

DeKalb CEO wants Mexican IDs accepted

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
September 4, 2002 Wednesday, Home Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
ajc.com

Section: Metro News;

Length: 319 words

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Body

DeKalb County officials debated Tuesday whether to accept Mexican citizenship cards as identification to help immigrants living in the county open utility and bank accounts.

County officials asked commissioners to recognize the identification cards, called matricula consular, because many immigrants lack required documents, such as a driver's license or a state identification card.
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"It just makes sense," said Vernon Jones, **DeKalb's** chief executive officer, who pushed for accepting the cards as a form of identification during a commission work session Tuesday morning.

But some commissioners balked at the idea.

"I think it's a backdoor way to legitimize illegal immigrants," said Commissioner Elaine Boyer. "How do we know with the first anniversary of Sept. 11 coming that we are not accepting people with criminal backgrounds?"

Commissioner Judy Yates, who said she used her passport as a form of identification when she lived in France, wondered why immigrants in **DeKalb** can't do the same.

"I just don't see what we're accomplishing here," she said.

County officials said some Mexicans who cannot open a bank account and thus carry large amounts of cash are often robbed.

Commissioners are scheduled to vote on the issue next Tuesday.

To get a card, Mexican nationals living in the United States must pay \$29 and show a certified copy of their birth certificate and an official photo ID. They must also show proof of their U.S. address.

The cards are already accepted by some major banks, hundreds of law enforcement agencies and major cities with large Mexican populations such as Chicago, Los Angeles and Phoenix.

Some metro area governments also accept the cards for limited purposes. The city of Forest Park accepts the cards for identification, and in Fulton County, immigrants can use the cards as identification for paying property taxes on items like vehicles.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: PASSPORTS & VISAS (90%); IMMIGRATION (90%); COUNTIES (90%); COUNTY GOVERNMENT (90%); CITIZENSHIP (78%); LAW ENFORCEMENT (76%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (73%); EXECUTIVES (71%); ANNIVERSARIES (69%); PROPERTY TAX (50%)

Company: FOREST PARK (53%); FOREST PARK (53%)

Industry: BANKING & FINANCE (89%); PROPERTY TAX (50%)

Geographic: MEXICO (94%); UNITED STATES (79%); FRANCE (76%)

Load-Date: September 4, 2002

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