



Kahnawà:ke Ratitsénhaiens

Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

P.O. Box 720 Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Territory JOL 1B0

Phone: (450) 632-7500 Fax: (450) 638-5958

Web Site: www.Kahnawake.com E-mail: communications@mck.ca

Enhsakotò:kénhte Nitiotié:ren Tsi Ietsenhaiéntákhwa

Tsi Nahóten Karihwanákere No'nenk News Release

MCK Offers Supporting Documents for Kahnawa'kehró:non Crossing into U.S.

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 5, Ohiarí:ha/June 2009) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to inform the community that, despite agreements announced by both Canada (via INAC) and the United States (Department of Homeland Security), there has been at least one confirmed incident encountered by a community member having difficulty using their INAC status card when crossing the border into the U.S.

The situation is being immediately addressed by the MCK. The heads of the border crossings in the area are being contacted to remind them of the current understanding regarding the extension that has been agreed to.

In the meantime, the MCK will make available copies of a letter received yesterday from INAC (dated June 3, 2009) to community members who plan to travel by land to the United States. The letter, signed by INAC's Director of Individual Affairs Ray Hatfield, refers to the recent announcements from the Department of Homeland Security that confirm that the current Indian Status cards are being accepted past the June 1 deadline. This may offer some support in a case where a border agent may claim to be unaware of the exemption/extension.

Copies of this letter are available at the main offices of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke and online at www.kahnawake.com.

-30-

For further information, please contact:
Joe Delaronde, Political Press Attaché
Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke
450-632-7500
joe.delaronde@mck.ca

June 3, 2009

Chief and Councillors:

By letter dated April 27, 2009, I informed you of the decision made to delay the implementation of the Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS) pending completion of a quality assurance review of the issuance process of the SCIS. I also informed you that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) would not be in a position to deliver the SCIS to First Nation communities located near the Canada-United States border in advance of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) effective date of June 1, 2009.

Today, I want to inform you of recent announcements made by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The Government of Canada has been informed by DHS that the WHTI will be applied with a practical and common sense approach, which includes a period of flexibility. **During this period of flexibility, the current versions of the Certificate of Indian Status (plastic and paper laminate) will be acceptable documents to present when visiting the United States by land or water.** The period and extent of this flexibility are entirely at the discretion of U.S. officials.

I would also like to share with you that on May 4th, 2009, the Government of Canada received official notification from the United States that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security approved the SCIS business plan and is in the process of designating the SCIS as a WHTI-compliant document to visit the U.S. by land or water. This means that once the SCIS is implemented nationally, it will be accepted when visiting the United States by land or water. This positive development attests to the confidence we have in the security and integrity of the new SCIS.

Once again, please note that the document requirements for travelling to the United States by air require a valid Canadian passport or Nexus Card. Information on document requirements and the period of flexibility can be found on the Customs Border Patrol website at or Canadian Border Services Agency websites (links below).

- www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/newsroom/news_releases/05272009_7.xml
- www.cbsa.gc.ca/whti-ivho/cert-ind-eng.html

.../2

Canada

I hope this update addresses concerns you may have had arising from the delay in implementing the new SCIS. As a reminder, regular updates on the implementation of the Secure Certificate of Indian Status can be found at: <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/br/is/scs/index-eng.asp>.

Yours sincerely,



Ray Hatfield
Director General
Individual Affairs