deportation. When he completes his sentence for the robbery, he will be deported and returned to Spain. It is unlikely that he will ever be able to return to the United States without facing Federal criminal charges and another prison term for reentry after deportation. As far as his future in the United States is concerned, he knows this is the end of the road.

Between 1980 and 1994, the total number of individuals held in Federal and State prisons and local jails almost tripled, increasing from 501,886 to 1,483,410. Although only a percentage of those incarcerated are illegal or criminal aliens, the growth in the number of those incarcerated has heightened awareness of the criminal alien problem at the State and Federal level, and the criminal alien issue has been identified as a growing problem in several studies.

There are approximately 108,500 foreign-born criminals in the Federal and State penal system. Many (about 80 percent) will prove to be deportable either as a result of a criminal conviction or because they are otherwise unlawfully present. Some aliens (about 8 percent) will not be deportable. The remaining number who are foreign born (about 12 percent) will be found to be United States citizens who were born abroad or naturalized.

In February 1997, there were 937,827 inmates in State institutions. Of these, 73,687 (7.86 percent) were foreign born. The five states, California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Texas, and New Jersey, account for 58,778 (76.4 percent) of the foreign-born inmate population in State institutions.

To address this problem, the INS has moved aggressively to improve and enhance the Institutional Hearing Program (IHP), beginning with the five states accounting for the largest population of foreign-born inmates and steadily expanding to other states. The IHP is a cooperative effort of the INS, the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), and correctional agencies to identify, process, and complete deportation hearings for deportable aliens while they are still incarcerated so they can be removed expeditiously from the United States upon their release.

A new officer corps position, immigration agent, was established in Investigations to play a major and important role in identifying and processing criminal aliens for removal from the United States.

During fiscal year 1996, an average of 61,138 foreign-born individuals were incarcerated in the top seven states of the continuously expanding IHP. There were 28,143 foreign-born inmates interviewed in these institutions, resulting in 19,030 Orders to Show Cause being prepared.

As a result of the intensive, sustained, and expanding IHP efforts nationally by the INS, the EOIR, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and many State departments of corrections, 12,640 removal orders were issued during fiscal year 1996.

Though stretched thin and facing monumental tasks on every front to meet the interior enforcement challenge, the Investigations Division personnel, shoulder to shoulder with all other INS divisions and components, continues to meet INS' traditional standard of excellence with dedicated effort and remarkable accomplishments.

This special insert to the INS Communique was produced by the Headquarters Office of Investigations.

INSERTS CD-ROM Provides Useful INS Information

The Headquarters Office of Policy and Planning's Policy Directives and Instructions Branch (HQPDI) offers a CD-ROM product, INSERTS (Immigration and Naturalization Service Easy Research and Transmittal System), that contains Service reference material. The CD is in use at 1,600 INS user sites worldwide and Department of Justice components including the Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) and the Office of Immigration Litigation (OIL).

The CD-ROM operates on a PC-DOS and PC-Windows system format in stand-alone and local area network (LAN) configurations. It is organized in a simple-to-use, library-type environment. Users select reference documents from "bookshelves." The disk contains cross-referencing capabilities and Internet-like hyperlinks between and within documents.

"The CD-ROM is useful to people who are drafting regulations, because they can call up the particular section and modify it," according to HQPDI Branch Director Richard Sloan. It also eliminates the need for each officer corps member to maintain hard copies of the 8 CFR, the INA, and OIs and provides a powerful research tool to the user, according to Sloan.

"This is the future of data distribution," he said, noting that even with the search engine (the software that runs the CD's retrieval capabilities) included on the deliverable disk only about 30 percent of the current volume's disk space has been filled.

The next release of the CD will be issued in mid-May, and will add the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA); IIRIRA wires; IIRIRA forms; and the Immigration and Nationality Act, reflecting IIRIRA changes. By the end of 1997, two updated releases will include the EEO Handbook; the FOIA/PA Handbook; the Inspections, Border Patrol, and Examinations Handbooks (upon completion by the Office of Programs). A forms-filler mode also may be added, Sloan said. Users would be able to enter data on the forms included on the disk, save them, and print them out on their own laser printers.

Additional information is available from Richard Sloan, director of Policy Directives and Instructions Branch, or Steve Tarragon, senior management analyst, HQPDI, at (202) 514-3291.

The current release of the INSERTS CD-ROM (Vol. II-2, December 1996) contains the following information:

General Counsel Opinions (1989-1996);

Board of Immigration Appeal Interim Decisions (Volume 19 and 20);

Office of Immigration Litigation Case Summaries;

Administrative Decisions for Employer Sanctions;

Immigration and Nationality Act;

Title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations;

Titles 7 CFR, 20 CFR, 21 CFR, 22 CFR, 28 CFR, 32 CFR, 42 CFR, and 45 CFR (Those parts that affect immigration and nationality matters);

Operations Instructions;

Public Laws affecting immigration and nationality matters;

IMMACT 90 Wires;

INS Federal Register Publications (1994-1996);

Search and Seizure Manual (M-69);

Administrative Manual (selected sections — financial management, directives, forms and regulations management; radio and data communications; and the firearms policy);

Records Operations Handbook (M-407);

Personal Property Management Handbook;

American Express Travelers' Guide;

Public Use Forms;

Union Agreements between the INS and the National Service and Border Patrol Councils;

Headquarters and Field Offices Addresses and Telephone Directory ; and

PC-RAFACS User Manual.

Background photo: Richard Sloan (right) and Steve Tarragon pose with INSERTS CD-ROM.

Federal Inspectors Hold Joint Land Border Conference

More than 60 INS, Customs Service (USCS), and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) representatives from 10 ports of entry (POEs) held a land border conference in Washington, DC, from February 4-6, the first time the three Federal Inspection Service agencies had come together on such a large scale and with such positive results. Participants included members of the Port Quality Improvement Committees (PQICs) from the six land border National Performance Review (NPR) sites as well as members from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) PQICs.

On the first day each agency met individually and discussed their goals, priorities, and plans of action. On the second day, speakers addressed the group on topics of shared concern and listened as agency representatives reported on the prior day's activities. The afternoon was used for practical exercise, as working groups pooled their knowledge to find solutions to issues such as the use of multi-agency roving teams. The final day included training in performance measurement, followed by more practical exercise in formulating such measurements. This training will enable our POEs to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of initiatives being tested to enhance enforcement while promoting the facilitation of travelers.

INS representatives at the conference also got a private tour of the Electronic Data Systems (EDS) "Information Age" exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of American History. The tour provided the INS participants with a close look at communication and computer development.

After the conference, members of the Senior Implementation Group (SIG), consisting of senior executives from the FIS agencies and with PQIC oversight, traveled to the San Diego district, attending PQIC meetings in both Calexico and San Ysidro, viewing the facilities, and speaking with POE personnel from all three agencies.

Seaport Inspectors Attend Security Training at Port of Los Angeles

Ten of INS' seaport immigration inspectors attended seaport security and anti-terrorism training at the Port of Los Angeles from February 10-14. The comprehensive training focused on operational and physical security issues in the seaport environment, highlighting the need for Federal agencies and the private sector to form a partnership in developing sound vulnerability and risk assess-

Seaport inspectors take a break aboard a maritime display during their seaport security training at the Port of Los Angeles.

SENTRI Included in Smithsonian Institution's Permanent Research Collection

Already the winner of a Department of Justice National Performance Review Hammer Award, INS' Secure Electronic Network for Travelers' Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) has been included in the 1997 Innovations Collection housed at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in Washington, DC.

Now part of the museum's Permanent Research Collection, SENTRI was recognized by the Computerworld Smithsonian Awards Program (CWSA), which "publicly honors those men and women whose visionary use of information technology produces social, economic, and education progress." SENTRI was specifically recognized for "helping to demystify technology and empower others to use technology as a tool for positive change."

In addition to being included in the Innovations Collection, SENTRI is now eligible for a CWSA "Core Award," winners of which will be announced at a formal dinner held at the National Building Museum in early June.

ments and port contingency and crisis action plans.

The training also explored issues such as contemporary trends in terrorism, bomb and explosive material recognition, and procedures to follow when a suspected bomb is encountered. Other topics covered included stowaway issues and personal safety considerations such as hostage situations, hazardous material identification, and management in emergency situations.

According to Paul Rodgers of INS' Office of Security, who attended the training, "With the courses provided in this training program, the inspectors will be able to return to their respective ports of entry, and apply sound risk-management principles that will not only enhance the safety of personnel, but will also increase the port's ability to deter the entry of illegal aliens, criminals, terrorists and prevent the smuggling of contraband into the United States."

The training was sponsored by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Academy and hosted by the Los Angeles Port Police Department. The inspectors attending represented the seaports of Houston, San Francisco, San Juan, Anchorage, Miami, Long Beach, Newark, and New Orleans. In addition, Headquarters representatives from the Office of Inspections and the Office of Security participated. In addition, employees of numerous Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies, as well as the maritime industry also attended the training.

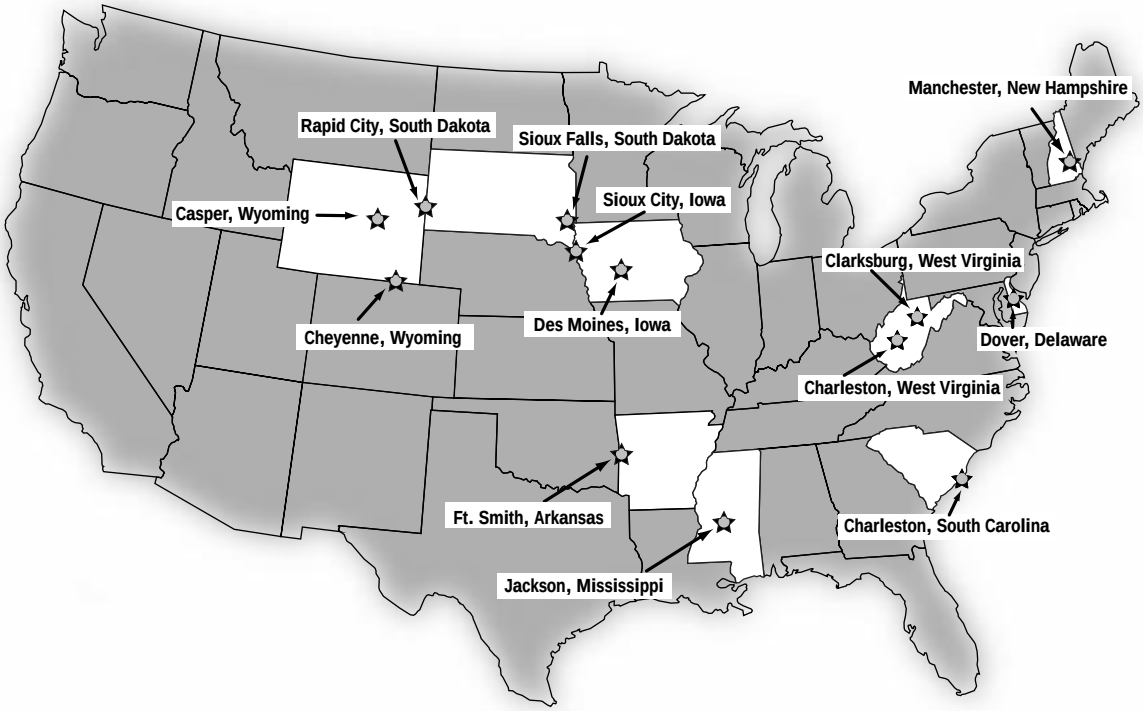
New Law Leads to New or Expanded Field Offices

In a move that will help INS not only strengthen its enforcement capabilities nationwide but will ensure that a new law mandating that at least ten Service officers are stationed in each State, the Service is currently working with Congress to establish eleven new offices and expand two others in nine states from New Hampshire to Wyoming.

To meet the requirements of the new law, which is a subsection of the '96 Act, INS will open or has already opened offices in Fort Smith, AK; Dover, DE; Des Moines and Sioux City, IA; Jackson, MS; Manchester, NH; Sioux Falls and Rapid City, SD; Charleston and Clarksburg, WV; and Cheyenne, WY. In addition, offices in Charleston, SC, and Casper, WY, will be expanded.

"These new offices will help ensure effective enforcement of the Nation's immigration laws and improve coordination with local law enforcement agencies," the Commissioner said when the announcement was made. "They will also assist in the deportation of criminal aliens, increase the effectiveness of our worksite enforcement program, and help us to improve services for legal immigrants."

Staff in the new and expanded offices will include detention and deportation officers, special agents, and adjudications officers, the Commissioner said.



Transportable Observation Platform Highlights Technology Demonstration

The Service's transportable observation platform, one of the latest advances in INS' continual improvement in methods to observe and monitor cross-border traffic, was showcased March 26 at a conference in Tucson, AZ, sponsored by the White House Drug Policy Office's Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center.

With Commissioner Meissner in attendance, the platform's features were demonstrated, including a camera mounted atop a 17-foot high telescoping mast and a bunker-like shelter at the base of the mast where recording and location-determining equipment is housed. The entire structure can be attached to a vehicle, allowing it to be easily transported along the border.

Other government technologies exhibited at the conference from Customs, the DEA, and the FBI included radio tracers of brain images to allow the biochemical tracking of cocaine, global positioning satellite systems, unmanned remote aircraft, and hand-held portable contraband detectors.

The event was part of a three-day fact-finding trip by Rep. Jim Kolbe, Chairman of the House Treasury, Postal Appropriations Subcommittee, and was hosted by the Pima County, AZ, sheriff's department.

The transportable observation platform as it appears when mounted on a pickup truck.

Infrared imagery is projected onto a screen inside the unit, where it can be analyzed by INS officers.

Once transported to where it will be used, the platform can also stand alone on its built-in supports.

National Women's History Month Celebrated at INS Headquarters

Speaking at an INS ceremony at Headquarters recognizing National Women's History Month in early March, Deputy Commissioner Chris Sale reaffirmed the Commissioner's commitment to ensuring equal opportunity regarding all hiring, promotions, and awards given by the Service, and specifically pointed out the contributions that women "have made and continue to make" at INS every day.

> *"Women have made, and continue to make, important contributions to the Immigration and Naturalization Service"*
>
> — Deputy Commissioner Chris Sale

Six years ago, Sale said, when she attended her first Commissioner's Conference, there were only four women in attendance in a supervisory capacity. At the 1996 conference in San Antonio, TX, however, there were significantly more, including district directors from Phoenix, Newark, and Detroit; several asylum office directors; two service center directors; deputy district directors from Mexico City, Los Angeles, San Diego, and New York; and the Service's heads of the Office of Security and Equal Employment Opportunity.

It is the nonsupervisory workers who deserve special recognition, however, according to Sale. "Some workers are probably known, many are not. But they are all of equal value based on the contributions they make every day," she said. "Who actually became a DD is not worth much if the support work that needs to be done is not being taken care of."

As of September 1996, the Deputy Commissioner said, 30 percent of the INS workforce at all levels were women, up 16 percent compared to 1995. In addition, 27 percent of all new hires in 1996 were women, more than double the number hired in 1995, and women received 34 percent of all supervisory promotions at the GS-13 level or above during that time.

"Women have made, and continue to make, important contributions to the Immigration and Naturalization Service," she said. "Our workforce is becoming more a reflection of the American labor force. This is about quality work, and recognizing that work. [The new hiring and promotion figures] are a measure of the key work that women are performing within the Service."

Verna Gordon Receives Sprint Innovation Award

Verna L. Gordon, an INS telecommunications specialist in Washington, DC, and the designated agency representative for Headquarters, has received an Innovation Award by US Sprint for her work to develop a less-expensive and easier-to-use system by which trainees at Service facilities and infrequent travelers can make FTS 2000 long distance calls through the use of a customized pre-paid calling card.

The award, presented in mid-March "in recognition of her leadership role in developing and implementing FTS 2000 enhanced authorization cards that meet the Service's mission-critical requirements," is given out only infrequently by Sprint, and Gordon was the first woman ever to receive such commendation from the company. It was also one of the few times that the FTS 2000 contract has been modified.

According to Gordon, the phone card idea was the result of a need identified by former Executive Associate Commissioner for Management Kenneth Rath. Seeing that trainees at Service academies were limited to making $5 a day in long-distance calls, and knowing that this still added up to millions of dollars in charges every year, he suggested that INS work with Sprint to find a better way of doing business. It was Gordon's idea to purchase pre-paid calling cards with either 30, 60, or 120 minutes of time and to distribute them to new trainees and other Service employees.

When Sprint balked at the suggestion, Gordon found a way to make it happen, even securing test cards to determine if the system was

Continued on page 24

Verna Gordon received US Sprint's Innovation Award for rethinking the way INS makes and pays for various long-distance calls. (Photo by Mitch Katz, INS HQ Public Affairs)

Border Patrol Trainees Endorsed for Meritorious Action Commendation

Quick Thinking Leads to New Beginning for Edward Newbegin

Four Border Patrol Agent trainees from the Charleston Academy have been endorsed for a Meritorious Action Commendation for their part in saving the life of a 67-year-old man they found unconscious while playing a round at a local golf course.

David G. Brickley, Trevor D. Devine, Matthew L. Hanna, and Brian Jones, each of whom are trainee agents in the Academy's 323rd session, first became aware that Edward Newbegin was unconscious after hearing his wife's screams for help. After arriving at the scene, the trainees found the man face down in the grass and, after checking for signs of life and not detecting a pulse, immediately began CPR. Coincidentally, they had received training in CPR and first aid during the previous two days at the Academy, and were therefore well-prepared to take action.

All four continued to provide care for Newbegin after he began breathing on his own, and remained on the scene until the Charleston County Emergency Medical Team arrived. The trainees were later credited by the responding emergency medical technicians for their quick thinking, according to Senior Border Patrol Agent Gregory O. Martin, as their decisive action likely saved Newbegin from brain damage as a result oxygen deprivation that can occur when unconscious for extended periods of time.

After arriving at the Charleston hospital, Newbegin underwent open-heart surgery to replace his aortic valve. After he was released from the hospital, he began walking 1/2 mile per day by the end of the month and soonafter was back on the golf course — albeit holding the pin for his regular threesome, not playing as of yet.

"In spite of the lack of protective equipment, these young men 'brought me back' from a comatose state prior to the arrival of Charleston County emergency medical support personnel," Newbegin wrote in a letter endorsing the agents for a Meritorious Action Commendation. "There is no doubt that their selflessness, dedication to duty, and proper application of newly learned skills saved my life."

Senior Border Patrol Agent Gregory O. Martin contributed to this story.

Four members of the Border Patrol have been recommended for Meritorious Action Commendation. Pictured (l. to r.) with Chief of Staff Peter M. Becraft are Chief Patrol Agent Charles Huffman, Charleston Academy; Border Patrol Agent David G. Brickley Jr.; Border Patrol Agent Matthew L. Hanna; Border Patrol Agent Trevor D. Devine; and Border Patrol Agent Brian Jones.

INS Staffers Graduate from USDA's Executive Potential Program

Seven INS employees graduated from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Executive Potential Program during the most recent ceremony held March 27 in Arlington, VA.

The program is conducted on an interagency basis for GS-13 and GS-14 employees and provides a management and training foundation, along with appropriate developmental experiences. The core curriculum consists of an orientation and four seminars designed to provide both formal and informal discussions about management and training issues. Each participant is also required to complete two 60-day segments of developmental work assignments away from their job sites and a 3-day assignment "shadowing" a high-level agency official, as well as completing an in-depth individual needs assessment. There are 23 total hours of core classroom training.

Graduates of the first class of 1997 include: William V. Beaumet, Headquarters Border Patrol; Robert S. Coleman Jr., deputy district director, Seattle, WA; Mark A. Cox, Headquarters EEO; Debora A. Farmer, ECC, El Centro, CA; Loretta Lopez-Mossman, Central Region Border Patrol; John A. Mata, Border Patrol, Blaine, WA; and John E. Ramirez, Southern Region, Dallas, TX.

For more information about the program, contact the USDA Graduate School's Career Development Program, c/o the Executive Potential Program, 1400 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1200, Arlington, VA 22209; or by calling (703) 807-0313.

Personnel Notes

Michael D. Hoefer

At Headquarters:

Alan M. Erenbaum, formerly the counselor to the Commissioner, has been nominated to be the new director of the Office of Congressional Relations. He was designated as the acting director as of March 10 pending his official appointment.

Michael D. Hoefer has been selected as the new director of the Office of Statistics within the Headquarters Office of Policy and Planning, where he will oversee both the Demographic Analysis and Operational Statistics branches. A 15-year INS veteran, Hoefer was formerly the chief of the Demographics Analysis Branch and contributed to the development of the Service's statistical yearbook as well as other legal immigration databases. He also represents INS on the U.S. Commission on Immigration reform. Prior to joining INS, Hoefer worked for the Department for Labor and the Office of Personnel Management.

Miguel J. Maldonado Jr.

In Memoriam:

Agent Miguel J. Maldonado Jr., a senior patrol agent with the McAllen sector was killed in a single-vehicle accident in early March. A 17-year veteran of the Border Patrol, Agent Maldonado entered on duty at Laredo, TX, and was promoted to SBPA in 1987. He joined McAllen in 1988, and has three nephews in the Border Patrol: Rudy Maldonado, Laredo sector; Rey Diaz, McAllen sector; and Joe Maldonado, El Paso sector. Agent Maldonado is survived by his wife Ricarda and one son, Michael.

AWARD

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feasible within INS. In fact, working with the Office of Public Affairs, she even designed the Statue of Liberty artwork that will be on all new cards. In addition, it is expected that the agreement will forge the way for all Federal agencies to begin using such debit calling cards in the future.

"Through her shrewdness and 'tough as nails' approach at the negotiation table, Ms. Gordon ensured that INS got the very best quality service and most economical rates available," according to the citation she received along with the award.

The new cards should be ready for limited delivery to the field and use at the Service's training academies in Charleston, SC, Glynco, GA, and Artesia, NM, by the end of May.

The staff of the INS *Communiqué* is proud to announce that it has received a 1996 Crystal Award of Excellence from the Communicator Awards in the print media competition. Of the over 2,500 entrants in the competition, only 11 percent won the Crystal Award, given to those entrants "whose ability to communicate elevates them above the best in the field." INS was also one of only three Federal agencies to win the award.

Thanks to all our readers for your continued support in helping to make the *Communiqué* an award-winning publication.

Communiqué

The ***INS Communique*** is published by the Headquarters Office of Public Affairs to inform employees of the Immigration and Naturalization Service about official and unofficial activities. Readers are invited to submit articles, photographs, and letters to the editor. Write to INS Public Affairs, Washington, DC 20536; or ✆ (202) 514-2648.

News updates are posted on the INS NEWSLINE at: ✆ (202) 616-1994.

Doris Meissner	Joseph Mancias, Jr.	Richard Kenney	Mitch Katz
Commissioner	*Director of Public Affairs*	*Editor*	*Associate Editor*

Cover: Just one of the many recent INS technology initiatives, the Service's INSERTS (the Immigration and Naturalization Service Easy Research and Transmittal System), CD-ROM, which operates on a PC-DOS and PC-Windows system format in both stand-alone and local area network (LAN) configurations, contains a wealth of immigration-related reference documents. Pictured are the CD-ROM and Rick Sloan, director of the Office of Policy and Planning's Policy Directives and Instructions Branch which produces the disk. (See story on page 17.)