



U.S. Embassy Prague American Citizen Services Newsletter

January 2009

Dear American Citizens :

We would like to welcome you to 2009 with what we propose to be a monthly newsletter for American citizens resident in the Czech Republic. Our concept is to provide you with information regarding services for American citizens provided by the Embassy in Prague that may be of use to you, solicit your feedback on services, and keep our distribution list current. We will *try* to limit the newsletter to a page or less, but if you prefer not to receive our e-mails just let us know and we will take you off the list.

Extended Service Hours. Our first announcement of the New Year is that we will be extending the time our service windows are open for American citizen services. In addition to our current hours, Monday through Friday from 8:30AM to 11:30AM, we will be open Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 1:00PM to 3:00PM, starting January 26. We're calling this a Visa Waiver dividend, as the recent elimination of the visa requirement for many Czech travelers to the U.S. has enabled us to shift some resources to American Citizen Services.

Brno American Citizen Services Day. We will send you a separate email on this new initiative once we finalize the details. Between mid-February and mid-March, we plan to visit Brno for a day to provide a full range of American citizen services, such as passport applications, notarial services, and consular reports of birth abroad. We hope to offer this service on a regular basis and extend it to other Czech locations in the future.

COMING SOON - Passport Renewal by Mail. If you have a full-validity (10-year) passport issued within the past 15 years, which was issued when you were at least 16 years old, and is not mutilated in any way, you may soon apply for passport renewal by mail. The passport must also be in your current name unless you can legally document a name change. If you meet these requirements and wish to avoid a trip to the Embassy, this is a great timesaver. We will provide additional information on this option shortly. Please check our website, <http://prague.usembassy.gov>, for updates as well.

Voting a Success? As you all know, there was quite a bit of interest in the elections last year. We believe that although absentee voting is still complex – the rules are different for each of the 50 states and eligible territories – there were some improvements made in the dissemination of information. We were pleased to provide assistance to more than 300 of you who came in during the month of October to mail your ballots or ask questions. Stay tuned for more election news, as 2009 will see some voting to replace vacant Senate seats and other offices.

Improving Outreach. We want to reach as many people in the American community as possible, so we urge you to forward this newsletter to your American friends in the Czech

Republic who might not be on our distribution list. Anyone can be added to the list by emailing ACSPrg@state.gov.

Please let us know if you have any questions, or if there are ways in which we might improve our services. We are often constrained by budget and/or regulation, but within these limitations we will always strive to do our best to serve you. You can reach us at ACSPrg@state.gov, and also at <http://prague.usembassy.gov>.

Best regards, and Happy New Year!

Stuart Hatcher
Consul General