

A graphic featuring a globe with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The globe is rendered in shades of blue and purple. Overlaid on the globe is a black silhouette of an airplane in flight, moving from the bottom left towards the top right. The words "PASSPORT ANNOUNCEMENT" are written in large, bold, yellow capital letters across the center of the globe.

PASSPORT ANNOUNCEMENT

New ePassports to begin being issued

The U.S. Department of State reports that U.S. passports issued after October 2006 will contain embedded radio frequency identification chips that carry the holder's personal data and digital photo. The new passports promise to deter passport theft and forgeries, as well as speed up immigration checks at airports and borders.

The new passport combines face recognition and contactless chip technology. The chip, embedded in the cover of the passport, holds the same information that is printed in the passport: name, date of birth, gender, place of birth, dates of passport issuance and expiration, passport number, and photo image of the bearer.

The inclusion of the digital photograph will enable biometric comparison, through the use of facial recognition technology at international borders. The U.S. "ePassport" will also have a new look, incorporating additional anti-fraud and security features.

Passports without chips will still be valid for the full extent of their validity period.

For more information about the Electronic Passport, please visit the Bureau of Consular Affairs' website at <http://travel.state.gov>

For more information about applying for a passport, please visit the Clerk of the Court's website at: www.clerkofcourt.maricopa.gov/passport.asp

