



PRESS RELEASE

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CONSULAR OUTREACH IN TEXAS

Los Angeles, 04 February 2009 – A team from the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles will be conducting a Consular Outreach Program in two major cities in Texas. The schedules are as follows:

- **Houston, TX on 12-13 March 2009** at the **International Food Court** located at Beechnut corner Beltway 8. Service hours will be **from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm**.
- **Dallas, TX on 15-16 March 2009** at the **Memorial Park Recreation Center**, 1950-B South Valley Parkway, Lewisville. Service hours will be **from 10:00 am until 7:00 pm on 15 March 2009** and **from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm on 16 March 2009**.

These consular outreach programs are being undertaken in cooperation with the *Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Texas (PACCTexas)* and the *Filipino American Council of South Texas (FACOST)*.

The following consular services will be rendered:

1. Applications for Machine Readable Passport (**Cost: \$50**), to be returned to the applicant by mail at an additional cost of **\$6**.
2. Applications for the retention and re-acquisition of Philippine citizenship pursuant to Republic Act 9225 or Dual Citizenship Law (**Cost: \$50**). Oath-taking will be scheduled on the same day for qualified applicants.
3. Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) Registration. (**Gratis**)

The Consulate will only accept payments in cash, postal money order or cashier's check. Personal checks will not be accepted.

Please note that these consular outreach programs **will not accept** application for **authentication** and **notarization** of documents since these could be **filed** with the Consulate **by mail**.

Application forms and requirements can be downloaded from the Consulate's website at www.philippineconsulatela.org.

In view of the anticipated high volume of applicants and in order to ensure an orderly flow of operations, this Consular outreach shall be guided by the following:

1. **STRICTLY BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.** No walk-in applicants will be entertained.
2. All Applicants for any of the above consular services are requested to set up an **appointment** with the Consulate, **not later than 6 March 2009**, either through **fax (213) 639-0990** or through email at consular.outreach.tx@gmail.com.
3. **All Passport Applicants** should send an **advance copy** of their **passport application forms** and **data page** (bearing the name and photo) of their passports to the Consulate either **by fax or by email**. **Incomplete forms will not be processed.**
4. **Dual Citizenship Applicants** should send an **advance copy** of their **application forms** and **supporting documents**. **Incomplete forms will not be processed.**
5. **OAV Registrants** should also send an **advance copy** of their **application forms** and **supporting documents**. **Incomplete forms will not be processed.**
6. Names of all applicants with **pre-processed applications** will be posted at the Consulate's website (www.philippineconsulatela.org) **by 6 March 2009**. **Personal appearance is required** for all applicants.
7. All **applicants** are **advised** to **transact** their **business** directly with **Consulate officials** and not through travel agencies.
8. **Private photographers**, who are knowledgeable of the photo requirements for the MRP, will be **present** at the **venue** during the Consular Outreach for those who will need photos for passport renewal.

For general information, interested parties may wish to call or email the following:

1. **Vice Consul Charmaine Serna-Chua** (Tel: 1-213-637-3004 | E-mail: consular.outreach.tx@gmail.com) of the Consulate; or,
2. **Ms. Ethel Mercado, President, PACCTexas** (Tel: 1-940-728-2222 | E-mail: outreachdallas@pacctexas.org) for **Dallas**; or,
3. **Ms. Tess Tuazon, President, FACOST & BOD PACCTexas** (Tel: 1-713-787-1938 | outreachhouston@pacctexas.org) for **Houston**.

For the information of the public, the Philippine Embassy and Consulates General in the U.S. started to accept and to process applications for Machine Readable Passports (MRP) on **June 2, 2008**. This is in compliance with the requirements of the International

Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for its member states, including the Philippines, to issue MRPs not later than **1 April 2010**.

Since applications are sent to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila via diplomatic pouch, it may take **six weeks** for a passport to be released to the applicants, from the time the application is accepted. **Personal appearance** is required for data verification, finger-printing and signature capture. Applications by mail are no longer accepted.

In compliance with the new photo requirements for the MRP, applicants are requested to visit the Consulate's website (www.philippineconsulate.org).

While **some countries** may still **honor** valid **green Philippine** passports beyond 1 April 2010 as **bona fide travel documents** until they expire, **most countries** will **require** travelers to be holders of either **machine readable passports** or **e-passport** for their sojourn by **2010**.

In this regard, all Philippine **passport holders** are advised **to renew** their Philippine passport **six months prior** to its **expiration**, in accordance with ICAO regulations, and **to secure** their **plane tickets** only after they have **received** their **new passport**.

All Filipinos, including those with valid green passports, are therefore **encouraged to apply** for their machine readable passports **as early as possible**. ###end