



INFORMATION BULLETIN

DATE: October 14, 2008

SUBJECT: Michigan adopts EDLs

SOURCE: Detroit News

State and federal officials signed an agreement Monday that will allow U.S. citizens in Michigan the option of using a driver's license, rather than a more costly passport, to cross the U.S.-Canada border when tougher security rules take effect next June.

Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land and Stewart Baker, an assistant secretary with the Department of Homeland Security, signed documents authorizing a new and enhanced Michigan driver's license at a ceremony at the Detroit Regional Chamber.

The new cards, which contain an electronic chip that can be read by border guards, should be available next spring at a cost of less than \$50, Land said at a news conference.

State laws to allow the enhanced driver's licenses were passed by the Legislature in February. They are intended to enhance border security while still encouraging a free flow of traffic and commerce across the U.S. Canada border.

"We do more business with Canada than any other state," -- more than \$1 billion a week--said Land.

Richard E. Blouse, Jr., president and CEO of the Detroit Regional Chamber, said the new license "balances national security with economic security."

Baker said enhanced state driver's licenses have also been approved by federal authorities for the states of Washington, New York, Vermont and Arizona and U.S. border authorities recently began accepting the cards on a pilot basis at a Washington-British Columbia land crossing.

Enhanced personal identification cards for Michigan residents will also be available, Land said. Residents will also have the option of continuing to use a regular driver's license.

Starting June 1, the federal government will require those crossing U.S.-Canada land border to present a passport or another acceptable form of enhanced identification. Those tougher rules are already in effect for air arrivals.