

## Passport production reaches record numbers

*by UPI*

WASHINGTON - The U.S. State Department says production of U.S. passports reached record high numbers fueled by the demand created by new immigration rules. The department said a record 412,000 of the documents were issued last week, besting the previous record of 379,000 -- which was set one week prior, The Chicago Tribune reported Tuesday. The nation's 17 passport agencies are compensating for the increased demand with staff increases and boosts in overtime and weekend hours, the department said. The increases have compensated for many of the processing delays that were brought about by the initial surge and the department said expedited applications will soon return to two-week waiting periods rather than the current four. The department had warned of lengthy delays in March when it reported that the number of monthly applications rose to more than 1 million. The drive for passports intensified when rules were put into effect requiring U.S. citizens to hold passports for air travel to any country, including Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean.

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