

Mexico Streamlines its Requirements

One of the most frequent complaints of Canadian business visitors to Mexico recently has been about the amount of red tape necessary to get a business visa. Travellers to *CANADA EXPO* in March were particularly annoyed at having had to obtain this visa (at a cost of about \$100) for what was for most of them a five- or six-day trip with no selling anticipated.

Mexico has announced that, as of April 1, 1994, there is a new format for the admission into the country of business visitors who qualify under the temporary entry provisions of NAFTA Chapter 16. This will go a long way toward easing the frustrations of Canadian business visitors, some of whom had resorted to enter-

ing the country by tourist visa even when planning to conduct business.

The new visa is initially valid for 30 days and is issued without charge. The visa will continue to be available at Mexican embassies and consulates, but, more importantly, will now be issued by airlines, travel agencies and tourism offices, on board airplanes and at land and maritime entry points. It allows multiple entry in the 30-day period. After 30 days, it may be extended for up to a period of one year, but that extension will make it subject to a fee (currently \$100 U.S.).

A total of four such one-year extensions are allowed providing the terms under which the visas have previously been issued have

not changed.

Mexico has also prepared a guide for those business people, traders, investors, intra-company transfers and professionals who qualify under the new procedures.

The new visa will greatly facilitate the activities of Canadian business visitors to Mexico. Truckers, for example, can now obtain visas at border points. The system will encourage individuals to fill out the proper forms, meaning that fewer will be at risk of contravening Mexican immigration regulations.

Canadian members of a NAFTA working group on visas are continuing to monitor the concerns of Canadian business visitors on an ongoing basis.

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CBCM will become a launching pad for exporters looking at markets in Central and South America.

There is also the opportunity for smaller solo trade shows, with 15-20 companies. The CBCM will be an ideal venue for conferences, receptions and seminars.

But while the government and Embassy will continue to stage their programs to enhance Canadian trade in Mexico, the Canadian Business Centre will be driven by exporters, sales teams, marketing strategists. The activities of the Centre are very much to be determined by those who choose to take advantage of its facilities, to set their own agendas, design their own, tailor-made, programs in Mexico.

Each company or group of companies has different needs, and the only limitation on Canadian businesses (within the laws of the affected countries!) will be imagination and enterprise. Despite a substantial lineup of DFAIT-spon-

sored events for its first year, the chronology of the CBCM will consist in large part of activities created by Canadian business people.

A new initiative, previously impractical in the absence of a low-cost venue, is the reverse trade show, where importers exhibit the wares they buy. This helps the first-time Canadian visitors get a line on what the market wants. Additionally, Canadian companies want to keep their local representatives involved in their export effort, and having the agents mount the show is one way to do this to great effect.

The CBCM is to be run on a busi-

ness basis. Fees will be charged for space rental, translation services, conference facilities and the like.

The CBCM will become an attractive and recognisable symbol of Canadian enterprise in a very short time. Its ongoing sequence of activities will help raise the profile of Canada in a market where we have been told we are very welcome, but not yet well known.

For further information, contact Latin American Caribbean Trade (LGT) by fax at (613)943-8806, or the CBCM fax at the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City at (525) 724-7902.

Access

Access, the newsletter of the new Access North America (ANA) program, is published monthly and only in *CanadExport*. Subscribers to *CanadExport* automatically receive *Access*. It examines opportunities for Canadian businesses, introduces some Canadians already operating in the Mexican and U.S. market, profiles specific sectors, and notifies readers of forthcoming events related to doing business in Mexico.

Your feedback is welcomed; correspondence should be sent to *Access*, BCT, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa, Ont., K1A 0G2, or by fax, (613) 992-5791.

For further information on the copy of a brochure on Latin America, contact InfoEx at 1-800-367-8888 (In Ottawa 944-4000).

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