

## **NASCIO Recognition Award Nomination**

**Title:** Enhanced Driver License/Identification Card Project

**Category:** Cross-Boundary Collaboration and Partnerships category

**State:** Washington

## Executive Summary

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) is a joint initiative between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of State (DOS) that requires all travelers to and from the Caribbean, Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda to present a passport, or other approved document, in order to enter or re-enter the United States. Re-entry from these areas has historically been exempt from passport requirements.

The new requirement had the potential to seriously disrupt Washington State's robust trade, tourism, and travel relationships with Canada. With the added pressure of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver, B.C., Governor Chris Gregoire of Washington State and Premier Gordon Campbell of British Columbia jointly wrote President George W. Bush in December 2005, expressing concern that costly identification requirements could dissuade families and travelers from crossing the Washington/British Columbia border.

At a conference in July 2006, Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff expressed a willingness to consider passport-equivalent documents to meet the WHTI requirements. On March 23, 2007, DHS signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the State of Washington to launch the Enhanced Driver License/Identification Card (EDL/ID) program as an acceptable alternative for crossing U.S. land and sea borders.

Participation is voluntary, and the cost is \$15 more than a regular Washington State driver license or ID card (vs. \$100 for a U.S. passport). Security enhancements included in the EDL/ID are industry best practices:

- An icon on the front of the card indicates that it is an EDL/ID
- The back of the card has a Machine Readable Zone that can be scanned at the border
- Passive vicinity radio frequency identification (RFID) is embedded in the card to facilitate rapid identification checks at the border
- The Radio Frequency ID (RFID) tag has a unique reference number and does not contain personal information
- Data encryption, secure networks, and firewalls protect the transmission of EDL/ID information

The success of this program is directly attributable to effective collaboration (driven by Washington State officials) between the numerous, and often disparate stakeholders. Stakeholders include: Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL), the Washington State Department of Information Services (DIS), Department of Personnel (DOP), the office of Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire; the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of State (DOS); U.S. Customs and Border Protection; the Provincial Government of British Columbia; and the card vendor, Digimarc. The project has attracted a great deal of interest from governments around the country and throughout the western hemisphere.

## Description

### Business problem

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) policy enacted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Department of State requires all travelers journeying to and from the Caribbean, Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda to present a passport or other approved document to establish identity and citizenship in order to enter the United States. Until this time, U.S. citizens could use their driver license or government identification card to cross the border. This major change had the potential to seriously disrupt Washington State's robust trade, tourism, and travel relationships with Canada.

Passports and fees can cost \$100 and take weeks or months to obtain, which is cost and time prohibitive for many Washington citizens.

A solution needed to be identified that:

- 1) was acceptable to the U.S., Canadian, and Washington State security and customs standards.
- 2) was affordable to both the state and its citizens.
- 3) was accurate.
- 4) was easily accessible to Washington citizens.
- 5) could be delivered within a tight timeline and budget.

### Solution

With the additional pressure of the Winter Olympic Games taking place in Vancouver, B.C., in 2010, Washington's Governor Chris Gregoire and Premier Gordon Campbell of British Columbia jointly wrote President George W. Bush in December 2005, expressing concern that costly identification requirements could dissuade families and travelers from crossing the Washington/British Columbia border. Eighteen months later, Washington offered the first Enhanced Driver License and Identification Card to its citizens – providing a cheaper, faster, and convenient way to guarantee proof of citizenship, and allowing for smoother, border crossing to Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean.

### Technical Overview

The EDL/ID card provides Homeland Security Border Patrol personnel with a driver license photo and personal information via the DIS secure private network.

To accomplish this, the EDL/ID card contains an embedded an Ultra High Frequency Passive Vicinity RFID tag. This tag does not contain any personal identifying information – just a unique reference number. At the border, the RFID reader energizes the tag and transmits the reference number back to the border officer. This number is then matched to DOL records to verify the information contained on the

front of the EDL/ID card. Data encryption, secure networks and firewalls protect the transmission of the EDL/ID information.

The license manufacturer, Digimarc Corporation, was new to the technology of embedding RFID tags into their products. Both Digimarc and the DOL team had to work closely with Homeland Security to identify frequency and wattage specifications for the tag. DOL also worked with Digimarc to secure additional technology, including the biometric identification (facial recognition) for accurate identity confirmation.

DOL and DIS worked closely to identify the networking and security needs of the RFID system, and to make it available to several border outposts throughout the area as well as various DOL locations that would be issuing the EDL/ID.

### Stakeholder Support

- Intergovernmental
  - The overwhelmingly positive outcome of this project could not have happened without close cooperation between Washington State, U.S. Federal and Canadian governments.
  - The EDL team had to work collaboratively with U.S. Customs and Border Protection staff, as well as their computers and software, to make sure the networks would communicate effectively when required.
  - The team also had to work with Homeland Security officials to ensure that the EDL/ID program would meet the federal standards.
  - A Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the Department of Homeland Security and Washington State to authorize the EDL/ID as a recognized form of identification that can be used in border crossings from Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean.
- Intragovernmental
  - The Washington State Department of Licensing took a team approach to the project, starting with clearly outlining the required procedures and security features. This was followed by an assessment of current infrastructure and identification of needed tools.
  - Twelve DOL offices around the state were originally identified as EDL/ID interview sites. Each of these sites had to be outfitted with scanners and document authentication software, as well as significant staff training regarding the new requirements.
  - The state had to adjust labor agreements with DOL staff members required to handle citizenship documents.
  - DOL worked with state legislators to enact enabling legislation to authorize the EDL.
  - DOL office and Headquarters technology had to include:



- Online address verification
- Online SSN verification
- Document authentication system
- Biometric Recognition system
- Real time verification of Washington State birth certificates with Department of Health

Timeline and Communication

**Example of web advertising:**

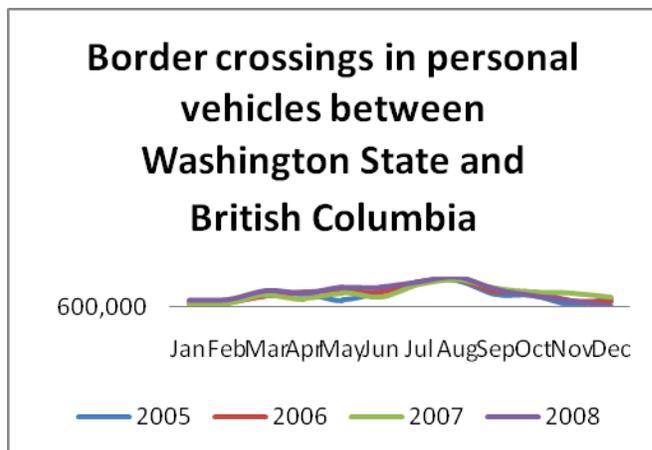
It took 18 months to deliver the project to the citizens of Washington State. Just before the service went live on January 22, 2008, a comprehensive public awareness campaign was initiated statewide, on the availability of the EDL/ID.



Significance

Control at the U.S./Canadian border has tightened, constraining tourism and spontaneous travel while creating major traffic delays since September 11, 2001. These delays constrict international trade, economic development, and overall growth of regional economies. The implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) heightens those effects. No longer is a traveler able to cross the border by land or sea with just a photo ID and an oral declaration of citizenship.

With an estimated 23 percent of Americans and 55 percent of Canadians holding passports, tourism and border crossing travel was already down in part due to confusion surrounding passport requirements (see chart below). Given the deep cultural ties, and the trade and tourism between Washington and British Columbia, the two governments saw the need to create a border-crossing card. This card had to meet federal security requirements specified by WHTI, but it was essential to keep the card more cost effective for families than acquiring passports. Due to the upcoming 2009 World Police and Fire Games in Washington and the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver, B.C., the need for this card to be designed, developed, and implemented became imperative.



The Peace Arch border crossing, between Blaine, Washington, and Surrey, B.C., is among the busiest border crossings between Canada and the U.S. More than 32,000 vehicles cross the B.C./Washington border every day, and more than 1.3 million trucks cross the B.C./Washington border each year. Moreover, a recent survey of B.C. and Washington truck drivers estimates border crossing congestion costs

operators \$60 million a year.

In order to ease the congestion while making it as convenient as possible for individuals and families to travel back and forth across the border, the State of Washington launched the Enhanced Driver's/Border Crossing Project. As defined by the partners – Washington State (specifically the Department of Licensing), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the government of British Columbia – the project would entail:

- 1) designing and implementing the systems required to process enhanced driver license and ID card applications
- 2) issuing the new license and ID card
- 3) installing the systems and equipment at the border to verify identification

Coordination between the three parties was vital to the success of the project.

Washington's project was the first Enhanced Driver License (EDL) program in North America, receiving some 4,000 applications and issuing 400 EDLs within one week of launching the program. British Columbia also began a pilot plan, which was over-subscribed in less than 72 hours. This powerful public response may have surprised some, though officials in both Washington and B.C. anticipated that a border crossing card would be welcomed by a general public that is accustomed to seeing the border as little more than a formality.

The appeal of the enhanced driver license does not stop in Washington and British Columbia (B.C.). Washington State, in conjunction with the Pacific Northwest Economic Region partnership, has conducted outreach including a webinar with officials from B.C. and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to help other jurisdictions learn more about how to set up their own EDL program. Representatives from eleven U.S. states, seven Canadian provinces and a province of Mexico joined the webinar. Arizona, Vermont, and New York have also signed agreements with the Department of Homeland Security similar to Washington's, while the Canadian provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Yukon, and Manitoba are also working actively to develop their own enhanced driver licenses.

This one idea – spawned from a bilateral, cross-border meeting, advocated and developed through bilateral and multilateral cross-border engagement – has spread and set an agenda in two nations. It has also tapped into a fundamental need of our citizenry: that our borders should not be an impermeable, barrier that separates our lives and livelihoods, but rather an effective tool for addressing our mutual security concerns while remaining open to legitimate travel and trade.

The efforts of the State of Washington and British Columbia demonstrate what border regions can achieve when they identify mutual priorities and collaborate across boundaries toward objectives of national importance.

## Benefit of the project

- **Citizens save money - \$15 vs. \$100:** The fee for the EDL/ID is only an additional \$15 above the normal cost of getting a drivers license or ID card. Children are able to get an enhanced ID card without applying for a passport. U.S. passports now cost \$100, plus any additional express fees for priority processing.
- **Citizens save waiting time - two weeks vs. four-12 weeks:** Processing time for an EDL/ID is two weeks or less. Processing time for U.S. passports is currently four weeks, but can increase to 12 weeks during peak processing time.
- **Citizens save time in line at the border:** At a border crossing station, RFID readers are used to identify EDL/IDs remotely, while the license holders are waiting in line in their vehicles. RFID chips embedded in the EDL/ID contain a reference number that is used to quickly and securely connect to nationwide databases. This means a background check can be performed and completed before reaching the actual border, thus saving everyone time spent waiting in border crossing lines.
- **More secure licenses help prevent identity theft:**
  - Facial biometric identification software converts the facial features in a photo to a digital code, which in turn helps confirm identity and prevent the creation of duplicate IDs.
  - Information is transmitted on a closed and secure network at all points of the process. Safeguards include isolated-dedicated optic fiber, firewalls, and encryption of personal identifying information between Washington State and the border agent during transmission.
  - A security sleeve protects the RFID tag from being read when the card isn't being used for border crossing.
- **Travel, trade and cultural exchange remain open to all:** By offering a low-cost, convenient alternative to a passport, Washington State is ensuring that cross-border interactions between British Columbia and Washington are preserved. Families that would balk at the cost and time involved in obtaining passports can still have the opportunity to travel easily between the U.S. and its neighbors with an EDL/ID. This will be especially important during the 2010 Winter Olympic and Winter Paralympics Games held in Vancouver, B.C. Not only are these events expected to boost tourism, but also to increase the \$35 million in economic trade goods flowing back and forth daily across the U.S./Canadian border at Blaine.
- **Reduced workload on federal government:** New rules requiring passports for travelers returning by air from neighboring North American countries and the Caribbean meant a large increase in passport applications (from 12 million to 17.5 million annually). The Washington EDL/ID program means that some pressure is taken off the federal government and redistributed at the state level. As of June 2, 2008, 27,473 appointments to apply for an EDL/ID had been scheduled, both past and future. Of the total appointments available in June 2008, 70 percent had already been filled and the waiting time for the license remains less than two weeks. As of June 2, 2008, 15,718 enhanced driver's licenses had been issued.