



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

September 18, 2006

Press Release

US CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP DURING CITIZENSHIP DAY CEREMONIES AT PARKS AROUND THE NATION

Ceremonies to Celebrate Citizenship, Celebrate America's National Parks

WASHINGTON – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Department of the Interior's National Park Service (NPS) kicked off a partnership today to welcome new American citizens to the United States at some of our more historic and picturesque national parks. USCIS Director Emilio T. Gonzalez and Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne made the announcement during a ceremony in celebration of Citizenship Day at Ellis Island, the historic gateway of immigration to the United States. During a special naturalization ceremony, Director Gonzalez administered the Oath of Allegiance to more than 100 New York area residents and Secretary Kempthorne later addressed the new citizens.

Gonzalez and Kempthorne noted that in commemoration of Citizenship Day and Constitution Week (September 17th to September 23rd) more than 28,000 new Americans will be sworn in at approximately 133 citizenship ceremonies around the nation. This year, USCIS expects to help more than 650,000 men, women and children from nearly every country on the globe become U.S. citizens.

“There is an enduring connection between the American people and our national parks, which this partnership celebrates by presenting new opportunities to enhance the meaning and stature of citizenship ceremonies,” remarked Gonzalez. “National parks provide the perfect backdrop to citizenship ceremonies and allow the National Park Service to build connections between new citizens and America's system of national parks.”

“The Department of the Interior and the National Park Service are honored to be the very first to welcome these new Americans,” said Kempthorne. “This land is now their land and we look to these new American citizens as the stewards of our parks so that they will endure for the enjoyment of future generations.”

The announcement of this partnership coincides with an Executive Order signed by President Bush creating the “Task Force on New Americans” which is mandated to strengthen the efforts of Federal, State, and local agencies to help integrate legal immigrants into American society. The cooperation of USCIS and the NPS is one of the many ways that the Department of Homeland Security is working to fulfill this mandate and welcome new immigrants to American society.

(more)



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CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES AT NATIONAL PARKS SEPTEMBER 17-23

Sunday, September 17, 2006

- National Mall and Memorial Parks, 7th and 8th Streets N.W. and Madison Drive, Washington, D.C. 12:00 p.m.

Monday, September 18th

- Jean Lafitte National Park, Wetlands Cultural Center, New Orleans
- Ellis Island National Monument, New York, NY
- Charles Pinckney National Historical Site, Charleston, SC
- Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, St. Louis, MO
- Homestead National Park, Beatrice, NE

Wednesday, September 20

- Cabrillo National Monument (Military Naturalization), San Diego, CA

Friday, September 22

- Yosemite National Park, Sierra Nevada, CA
- Great Sand Dunes in Mosca, CO

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