



**Dennis Bevington
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MP's office issues alert on expiration of Permanent Residency cards

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – Dennis Bevington's Constituency Office has recently been informed that all Permanent Residency (PR) cards for landed immigrants issued after June 2002 have now reached their five-year expiration date. For those who wish to renew their PR cards, the wait at the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) processing centre in Sydney, Nova Scotia is 6-8 weeks. This waiting period is expected to grow fast as more people become aware of the situation.

A CIC official states the majority of NWT residents who obtained PR cards in 2002 are now Canadian citizens, or still have a while to go before their cards expire. However, a large number of cards were issued to residents of Fort Smith, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson and Inuvik in 2003.

Those without valid PR cards will be able to leave Canada, but will not be permitted to re-enter the country. In that case, they could visit the closest Canadian embassy and pay a \$50 fee, but the wait could be anywhere from one day to two weeks before receiving approval to re-enter.

One potential problem is those applying for a renewal are now required to obtain a photo with strict specifications. While several businesses and individuals in various communities across the NWT provide this service, the onus is on the individual seeking PR renewal to ensure that their photos meet the requirements (www.cic.gc.ca). Factors that may affect whether or not a PR photo is acceptable includes, but is not limited to: hair position, hats or head-dresses, shadows on the face, reflections in the lenses of eyeglasses, jewelry, size of the photograph.

CIC officials in the NWT can inspect PR photographs in an attempt to determine whether or not they meet the specifications, but the ultimate decision is made at the processing centre in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Prior to that, there is no guarantee that the photo will be approved.

"Given that summer vacations are approaching, I am concerned about the number of constituents who may be in this position," said Bevington.

For urgent cases, PR's can do the following (NOTE: this information is available at www.cic.gc.ca):

1. If you have not yet mailed your application

Please complete your application as instructed, include a copy of your plane tickets with your application, and write "Urgent-Proof of travel included" on your envelope. An agent from the processing centre will examine your application on a priority basis.

2. If you mailed your application before the processing times posted on the Web site and have not yet received your card, please send the following information by fax at (514) 496-8670:

surname and given name;
client ID number (if available);
date of birth;
home address;
telephone number;
e-mail address (if applicable);
a copy of your plane ticket; and
a copy of the pages of your passport showing your name, date of birth and photograph.
If all these requirements are met, we will examine your request and contact you within two business days to inform you whether it is possible to expedite the issuance of your PR card.

For assistance with card renewals, please contact the Centre For Northern Families' New Canadians and Multiculturalism Program at 873-2566, Service Canada in the Greenstone Federal Building, or the MP's office at 873-6995.

For more information contact:

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