



EBTC INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SUBJECT: Enhanced DLs

SOURCE: Vancouver Province

The U.S. border crossing at Blaine, Wash., will become the first on the border in September to process enhanced driver's licences, said a U.S. border official.

The crossing, along with one on the border of Arizona and Mexico, will be equipped with the computers capable of reading the new licences, which are being tested in a pilot project in B.C. and are scheduled for rollout next year, said Colleen Manaher of U.S. Customs.

The computers will be rolled out to the rest of the border crossings by early next year.

The enhanced driver's licences will be acceptable in lieu of passports at crossings when a U.S. requirement making passports mandatory takes effect on June 1 next year.

Manaher will be speaking on the challenges of streamlining passage through secure borders between Canada and the U.S., particularly leading up to the 2010 Olympics, at the annual Pacific Northwest Economic Region conference in Vancouver today through Thursday.

The conference will discuss a wide range of topics, including agriculture and cross-border trade, Asia-Pacific issues, environment, health care, education, research and development, tourism and the workforce.

Topics include border security for agriculture products in light of recent health scares such as the tainted pet-food scare, the conflict and gap between rural and urban communities and how to maximize positive media exposure around the 2010 Olympics.

Speakers include U.S. ambassador to Canada David Wilkins, Canadian ambassador to the U.S. Michael Wilson, Idaho governor Butch Otter, Yukon premier Dennis Fentie, Vancouver mayor Sam Sullivan, B.C. premier Gordon Campbell and various provincial and federal ministers.

PNWER is a regional U.S.-Canadian forum designed to encourage global economic competitiveness.

