

Red Seas, White Sands, Blue Skies: An American Citizens Services Newsletter

First of all we would like to thank everyone who participated in our town hall meeting in October. It was a great opportunity to meet many of you and discuss issues of interest to U.S. citizens living in Saudi Arabia. We hope to plan further town hall meetings on a regular basis.

Now that the U.S. holiday season is upon us and schools will be closed for winter break, many of you may have plans to travel outside Saudi Arabia. If you are planning to leave the Kingdom, we would like to remind you to take a look at your travel documents to make sure that you and your family members have at least six months validity remaining on your passports, and that you have enough passport pages for any visas or stamps you may need for your travels. If you discover that you need to renew your passports or add pages to your existing passports, please make an appointment with our American Citizen Services Unit to take care of these issues well before your travel dates.

www.travel.state.gov is a valuable source of information for international travelers, providing country specific information on all of your holiday destinations. We also recommend that everyone enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) both here in Saudi Arabia and at your holiday destinations outside the U.S. This will ensure that you receive any messages from the U.S. Embassy to the American citizen community in those countries, and will allow the State Department to better assist you in a crisis situation.

Best wishes for a happy holiday season,

Donald H. Steele



Precautions to Take While Traveling

Safety on the Street : Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in (or avoid) areas where you may be more easily victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places, festivals and crime-ridden neighborhoods.

- Don't use shortcuts, narrow alleys or poorly lit streets.
- Try not to travel alone at night.
- Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations or arguments.
- Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.
- Avoid scam artists by being wary of strangers who approach you and offer to be your guide or sell you something at bargain prices.
- Wear the shoulder strap of your bag across your chest and walk with the bag away from the curb to avoid drive-by purse-snatchers.
- Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. Try to ask for directions only from individuals in authority.
- Know how to use a pay telephone and have the proper change or token on hand.
- Learn a few phrases in the local language or have them handy in written form so that you can signal your need for police or medical help.
- Make a note of emergency telephone numbers you may need: police, fire, your hotel, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.



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<u>Upcoming Holiday Closures</u>
November 28 - Thanksgiving Day
December 25 - Christmas Day
January 1 - New Year's Day

How to Reach Us

The US Embassy is located in the Diplomatic Quarter, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Public hours: Saturdays, Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, 1:00pm-3:30pm
Schedule an Appointment:
<https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=RID&appcode=1>
Phone: (966)(11)488-3800

US Consulate Jeddah
Public hours: Saturday/ Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday, 1:00-3:00pm
Schedule an Appointment:
<https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=JDD&appcode=1>
Phone: (966)(12)667-0080

US Consulate Dhahran
Public hours: Saturday through Wednesday, 1:00-3:30 pm
Schedule an Appointment: <https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=dhr&appcode=1>
Phone: (966)(13) 330-3200

MASSACHUSETTS TO HOLD SPECIAL GENERAL ELECTION

For Representative in the 5th Congressional District

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The Commonwealth of Massachusetts will hold a special general election for U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday, December 10, to fill the seat vacated upon the election of former Representative Ed Markey to the U.S. Senate.

You can register to vote and/or request an absentee ballot by mail, email or fax using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) online assistant at <http://www.fvap.gov/request/request-ma.html>. Do not forget to indicate on the FPCA how you would like to receive your absentee ballot (by mail, email or fax).

Uniformed Services personnel, their eligible family members and U.S. citizens residing overseas must submit an FPCA to request an absentee ballot. Please note you will not automatically receive a ballot, even if you voted in the November 6, 2012, General Election.

Voted ballots returned from within the United States or by fax or email must be received before 8 p.m. EDT on December 10, 2013. Voted ballots returned from outside the United States must be postmarked by December 10, 2013, and received by the election authority by December 20, 2013.

If you are concerned about not receiving your ballot in time to vote, use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB, SF-186). The online FWAB assistant is available at <http://www.fvap.gov/request/request-ma.html>. The FWAB is also available at military installations around the world.

To determine the status of your absentee ballot request once submitted, contact your local election office. You can find contact information for your voting jurisdiction at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleclk/clkidx.htm>.

Go to FVAP.gov to fill out and print your forms today! Additional information on the completion and submission of these forms is also available, as well as Massachusetts voter-specific information. Find a list of municipal contact information at <https://www.fvap.gov/r3/jurisdictions/MA> or <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleclk/clkidx.htm>.

FPCA request deadline	Before 12 p.m. EDT, December 9
Voted ballot received by election authority for ballots returned by fax or email	Before 8 p.m. EDT, December 10
Voted ballot received by election authority for ballots returned by mail from <i>within</i> the U.S.	Before 8 p.m. EDT, December 10
Voted ballot received by election authority for ballots returned by mail from <i>outside</i> the U.S.	Postmarked by: December 10 Received by: December 20

2014 Tax Season to Start Later Following Government Closure; IRS Sees Heavy Demand As Operations Resume.

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today announced a delay of approximately one to two weeks to the start of the 2014 filing season to allow adequate time to program and test tax processing systems following the 16-day federal government closure.

The IRS is exploring options to shorten the expected delay and will announce a final decision on the start of the 2014 filing season in December, Acting IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel said. The original start date of the 2014 filing season was Jan. 21, and with a one- to two-week delay, the IRS would start accepting and processing 2013 individual tax returns no earlier than Jan. 28 and no later than Feb. 4.

The government closure came during the peak period for preparing IRS systems for the 2014 filing season. Programming, testing and deployment of more than 50 IRS systems is needed to handle processing of nearly 150 million tax returns. Updating these core systems is a complex, year-round process with the majority of the work beginning in the fall of each year. About 90 percent of IRS operations were closed during the shutdown, with some major work streams closed entirely during this period, putting the IRS nearly three weeks behind its tight timetable for being ready to start the 2014 filing season. There are additional training, programming and testing demands on IRS systems this year in order to provide additional refund fraud and identity theft detection and prevention.

“Readying our systems to handle the tax season is an intricate, detailed process, and we must take the time to get it right,” Werfel said. “The adjustment to the start of the filing season provides us the necessary time to program, test and validate our systems so that we can provide a smooth filing and refund process for the nation’s taxpayers. We want the public and tax professionals to know about the delay well in advance so they can prepare for a later start of the filing season.”

The IRS will not process paper tax returns before the start date, which will be announced in December. There is no advantage to filing on paper before the opening date, and taxpayers will receive their tax refunds much faster by using e-file with direct deposit. The April 15 tax deadline is set by statute and will remain in place. However, the IRS reminds taxpayers that anyone can request an automatic six-month extension to file their tax return. The request is easily done with Form 4868, which can be filed electronically or on paper.

IRS processes, applications and databases must be updated annually to reflect tax law updates, business process changes, and programming updates in time for the start of the filing season.

The IRS continues resuming and assessing operations following the 16-day closure. The IRS is seeing heavy demand on its toll-free telephone lines, walk-in sites and other services from taxpayers and tax practitioners. During the closure, the IRS received 400,000 pieces of correspondence, on top of the 1 million items already being processed before the shutdown. The IRS encourages taxpayers to wait to call or visit if their issue is not urgent, and to continue to use automated applications on IRS.gov whenever possible. “In the days ahead, we will continue assessing the impact of the shutdown on IRS operations, and we will do everything we can to work through the backlog and pent-up demand,” Werfel said. “We greatly appreciate the patience of taxpayers and the tax professional community during this period.”



Be prepared for a Crisis Situation

Winging it is not an emergency plan. Talk to your kids about whom to call, where to meet, what to pack. Visit www.ready.gov/kids for emergency preparedness tips and information.

A disaster supplies kit is simply a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency. Try to assemble your kit well in advance of an emergency. You may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take essentials with you. You will probably not have time to search for the supplies you need or shop for them.

Call a Family Meeting and Make a Plan!

Some disasters strike without any warning, and family members may not all be in the same place. How will you get in touch with each other? Where will you meet? How will you get out of your house in case of a fire? What if your neighborhood is being evacuated? It's important to make a plan now so that you will know what to do, how to find each other, and how to communicate in an emergency. For more information visit : <http://www.ready.gov/kids/make-a-plan>



- Pick the same person for each family member to call or email. It might be easier to reach someone who's out of town.

- Text, don't talk, unless it's an emergency. It may be easier to send a text, if you have a phone, and you don't want to tie up phone lines for emergency workers.

- Create a fire escape plan that has two ways out of every room and practice it twice a year. Choose a meeting spot near your home, then practice getting there. Choose a spot outside of your neighborhood in case you can't get home. Practice getting there from school, your friends' houses, and after school activities.

- Keep your family contact and meeting spot location in your backpack, wallet or taped inside your school notebook. Put it in your cell phone if you have one.



Cold and Flu Season



Taking precautions for this fall's cold and flu season can be beneficial for you, your family and your friends. Visit Flu.gov to make sure you are ready, learn how you can help promote public awareness, and learn what steps you can take to protect yourself and your family from colds and flu.

Identity Theft Can Affect All Members of Your Family

You are probably aware that identity theft is a major cyber threat. But did you know that even children are not immune? Two and a half percent of U.S. households with children younger than 18 have experienced child identity theft..



Back-to-school is a ripe time for criminals seeking information. While filling out paperwork for school programs, sports teams, physicals, music lessons, etc., parents are often asked to provide their children's social security numbers, birthdates and other personally identifiable information. Also, children are often a prime target because they may not know how to safeguard their information.

[Check here](#) for what to know and do to avoid or report identity theft.

Fun Turkey Facts



The average weight of a turkey purchased at Thanksgiving is 15 pounds.

- The heaviest turkey ever raised was 86 pounds, about the size of a large dog.
- A 15 pound turkey usually has about 70 percent white meat and 30 percent dark meat.
- The five most popular ways to serve leftover turkey is as a sandwich, in stew, chili or soup, casseroles and as a burger.
- Turkey has more protein than chicken or beef.
- Turkeys will have 3,500 feathers at maturity.
- Male turkeys gobble. Hens do not. They make a clucking noise.
- Commercially raised turkeys cannot fly.
- Turkeys have heart attacks. The United States Air Force was doing test runs and breaking the sound barrier. Nearby turkeys dropped dead with heart attacks.
- A large group of turkeys is called a flock.
- Turkeys have poor night vision.
- It takes 75-80 pounds of feed to raise a 30 pound tom turkey.
- A 16-week-old turkey is called a fryer. A five to seven month old turkey is called a young roaster.



The US is the 4th largest country in the world by land area and 3rd by population.
 The tallest mountain in the US is Mt. McKinley located in the state of Alaska. It reaches 20,320 ft (6,194 m) above sea level.
 Alaska was purchased from **Russia** in 1867 and is the largest state in the US by land area.
 Hawaii was the last state to join the union, becoming part of the US in 1959. It is the only state made up entirely of islands.
 The most populated city in the US is New York City, followed by Los Angeles and Chicago.
 The most popular team sports in the US are American football, baseball, basketball and ice hockey.
 The US consumes more petroleum than any other country in the world.

Connect the dots and color in the symbol of freedom!



For 87 years the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade has been the official kick-off to the holiday season in New York. Every year more than 3 million people watch balloons, floats, bands, clown crews and other surprises along the 2-1/2 mile parade route while an additional 50 million people watch the parade on television. More than 8000 volunteers participate!

Word Scramble!

Unscramble the letters to form words !

- ASVI _____
- SSAETT _____
- CNSTUTIONIO _____
- GALF _____
- RPTOSASP _____
- BELOG _____
- VELART _____
- SASBEMY _____
- GRMAMINITOI _____
- YCRAOMDEC _____

COLOR THE SEAL!



There are hidden words below, running down, across, and diagonally. Our Passport Pal has only been able to find one. Can you find the rest?

N I B
 Z W Y T J Y V
 I D S T A T E A E Z B
 P T N U G Q S R R L U B L
 A G B M T Y G H H E C D R T Z
 T E V Q N E G O T I A T I O N
 W E D G O V E R N M E N T W S P O
 I P R E S I D E N T S A G Y L P E
 P Z O C S E C R E T A R Y V T F P W M
 Y E N G D C M N F H M T D R C O C D C
 M V A Q Y U Z B N N B J I Y O C N Y F
 U L C S R G R A J A U P O U Z J E
 F O R E I G N U S S T L L N L M E
 C X Y T C P A S S P O R T A S
 A J Q Y R Y K T A Y M R R W L
 D Z B V A I C D H A L Y T
 H I H B D S O K C M V
 M L W E R D Y
 H R O

ANSWERS: visa, states, constitution, flag, passport, globe, travel, embassy, immigration, democracy

Are you or is someone you know new to KSA?

Help newcomers to the Kingdom by reminding them to register with the Embassy or nearest Consulate using STEP online at: <https://step.state.gov/step/>
 This free service officers registered U.S. citizens updates on important regional issues, travel warnings and alerts, and provides a point of contact for citizens and their families in case of emergency.

AMBASSADOR	FOREIGN	PASSPORT	STATE
COUNTRY	GOVERNMENT	PEACE	TRADE
DIPLOMACY	INTERNATIONAL	PRESIDENT	TREATY
EMBASSY	NATO	SECRETARY	USA
EUROPE	NEGOTIATION	SECURITY	WASHINGTON