

## CIVIL CIRCLES



Photographs by Jake Wright, The Hill Times

**Making the grade:** Passport Canada falls under Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon's purview. AG Sheila Fraser said she was impressed at how Passport Canada improved its systems and work.

# Passport Canada's turnaround impresses AG and Deloitte

Passport listened to the AG's report, turned things around, doubled its employees and ramped up its passport output.



BY CYNTHIA MÜNSTER

Four years after a scathing report was released by the Auditor General's Office, Passport Canada has turned things around, has doubled its employees and ramped up its passport output to 4.9 million annually.

Two weeks ago, Deloitte took note and awarded the agency the top recognition in its "Public Sector Leadership Awards" for the changes the agency has made since documentation requirements also changed for travel to the U.S. which created a surge in passport demands in 2007 to 2008.

Deloitte's national public sector industry leader Paul Macmillan told *The Hill Times* that it's very unusual to see that kind of turnaround in the public sector and his organization chose to highlight it because he said they believe it's applicable to other agencies and departments facing process bottlenecks.

"They were able to roll up their sleeves and get the organization involved from top to bottom in figuring out what was the problem and how to go about fixing it and it wasn't simply a case of throwing money at a problem, but rather looking hard at the way that they had historically been processing applications," said Mr. Macmillan.

Passport Canada was "overwhelmed" by the numbers of passport applications that year, which "skyrocketed, almost overnight" to 3.6 million, from 2.5 million, Passport Canada Chief Operating Officer Jody Thomas said to Deloitte in a presentation.

"Lineups snaked around the block and headlines blared as the agency found itself unable to keep up with new applications. To meet this elevated need, the agency reinvented itself by introducing a new, more flexible and accelerated customer service model, simplifying back-end processing, reducing turnaround times and refining forecasting to improve its ability to allocate resources ahead of demand," said Ms. Thomas, who was unavailable for an interview last week. She described the end results—4.8 million passports in 2007-2008

and on track to five million "with no lineups"—as "nothing short of revolutionary."

Declared Ms. Thomas: "We realized that none of us would succeed unless we all did. For Passport Canada, that represented an important culture change. We got rid of the silos, we stopped dissecting issues. We worked as one, we got it done."

Auditor General Sheila Fraser said "they made a lot of progress."

Jean-Sébastien Roy, Passport Canada spokesperson, said over the past few years Passport Canada has introduced new policies to simplify passport renewal, streamlining the process so that those renewing their passports don't have to start all over again but rather submit the relevant, new information and photo. Streamlining means dividing up the tasks, which frees up local agents to take in new applications during busy periods and processing when it's less busy. The agency has expanded its accessibility by working with Canada Post and Service Canada to have more "service points" where people can submit their passport applications. It currently has 230 points of service, 33 of which are Passport Canada offices, up from 30 in 2003. In her spring report this year, the Auditor General looked again at the agency and found that the increased service points help and internal reporting and tracking have improved in the agency.

Passport Canada's regular operations are self-funded though passport sales, but it does get occasional government funding, such as in 2007-2008, when the agency received \$55-million from Treasury Board to address the anticipated surge in applications, that year alone the agency added more than 700 employees to its workforce.

Passport Canada falls under the Department of Foreign Affairs. It can currently issue up to 4.9 million passports annually. In the event of a very large increase in passport demand, a contingency plan has been developed and passport Canada would be able to increase its production significantly, said Mr. Roy.

The agency employs almost 3,000 public servants and in 2008-2009 the agency spent \$44.8-million on its operations.

*The Hill Times*

## OTTAWA outfront speakers series

New Ideas. Better Policies.

# Can we have an adult conversation about TAXES?

**Hugh Mackenzie**  
in conversation with **Susan Riley**  
of the *Ottawa Citizen*

**Tuesday, December 1, 2009**  
**12:00-1:45 pm**  
**Penthouse, Sheraton Ottawa**  
**150 Albert Street**

Admission: \$20. Lunch served.  
RSVP by November 27  
to 613-565-9449  
operations@rideauinstitute.ca



CCPA  
CANADIAN CENTRE  
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES  
CENTRE CANADIEN  
de POLITIQUES ALTERNATIVES



THE HILL TIMES  
EMBASSY

TAX EXPERT HUGH MACKENZIE makes the case for rebuilding government's fiscal capacity and making the public investments needed to meet the challenges we face as a nation. Will public services once again be sacrificed on the altar of deficit elimination, as happened in the 1990s? Can we have high-quality public services with U.S.-style taxes?



In the early 1990s, Hugh Mackenzie was Executive Director of the Ontario Fair Tax Commission and co-authored its final report. He is currently a research associate at both the CCPA and the Centre for Urban Studies and Community Studies, University of Toronto, and a Member of the Board of the Atkinson Charitable Foundation.



sparks Dental Clinic

Ottawa Downtown Core

### COSMETIC DENTISTRY

- Resin bonding
- CEREC crowns, veneers (single visit)
- Implant prosthetic

### LASER DENTISTRY

- Decay removal
  - Treatment of sensitive teeth
  - Treatment of cold sores and canker sores
- LASER TEETH WHITENING (one hour in office appointment)  
LASER GUM TREATMENT

### GENERAL AND EMERGENCY DENTISTRY

**INVISALIGN** – invisible adult orthodontics

*New patients welcome*  
*Sit back, relax with our large selection*  
*of DVDs, CDs on office entertainment system*

**Allow us to pamper you at our 'dental spa' - Dr. Tanya Bracanovich & Associates**  
240 Sparks Street, Level A • (613) 232-1411 • info@sparksdental.com • Reserved Validated Parking

