



NEWS RELEASE

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Passport Canada Office Official Opening

Kelowna, BC – The official opening of the passport office in Kelowna adds an important piece of infrastructure as the Kelowna economy continues to expand into global markets.

Ron Cannan, MP Kelowna-Lake Country and Stockwell Day, MP Okanagan-Coquihalla and federal treasury board president officially opened the facility located at the Capri Centre. Kelowna Chamber President Wesley Shields participated in the ceremonies.

Since 2005, the Kelowna Chamber has been pushing for the establishment of passport offices in regional centres outside of major metropolitan areas, specifically in Kelowna. The Chamber has also called for raising the validity date for Canadian passports to a ten-year period from the present five-year period.

In September 2007, representatives of the Kelowna Chamber met with the CEO of Passport Canada Gerald Cossette to discuss the need for a full passport office in Kelowna and the challenges and obstacles that business people face while trying to conduct international travel.

The new full passport office in Kelowna addresses a significant concern for businesses outside of the lower mainland. In the past, with no passport office in this area, business people were forced to either mail-in their applications or travel to the Lower Mainland and endure long wait times for passports to be granted or renewed.

For the many business people who conduct international travel, such as the technology and the manufacturing sectors, the new Passport Canada office removes a significant obstacle to conducting international business.

During the official opening, it was announced that the federal government is exploring introducing a 10 year passport by year 2012. The Kelowna Chamber will continue to push for raising the validity date for Canadian passports to a ten-year period from the present five-year period.

Established in 1906, the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce is a membership based business organization representing the "Voice of Business". Our mission is to foster a positive business environment by providing members with leadership, advocacy and services of value.

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