

# The CONSULAR BEACON

*A U.S. Embassy newsletter for U.S. citizens in Uruguay*  
Issue 1 | Dec. 2015

Avoid long lines...  
Renew now

Meet the Consul

Are you a  
**SMART**  
traveler?

Your Security

Goodbye  
Passport Pages

## WELCOME FROM THE CONSUL



Welcome to the inaugural edition of Embassy Montevideo's consular newsletter, the Consular Beacon. Whether you are visiting Uruguay for the first time, or are a seasoned veteran, we have included information that you will find very useful. From security information to the latest passport and consular news, we are dedicated to providing you with important information for your stay in

Uruguay.

For our first edition, I want to take this opportunity to highlight a few of the changes that we've made over the past several months. From rejuvenating our outreach efforts, to revitalizing our Warden program, to reducing the amount of time you spend in our waiting room for consular services, we have made great strides in improving the overall experience for our U.S. citizens in Uruguay.

If you recently had a great experience, or have an idea for us to improve our service, feel free to drop us a note at [MontevideoACS@state.gov](mailto:MontevideoACS@state.gov). We are always interested in hearing from our customers.

My team and I look forward to meeting you soon. Wherever your travels may take you, know that we are here for you.

Corey Bordenkecher

## MORE THAN JUST PASSPORTS



Millions of U.S. citizens travel abroad every year and encounter no difficulties. However, U.S. embassies and consulates assist nearly 200,000 Americans each year who are victims of crime, accident or illness, or whose family and friends need to contact them in an emergency. When an emergency happens, or if a natural disaster, terrorism, or civil unrest strikes during your foreign travel, the Consular Section's American Citizen Services Unit can be your source of assistance and information. For a full list of emergency and non-emergency services, please visit our website at [www.uruguay.usembassy.gov](http://www.uruguay.usembassy.gov).

### IMPORTANT DATES

#### EMBASSY CLOSED

DEC 25: CHRISTMAS

JAN 1: NEW YEAR'S DAY

JAN 6: THREE KING'S DAY

JAN 18: MLK DAY

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

DEC 4: TOWN HALL



# Summer Travel

Get in STEP

Photo: Pablo Castro

Remind your family and friends to enroll in the U.S. State Department's free Smart Traveler Enrollment Program in order for them to be included on the Emergency Messages mailing list. It is a great way to keep abreast of any public announcements on Travel Warnings, safety and security issues in Uruguay and

elsewhere.

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided to U.S. citizens who are traveling to or living in a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that U.S. Embassies and Consulates can better assist you in an

emergency, including some situations where family or friends in the U.S. are having problems contacting you with important news.



Smart  
Traveler  
Enrollment  
Program



Photo: Pablo Castro

## YOU'RE INVITED!

To a Town Hall meeting for all U.S. citizens on **Friday, December 4th** from **4pm to 6pm** at the Alianza Binational Cultural Center in Montevideo. Consular staff and Embassy personnel will be available to answer questions and address concerns facing the U.S. community in Uruguay. We look forward to seeing you there!

*The Alianza Binational Cultural Center is located at Paraguay 1217, between Soriano and Canelones.*

## APPLY NOW

Apply for Your U.S. Passport Now, Before the Busy Winter Travel Season!

If you're traveling internationally for the winter holidays, now is the time to apply for your U.S. passport. As an incentive to apply early, the Department is offering faster processing times through November.

Knowing your passport expiration date may help you avoid costly travel delays. Some countries will not allow you to enter if your passport expires in less than six months. Learn more by reviewing the [Country Specific Information](#) for the country you intend to visit.



Photo: Pablo Castro



## NEED AN APPOINTMENT?

Appointments are required for all non-emergency services, including passport, report of birth abroad, and notary services. Appointments are available Monday through Thursday, 1pm to 3pm at the U.S. Embassy in Montevideo. You can make an appointment online via our [Appointment System](#).

Federal Benefits customers may visit any Monday, between 1pm to 2pm and do not require an appointment. If you aren't sure if your service requires an appointment, contact us by email at [MontevideoACS@state.gov](mailto:MontevideoACS@state.gov).



## PHASING OUT ADDITIONAL PASSPORT PAGES

Effective **January 1, 2016** U.S. Embassies around the world will no longer be adding additional pages to valid passports. After December 31, 2015, if your current passport is running out of pages, you will need to renew your passport.

All new passport books will have 52 pages, at no extra cost to U.S. citizens applying from outside the United States. If you have an urgent need for travel and realize too late that your passport is running out of pages, you can visit the Embassy and apply for an Emergency Passport. Please visit

our [website](#) for more information about Emergency Passports.

And don't forget, many countries – including Uruguay and the United States! – require visitors to have at least two blank pages in their passports before allowing them to enter. Before you travel, we also urge you to check [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for the most up-to-date information and entry and exit requirements for your intended destination.

## Elections

### 2015-2016

**GET STARTED TODAY!**

[CLICK FOR MORE INFO](#)



## A STRONG WARDEN NETWORK

The Warden network consists of U.S. citizen volunteers living long-term in Uruguay, and who are well-trusted by their communities. While Wardens are not Embassy employees, they agree to help the U.S. Embassy in a crisis and to disseminate important information to other U.S. citizens, via email, telephone, or other social media. We currently have a great group of Wardens covering Uruguay, but we are looking for additional resources in the Artigas or Salto area. If you or someone you know would like to serve as a warden for these areas, please contact us at

[MontevideoACS@state.gov](mailto:MontevideoACS@state.gov) for more information.



# DON'T BE A VICTIM

As is noted in the Department of States Country Specific Information for [Uruguay](#), the security environment continues to face challenges with regard to petty theft, armed robberies, and in some cases crime with violence. While this is increasing throughout the country, some of the most affected areas are those frequented by American citizens. While there is no information to support that Americans are specifically targeted based on nationality, the Regional Security Office would like to highlight common themes among the incidents and remind everyone of recommended personal security practices.



## RECENT TRENDS

Restaurants, gas stations, and grocery stores located have been sites of recent armed robberies within the past several months. Common themes among these incidents include:

- Occurred between 2200 and 0300
- Suspects were between 16 – 24 year old males
- Suspects were armed with firearms and/or knives
- Employees and/or customers were robbed
- Resistance by the victims often resulted in violence and/or use of the weapon

## THINK AHEAD – PERSONAL SECURITY MEASURES

- Maintain situational awareness. Be observant of the people and vehicles around you. If something doesn't look right, leave the area.
- Avoid isolating situations. Travel in groups and stick to heavily trafficked locations.
- Avoid restaurants, gas stations, and grocery stores after 2200, if possible.
- Keep the amount of valuables on your person to a minimum (money, credit cards, cellular phones, jewelry, etc.).
- Do not resist or intervene in an armed robbery. The chance of being injured during a robbery is greatly reduced if the victim cooperates.

## AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Contact the local police to report the incident and for immediate help. Remember to request a copy of the police report. For more information about resources for victims of crime, and how the U.S. Embassy in Montevideo can assist, visit [Travel.State.gov](#).