

BORDER NEWS

September 23, 2008

An update about projects along the San Diego/Tijuana Border

The San Ysidro Port of Entry has re-opened the pedestrian SENTRI lane and it is now accepting all SENTRI users. Hours of operation are from 6:00am to 10:00pm seven days a week. Currently, there is only light traffic in this lane (400-500 crossers per day). The pedestrian SENTRI capacity can handle 4,000-5,000 crossers per day. Those interested in enrolling in the SENTRI program should apply on-line at <http://goes-app.cbp.dhs.gov>.

Vehicle Primary Client (VPC) Inspections have become more technologically friendly with touch screens implemented at the San Ysidro Port of Entry. The installation of the new screens and software at the 24 inspection booths took place on September 18, 2008 and the new system should assist the officers with inspections. 212 agents have attended advanced training on the new system. The increased wait time encountered in the last two weeks was due to the implementation of this new system. The Otay Mesa Port of Entry will have the new touch screen technology implemented on September 29, 2008.

SENTRI program. The San Diego U.S. Attorneys office is continuing to enforce violations of the SENTRI program. Violators of the SENTRI program will be federally prosecuted for any serious violations to the SENTRI regulations. Reports have surfaced of SENTRI users using the SENTRI exit lane to enter the east bound lane and cut into traffic. The City of Tijuana will be asked by the Port Working Group (see list of members below) to investigate this further.

The San Ysidro Port of Entry Reconfiguration has begun with the demolition of the old cargo port on Virginia Street. The new southbound lanes will be in this location allowing for the existing southbound lanes to be converted into northbound lanes and allowing for more secondary inspection gates. Employee parking will eventually move toward Virginia Street making way for feeder lanes while the northbound lanes are under construction. New employee parking is expected to be located where the city building and the "Duty Free" shop are currently located. The feeder lanes and double stacked booths (think Wal Mart) are expected to provide relief in February when construction at the existing San Ysidro Port of Entry is expected to begin. There is a commitment to keep 24 lanes open during construction in an effort to not further burden the crosser.

All the new lanes at the new San Ysidro port of entry will have the capacity to be **SENTRI** lanes upon completion. This will allow the Customs and Border Protection to use a determined amount of regular lanes vs. SENTRI lanes to assist with the flow of inspections.

The **newly modified secondary inspection area at San Ysidro Port of Entry** is forcing all traffic to enter secondary solely through the East side. This approach is currently being reviewed for efficiency.

Improved signage on the Mexico side leading up to the Port of Entry is being explored by the Baja Secretary of Tourism. The intent is to have real waiting times displayed.

I-94 permits will soon be issued inside the Otay Mesa Port of Entry. The Customs and Border Protection Agency is currently investigating their ability to accommodate applicants. An I-94 permit is required for non US citizens when visiting the United States for over 3 days or traveling beyond 25 miles into the interior.

Cameras are expected to aid in security and wait times. Newly installed cameras at the various ports of entry have enhanced security. Additionally the Port Working Group (see below for a complete list of members) is working with the City of Tijuana and the Customs and Border Protection Agency in an attempt to use the City of Tijuana cameras to determine actual wait times for crossing.

More Officers are stationed in San Ysidro and Otay Mesa ports of entry than ever before in the history of the San Diego land ports of entry. An additional 150 officers have been assigned to these ports of entry. The current onboard strength at San Ysidro is actually at 103%. This means that although San Ysidro Port of Entry is allotted 610 officers there is currently 633 assigned. However, it is still not enough. The Customs and Border Protection Agency is currently training 5,000 new officers throughout the United States and it is imperative that San Diego County gets a good portion of those agents assigned to ensure the security and efficiency of our land ports of entry.

This publication is intended to keep you current with the projects along the border. While every effort is made to inform you of the most recent events circumstances may change what is stated above. Border News is published by the Port Working Group comprised of individuals from the following organizations: South County Economic Development Council, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce, California Department of Transportation, Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce, San Ysidro Business Association, San Diego Association of Governments, General Services Administration, Customs and Border Protection Agency, State of Baja Tourism Office, Mexican Consul General's Office, Senator Boxer's Office.