

The Passport Office strives to improve service delivery, from internal administrative procedures to front line desk services. This year, we realized that to do better we need to understand our environment, our applicants, our people and our abilities. We implemented extensive information gathering processes, and we are now seeking out new information to re-evaluate our core competencies, opportunities and challenges. Through surveys and initiatives by the Executive Committee, we were able to assess our abilities more effectively. A scaled-down version of the Canada Award for Excellence was used to measure and determine how (if applicable) we could improve services, processes, policies and skill sets. It showed us what areas we should focus on to operate a more effective service.

On a global level, we are recognized for our client service, and we always strive to be on the cutting edge.

REGIONAL SUMMARIES

In the *Eastern Region*, comprised of St. John's, Halifax, Fredericton, Jonquière, Sainte-Foy, Laval, Saint-Laurent and Montréal, 307,037 passports were issued, an increase of 13 per cent over the year before. The East's automated phone system responded to 317,657 calls, of which 139,958 went to an agent. The Eastern region participated in several projects, including the redesign of the new passport applications. These applications are being designed for technological compatibility, Internet interface and simplification for the applicant. Through internal management teams and focus groups, prototypes are being developed, and in the future, external focus groups will be used to test the usefulness of the design.

Some unique services met with positive results. The urgent passport pickup service piloted in Halifax simplified the application process, and allowed applicants in remote areas to pick up their passports from Revenue Canada (Customs) at the airport, thus reducing the number of trips to the Passport Office. As well, due to the remote nature of some locations, the Eastern region participated in many travel shows, information booths and other travel promotions, and was able to accept passport applications on site at the display. Another time-saving initiative being piloted was the passport mail-back service, to provide the option of mailing the passport directly to the applicant. This also provided an excellent service for those citizens who are not near a Passport Office. Special services were provided in Quebec, where passport applicants could also apply for a birth certificate, and receive both the passport and the birth certificate at the same time. For travellers whose documents were either lost or stolen, the Passport Office made special arrangements, in cooperation with the Citizenship and Immigration Canada office, to allow the applicant to continue travelling until replacement documents were produced. These are just a few success stories of the Eastern region.

The *Western Region*, with offices in Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Surrey and Victoria, issued 350,271 passports. The CANPASS pilot project in Vancouver, aimed at improving business travelling processes, was officially turned over to Revenue Canada (Customs) in early 1998. Greater participation in the Missing Children's program was undertaken, and the Western region played a large role in exploring opportunities