

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



### Message from the Ambassador

Happy New Year! I welcome this opportunity to reach out through the ACS newsletter to my fellow U.S. citizens in the Kingdom. We here at the Embassy and in the Consulates General are busy as always serving your needs and representing the United States in our bilateral relationship with Saudi Arabia. We know you are also involved in many productive activities that bring our two countries closer together.

One of the most central concerns we share is personal safety. We all must continue to practice good security awareness in our daily routines. Based on several recent experiences, I would like to highlight in particular the importance of road safety. Sadly, as in many countries around the world, motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of death and injury in the Kingdom.

Car crash-related injuries and deaths are largely preventable. Whether driving to work, or on a family outing within or outside the city, we recommend following these few tips to help keep you and your passengers safe:

**Obey speed limits:** Insist that the driver maintains safe speed according to posted signs and road conditions.

**Seatbelts:** Make sure the driver and all passengers are safely buckled up! Use car seats and booster seats for children.

**Beware of aggressive drivers:** Get out of the way. Don't speed up or refuse to move out of the travel lane. Ignore rude gestures and don't return them. Report them to traffic police (993) when safe to do so.

**Poor road conditions:** Reduce your speed and use extra caution when there is rain or dust storms, which create wet or slippery roads; limited visibility due to fog or dust; high winds, poor road surfaces such as potholes or construction activities. Check weather reports before embarking on long trips.

**Vehicle condition:** Keep your car serviced – especially brakes, tires, tail lights and signal lights. Keep your fuel tank full on long hauls in case the next gas station is just a bit too far. And have enough cash as most gas and service stations do not accept credit cards.

While we encourage you to visit the many wonderful sights Saudi Arabia has to offer, we urge you to take charge of your own safety on the road.

With best wishes for a safe, healthy and prosperous new year,

**James B. Smith,  
Ambassador**

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### 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)(1)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)(2)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)(3)330-3200

### SMART TRAVELER DAY – FEB 21, 2013



**Download the free app at:**  
[http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel\\_5852.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_5852.html)

### Upcoming Holiday Closures

January 19 – Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday  
February 16 - President's Day

**REMINDER: American Citizens Services (ACS) All Appointment System:** The ACS Units at the Embassy and Consulates General require appointments for all non-emergency, routine services. This is a worldwide policy for all U.S. embassies and consulates. Routine services include passport and additional pages applications, requests for Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, Social Security card and benefit applications, and notarial services.



## NOTICE to South Carolina Residents:

As a result of the cyber attack to South Carolina's tax records, anyone who has filed a South Carolina tax return since 1998 is urged to visit : <http://protectmyid.com/scdor> or call 1-866-578-5422 to determine if their information was affected by the recent cyber attack. The call center is open 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM EST on Monday through Friday and 11:00 AM - 8:00 PM EST on Saturday and Sunday.

Experian's ProtectMyID™ Alert is designed to detect, protect and resolve potential identity theft, and includes daily monitoring of all three credit bureaus. The alerts and daily monitoring services are provided for one year, and consumers will continue to have access to fraud resolution agents and services beyond the first year.

In addition to the Experian service, state officials urged individuals to consider additional steps to protect their identity and financial information, including:

- Regularly review credit reports;
- Place fraud alerts with the three credit bureaus;
- Place a security freeze on financial and credit information with the three credit bureaus.

According to the S.C. Department of Revenue, if credit card information is compromised, the best protection is to have the bank reissue the card. Anyone who has used a credit card in a transaction with the Department of Revenue should check bank accounts regularly to see if any unauthorized charges have occurred. If so, the cardholder should contact the credit card issuer immediately by calling the toll-free number located on the back of the card or on a monthly statement, tell them what you have seen, and ask them to cancel and reissue the card. Consumers should also change any credit card web account passwords immediately when unauthorized charges are detected.



## Additional Medicare Tax:

The Affordable Care Act was enacted on March 23, 2010. It contains some tax provisions that are in effect and more that will be implemented during the next several years. Among them is the new Additional Medicare Tax which goes into effect starting in 2013. The 0.9 percent Additional Medicare Tax applies to an individual's wages, Railroad Retirement Tax Act compensation, and self-employment income that exceeds a threshold amount based on the individual's filing status. The threshold amounts are \$250,000 for married taxpayers who file jointly, \$125,000 for married taxpayers who file separately, and \$200,000 for all other taxpayers. An employer is responsible for withholding the Additional Medicare Tax from wages or compensation it pays to an employee in excess of \$200,000 in a calendar year. The IRS and the Treasury Department have issued [proposed regulations](#) on the Additional Medicare Tax. Comments may be submitted electronically, by mail or hand delivered to the IRS. For additional information on the Additional Medicare Tax, see IRS [questions and answers](#).

**Foreign Income Exclusion:** If you are a U.S. citizen or a resident alien of the United States and you live abroad, you are taxed on your worldwide income. However, you may qualify to exclude from income up to an amount of your foreign earnings that is now adjusted for inflation (\$91,400 for 2009, \$91,500 for 2010, \$92,900 for 2011, and \$95,100 for 2012). In addition you can exclude or deduct certain foreign housing amounts. You may also be entitled to exclude from income the value of meals and lodging provided by your employer. Please visit: <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers/Foreign-Earned-Income-Exclusion> for complete information.

Keep watching <http://irs.gov> for latest information on the impact of the tax legislation approved by Congress on January 1, 2013.

According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) 2009 Global Status Report on Road Safety, Saudi Arabia, has one of the world's highest traffic accident rates. The General Directorate of Traffic reported 544,179 traffic accidents during 2011, or the rate of 1537 per day, resulting in approximately 19 fatalities daily.

## Presidential Inauguration 2013



For more than two hundred years America's citizens have witnessed the Inauguration ceremonies of the President and Vice President of the United States. From the first Inauguration of George Washington, in New York City, in 1789, to today, as we prepare for the 57th quadrennial Presidential Inauguration, the swearing-in ceremonies represent both national renewal and continuity of leadership. As each president has offered a vision for America's future, we reflect on the heritage of Inaugurations past.

The Presidential Inauguration will be held in Washington DC on Monday, January 21, 2013. A week of the Presidential Swearing-in Ceremony, Inaugural Address, Inaugural Parade and numerous inaugural balls and galas honoring the United States. The official inauguration is "Faith in America's Future," commemorating the United States' perseverance and unity, marking the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and the placement of the Statue of Freedom atop the Capitol Dome in 1863. [More information](#) on presidential inauguration history and the 2013 inauguration is available on the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies (JCCI C) website.



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U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

### USCIS New Immigrant Visa Issuance Fee:

**On Feb. 1, 2013**, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will begin

collecting a new USCIS Immigrant Fee of \$165 from foreign nationals seeking permanent residence in the United States. This new fee was established in USCIS's final rule adjusting fees for immigration applications and petitions announced on Sept. 24, 2010. For more information see below or the following USCIS link: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnex->

[toid=3a2bb75e8109b310VgnVCM10000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=fe529c7755cb9010VgnVCM1000045f3d6a1RCRD](http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnnextchannel=fe529c7755cb9010VgnVCM1000045f3d6a1RCRD)

Foreign nationals who seek permanent residence in the United States and receive an immigrant visa will need to pay a USCIS Immigrant Fee beginning February 1, 2013. The new fee of \$165 was established in USCIS's [final rule](#) adjusting fees for immigration applications and petitions announced on Sept. 24, 2010. USCIS has worked closely with the Department of State (DOS) to implement the new fee which allows USCIS to recover the cost of processing that is performed in the United States after immigrant visa holders receive their visa packages from DOS and are admitted to the United States.

*Note: Applicants will now have two separate fees to pay. They are still required to pay the DOS visa application processing fee, and now will also have to pay the USCIS Immigrant fee.*

## Schengen Fact Sheet



There are 26 European countries that are party to the Schengen agreement, which eliminates internal border controls between them. Once you enter one Schengen country you may travel continuously for up to 90 days among the member countries. For persons carrying a tourist passport:

If you are **traveling for business or tourism**:

You **don't need a visa** for the initial entry into the Schengen area, but you must have a passport valid three months beyond the proposed stay. For example, for a two-week business trip, the passport must be valid for four months; for a two-month holiday the passport must be valid for five months.

**Note:** Travelers for business or tourism are permitted to stay in the Schengen area for 90 days **within a six month period**. Once the 90 day maximum is reached, leaving for a brief period and re-entering the area does not entitle a traveler to 90 more days within the Schengen states. The traveler would have to remain outside of the Schengen zone for 90 days before Re-entering without a visa.

If you are **traveling for reasons other than business or tourism** (employment, study, internship, etc.):

You **may need to obtain a visa** before you leave the U.S. depending on the host country. Check with the Embassy or Consulate of the country or countries to which you are traveling for their specific requirements. The State Department's Foreign Embassies webpage (<http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpi/32122.htm>) contains our most updated list of websites for foreign missions located in the U.S.

Although Euro-tions require obtain a stamp upon initial country, many staffed with this function. If you want to be sure your entry is properly documented, you must ask for a stamp at an official point of entry. Without the stamp, you may be questioned and asked to prove how long you have been staying in Schengen countries when you leave.



pean Union regula- that non-EU visitors in their passports entry to a Schengen borders are not officers carrying out

For persons carrying diplomatic or official passports, please check with the Embassy or Consulate of the country to be visited for specific requirements which may differ from those for tourist passports.

The 26 member countries of the Schengen agreement zone are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

**Personal Security:** In light of recent unrest in the world, we would like to remind everyone to be mindful of your personal security. Please visit our website for a checklist of personal security practices:

<http://photos.state.gov/libraries/saudi-arabia/768382/yoderja/secguide.pdf>

# KIDS CORNER

## President's Day



Presidents' Day is celebrated in February to honor two of our greatest presidents, Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. The holiday is celebrated in the United States on the third Monday in February.

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** is a United States federal holiday marking the birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is observed on the third Monday of January each year, which is around the time of King's birthday, January 15. Dr. King was the chief spokesman for nonviolent activism in the civil rights movement, which successfully protested racial discrimination in federal and state law. Dr. King won the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize. The campaign for a federal holiday in King's honor began soon after his assassination in 1968. Ronald Reagan signed the holiday into law in 1983, and it was first observed on January 20, 1986. At first, some states resisted observing the holiday as such, giving it alternative names or combining it with other holidays. It was officially observed in all 50 states for the first time in 2000.

This year will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the famous "I Have a Dream" speech which Dr. King delivered on August 28, 1963, on the steps of the Washington, D.C., Lincoln Memorial during the march on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. For the full text, see the Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers project at Stanford University, [www.stanford.edu/group/king](http://www.stanford.edu/group/king).

*I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today."*

George Washington was born on February 22, 1732. When he was born, America was not a nation yet. It belonged to England, a country across the ocean. People in America didn't want to belong to England so they fought a war to become a separate country. George Washington was an American general in the war. America won the war and picked a new name: The United States of America. George Washington was elected to be its first President.

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12 in 1809. Things were different then. When Abe was a boy, he lived in a log cabin. A log cabin is a small house made out of logs cut from trees. His father cut down the trees and made the cabin. There were no electric lights in the cabin. Young Abe read books by firelight and drew with charcoal on a shovel. Abe's family was poor. Often he went barefoot because he didn't have any shoes. When Abraham Lincoln grew up, he studied hard and became a lawyer. Then he was elected to be a law-maker. In 1861, Abraham Lincoln became the 16th President of the United States.

## Groundhog Day



February 2 brings the most-watched weather forecast of the year—and the only one led by a rodent. Legend has it that on this morning, if a groundhog can see its shadow, there will be six more weeks of winter. If it cannot see its shadow, spring is on the way. Since a groundhog (or woodchuck or "whistle pig") hibernates for the winter, its coming out of the ground is a natural sign of spring. In Europe centuries ago, people watched for other hibernating animals, including badgers, bears, and hedgehogs, as signs of winter's end. Germans who immigrated to Pennsylvania in the mid-1800s began keeping an eye on the groundhog. The widespread population of the rodent made it a handy agent for this particular weather superstition. The most famous Groundhog Day Celebrations in the U.S. are in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania.

## Presidential Puzzle

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Z S M M N O S N H O J W G V R O X Q T E T
N N P P B J R R Q Y D C G A N D E L K Y Q N
F Y J E F F E R S O N N K M I A V H S U B
K A E A S M A D A P B R H Z A D N O X I N
G M B F N A G U X U U U A V I B R A O A Z
E R O P S D A T R H B I M S C O O A I H V
R N A N R I N E T H N U P V N O S N H O J
O S O N R S N R F N L O C N I L U D A R D
M P W S T O A Z A G L Q S H R N A M U R T
L I L V K N E K T K Y P E I A E F G O E W
L E Y T M C K I N L E Y V O R N L F S W A
I R A D L G A M I C C A R T E R A Y R O S
F C G V E E I J S M A D A G I M A N T H H
A E Y A C N V I O G W V D L M I N H V N I
L B O H R E N E Y U I I R M O R V E N
J O B L J F H E S S L Z H S U B T C J S G
S E Y A H G I Z K O S B E R V J N K V I T
I W E M U J G E O R O L Y A T T I B A E O
K C M P Q F L C L E N R C R B Z L M Y N N
N O S I R A H C D R E O D N G C F I P L
T L E V E S O O R D N A L E V E L C A G Y
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Can you find the surnames of the US presidents listed below?  
Five presidents have the same surname and each of these names appear twice.  
The names may be horizontal, vertical, forwards or backwards.

- NIXON
- OBAMA
- PIERCE
- POLK
- REAGAN
- ROOSE-
- VELT
- ROOSE-
- VELT
- TAFT
- TAYLOR
- TRUMAN
- TYLER
- VAN BU-
- REN
- GRANT
- HARDING
- HARRISON
- HARRISON
- HAYES
- HOOVER
- JACKSON
- JEFFERSON
- JOHNSON
- JOHNSON
- KENNEDY
- LINCOLN
- MADISON
- MCKINLEY
- ADAMS
- ADAMS
- ARTHUR
- BUCHANAN
- BUSH
- BUSH
- CARTER
- CLEVELAND
- CLINTON
- COOLIDGE
- EISENHOWER
- FILLMORE
- FORD
- GARFIELD

## Inauguration Facts:

- The date of the first inauguration was April 30, 1789.
- Thomas Jefferson was the first president to be inaugurated in Washington, D.C., in 1801.
- In 1949, President Harry Truman became the first to be sworn on Television.
- James Buchanan's 1857 inauguration was the first to be captured on cameras.
- The location for the first president inauguration was New York City, which was then the capital of the fledgling nation.