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**BCIS TAKES FIRST STEP TO OFFER “ONLINE” FILING
Service Means Increased Security, Efficiency, and Greater Convenience for
Immigration Benefits Seekers**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - For the first time in history, applicants for immigration benefits will soon be able to file two key immigration applications using the Internet. The Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) announced today that beginning May 29, 2003 it plans to offer electronic filing (e-filing) as an option for two of the most commonly submitted immigration forms - the application used to renew or replace a “green card” (Form I-90) and the application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765).

For those who file electronically, BCIS confirms the identity of the customer early in the application process. BCIS also electronically collects a photograph, signature, and fingerprint for the individual. These biometrics are stored and can be used later for verification of the person’s identity. Customers whose applications are approved receive high quality immigration documents with special security features produced from BCIS’ centralized card production facility.

“The introduction of e-filing represents an important stride in our effort to deliver immigration services in a more efficient and customer-friendly way while meeting our national security objectives,” said Tom Ridge, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. “These two forms are the first of many immigration applications we plan to make available for online filing in the near future.”

Customers who e-file do not have to submit photographs at the time they file their applications. They will schedule an appointment to visit an Application Support Center (ASC) at a convenient time for the electronic collection of a photograph, signature, and fingerprint. After filing electronically, customers will schedule their appointment by calling the National Customer Service Center at (800) 375-5283.

The Employment Authorization and “green card” replacement applications were selected as the first forms for e-filing because they account for approximately 30 percent of the applications received annually by the BCIS. Additionally, these forms are relatively easy to complete and require very little supporting documentation because these individuals already have records on file with BCIS. Electronic filing for other immigration applications will be phased in over the next several years.

BCIS customers who have e-filed or who have an application pending at one of BCIS’ Service Centers can check the status of their application on line by visiting www.bcis.gov. The website also provides information and forms online for users to download free of charge. Electronic filing is a key facet of BCIS’ Immigration Service Modernization program, a 10-year effort to transform the delivery of immigration services. The initiative focuses on improvements in a wide range of areas, including

customer service, employee development, technology and processes, and management infrastructure.

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