

CENTRAL OPERATIONS

Central Operations is located in the National Capital Region and manages five points of service, including issuing offices in Ottawa and Hull, as well as the Official Travel, Certificate of Identity and mail-in service sections.

During the year under review, Central Operations issued 306,630 travel documents, a level similar to last year's, but using fewer people to accomplish the task. Moreover, the region continued to meet the highest standards of service, as evidenced by the many letters of commendation sent in by satisfied clients.

These achievements were especially noteworthy considering the special challenges faced over the year. The region was called on to help Eastern Operations meet an explosion in demand for passports during the Quebec referendum campaign. As well, regional staff were kept busy with the introduction of the new fee for consular services charged by the Consular Affairs Bureau and collected by the Passport Office.

In addition to providing passport services, Central Operations undertook a number of important outreach activities. Regional staff continued to make Passport Office services better known to the travelling public by participating in travel shows and presentations in the National Capital Region and through briefings to Members of Parliament and their staffs.

Central Operations promoted information exchange on passport operations through reciprocal visits with the head of the U.S. Passport Agency's Mail Centre in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and by hosting tours of its facilities for foreign officials from a number of countries.

The region's representatives supported Canada's role in facilitating international travel by attending a major meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). This meeting dealt with international air travel issues, including machine-readable travel documents and immigration matters.

WESTERN OPERATIONS

Western Operations provides services to Canadians in the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia through offices in Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Surrey, Vancouver, Victoria and Winnipeg.

During fiscal year 1995-96, Western Operations issued a record 326,067 passports, an increase of 15 per cent over the previous year. At the same time, the region continued to meet the standard for fast, efficient service by processing most passport applications within five days. This level of service was well appreciated by clients as shown by the many expressions of thanks received by all eight Western offices.

The year's achievements were due to the region's ongoing efforts to improve service and productivity.

One initiative has been a four-year program of client satisfaction surveys conducted by independent consultants. Survey results show that over 90 per cent of passport applicants in the region are very satisfied with the service they receive. Nevertheless, the region will continue to use client feedback from the surveys to enhance service further still.

In addition to the client questionnaires, the region sponsored independently conducted surveys of its employees with a view to improving the quality of the working environment. Action taken in this area included using the regional newsletter, *the Western RoundUP*, to update staff on important issues.