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OPENING OF REGIONAL PASSPORT OFFICES

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. Mark MacGuigan announced today that four new Regional Passport Offices will be opened in Fredericton, London, Windsor and Victoria.

The extension of personalized passport service to these four additional cities brings to sixteen the number of Regional Passport Offices across the country. It is estimated that the four new offices will provide over-the-counter service to approximately 22,000 Canadian travellers during the first year of operation. This is in line with the government's policy of emphasizing increased sensitivity and responsiveness to the Canadian public by decentralizing public services.

"Regional Offices provide fast and personalized counselling and passport issuing service, independent of interruptions in transport or postal services, and also make available emergency passport service and improved security" Mr. MacGuigan said.

Applications presented at the counter at Regional Passport Offices are normally processed and the passport issued within seventy-two hours. In addition, the Regional Offices can give emergency service to Canadians who must travel on short notice due to unforeseen circumstances, assist applicants in difficult cases and provide general advice on passport requirements and related travel problems.