

Initiatives to inform the public about passport services included two seminars in Brampton for the Muslim community and participation by various offices in a number of trade shows. As well, a flyer sent by a Member of Parliament to households in St. Catharines contained information on Passport Office services. A display on the history of passport production has been on rotation in the various regional offices.

In keeping with the Passport Office's corporate philosophy, the region continued to recognize the outstanding achievements of its employees. A number of employees received awards for special contributions to regional initiatives, for exceptional dedication to duty and for long service.

ORPORATE AGENCY RELATIONS AND CORPORATE SECRETARIAT

The Planning Unit provides support to the Executive Committee of the Passport Office by developing the long-term strategic direction of the organization as well as its short-term business objectives.

When the Passport Office was established as a "trial" Special Operating Agency (SOA) in 1990, its first major planning project was the five-year Strategic Plan: 1992-93 to 1996-97. The guiding principles of this plan were full cost recovery and improved delivery of secure travel documents. With this five-year cycle drawing to a close, the Agency began preparing for the next planning phase. The proposed new cycle will be three years, from 1997-98 to 1999-2000. Its prime function will be to assess and respond to the Canadian people's increased demands for Passport Office services in coming years.

To lay the groundwork for the next phase, the Passport Office conducted reviews of the changes occurring within the organization and the external trends affecting it. The reviews showed that the Passport Office will need to have a stronger customer service orientation, and, particularly, to adapt service delivery to the demands and needs of the various regions. A key trend identified by the reviews was the increased use of

new technology by airlines, customs and airport authorities to process passengers efficiently. This is likely to put pressure on the Passport Office to merge its products and processes with the production of documents such as visas and airline tickets and to adopt the technology to make this possible.

The Passport Office is already moving in this direction through its Technology Enhancement Plan. Much of the strategic planning over the year focused on finalizing this Plan. Another focus was an assessment of the SOA organizational model and other options available to the Federal Government for delivering Passport Office services. It is expected that the Agency will continue to run under the SOA model or an advanced form of it.

Key activities of the Planning Unit over the year were incorporating the results of the reviews, the emerging trends and the key objectives of the Passport Office into the 1996-97 Business Plan and 1994-95 Annual Report. These documents helped reinforce the corporate and SOA image and were used to communicate the Passport Office objectives and the results achieved to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, federal central agencies and other stakeholders.