

WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE ACCESS

Smart Border Declaration

On December 12, 2001, Deputy Prime Minister Manley and Governor Ridge signed the Smart Border Declaration and immediately began implementing a 30-point action plan to build a smart border for the 21st century: a border that is secure and efficient, open for business but closed to terrorists.

Prime Minister Chrétien and President Bush met in Detroit, Michigan, on September 9, 2002. At that meeting, they issued a joint statement and a smart border progress report that included announcements on the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) and NEXUS programs and progress on a number of security related items (www.can-am.gc.ca).

The FAST program partners the governments of Canada and the United States with the private sector to ensure a secure supply chain for low-risk goods. FAST will make many cross-border commercial shipments simpler, cheaper and subject to fewer delays while enhancing security. FAST went into operation in December 2002 at the following crossings: Douglas-Blaine, Windsor-Detroit, Sarnia-Port Huron, Fort Erie-Buffalo, Queenston-Lewiston and Lacolle-Champlain.

The NEXUS program provides dedicated lanes for pre-approved, low-risk travellers. NEXUS is already running at four border crossings, and a joint NEXUS application centre is now open in Detroit. NEXUS has been operating at the Windsor-Detroit and Fort Erie-Buffalo crossings since January 2003, and it will be expanded to all other high-volume crossings between the two countries by the end of 2003. A NEXUS-Air program is also in development and will be piloted in airports during 2003.

Also of note from the September 9, 2002, summit was the direction given to Deputy Prime Minister Manley and Governor Ridge to continue overseeing implementation of the Smart Border Action Plan

and to identify and initiate work in other areas where close cooperation serves our mutual interests. During the coming months, border agencies will continue to work on the action plan. Initial work is also under way on an additional five action items: biosecurity, research and development, maritime security, synchronized smart card technology for truck drivers and interoperable communications.

Looking Ahead

Recent U.S. legislative and/or regulatory activity has resulted in a number of border-related issues that pose concerns for Canada. These issues include the following:

- a 24-hour advance manifest rule: a requirement (introduced by U.S. Customs) that carriers provide selected marine cargo manifest information to Customs at least 24 hours in advance of loading (the U.S. is considering imposing similar requirements on other modes of transportation);
- Provisions requiring the registration of foreign facilities that manufacture, process, pack or hold food for human or animal consumption (which also applies to U.S. domestic facilities), and requiring pre-notification to the FDA of foreign food product shipments before they enter the U.S.
- U.S. entry/exit tracking: a requirement under the U.S. Patriot Act (October 2001) that the Attorney General develop an entry/exit tracking system and a biometric standard—U.S. officials are demonstrating a firm commitment to implementing this measure on the land border by the end of 2004; and
- U.S. restrictions on Canadian transportation companies handling explosives (which may be inconsistent with U.S. obligations under NAFTA): Canada has been actively engaging the U.S. Administration to ensure that it recognizes the costs and challenges of implementing such measures. We are also continuing to monitor other initiatives that may affect legitimate cross-border flows of goods, investment and persons.