

With the recent development of large-format laser imaging devices that transfer imposed image computer files onto metal offset printing plates, and with the achievement of increased imaging speeds, CTP systems have evolved to the point where they are now cost-effective, time-saving, and reliable devices for the demanding work performed by GPO. The new equipment will accept electronic input for platemaking directly from GPO's automated composition systems.

Establishing networked, high-speed, fully automated platemaking capabilities saves substantial labor costs. CTP technology makes it possible to send electronic text and image files directly to automated platemaking devices, eliminating the need for film negatives and the additional labor-intensive manual processes of stripping and imposing those negatives onto goldenrod for conventional platemaking. It will also ensure consistently high quality plates. As a result, GPO will be able to deliver the same volume of quality print products to Congress and Federal agency customers at a significantly reduced labor cost.

CTP technology saves in other ways as well. For example, it reduces the material costs for film and associated chemicals. And, by reducing the disposal and/or recycling of film and associated processing chemicals, it reduces hazards to the environment. Savings will be achieved by reducing the operating and maintenance costs of current film-processing and platemaking equipment. Total space requirements will also be reduced with the new

equipment. In addition, the new equipment will give GPO the capability for electronic storage of imposed signatures.

The new CTP equipment will be used to process the *Congressional Record*, the *Federal Register*, the *Code of Federal Regulations*, the *U.S. Code*, the *Budget of the United States*, and patents-related publications, as well as most congressional bills, reports, and documents. The devices will include the capability to automatically process at least three different plate sizes, making them suitable for use on a wide variety of GPO products. The acquisition of this equipment means that GPO's prepress processes will be totally electronic from submission of the information to the creation of the offset plate.

GPO Acquires New U.S. Passport Binding Line

During the year, GPO began the acquisition process for a new binding line for the production of U.S. passports. The new system, scheduled to be delivered in 1999, will replace equipment which has been in place since 1986. The GPO produces all U.S. passports for the State Department.

GPO's new passport binding line will provide the needed capability to keep up with the increased demand for U.S. passports. It is part of GPO's long-term partnership with the State Department to provide efficient, timely, high-quality, and high-security production services for U.S. passports.

The current GPO passport line, which will be retained as backup

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Agencies using GPO's new deposit accounts will stop wasting valuable time and money, maintain control of their funds, eliminate expensive and complicated paperwork, and cut the cost of their printing.

capacity, consists of two separate machines. The first assembles the preprinted pages and cover into a strip of three unfinished passports. The second prepares the strip of three into three finished passports. These machines are more than 10 years old and a large number of their component parts are no longer available. The passport pages are printed on GPO's six-color press. The press is not scheduled for replacement with this acquisition.

Cumulative passport production has been greater than 60 million passports on the existing system. Production in FY 1998 was 7,016,000 passports. Passport production requirements are expected to increase by approximately 5 percent annually for the next several years. The new equipment, which is being acquired from Uno Seisakusho Company, Ltd., under competitive bidding procedures, will ensure the necessary production capability. Total equipment and site preparation costs for the new system are estimated at \$3.6 million.

The State Department has been planning to introduce a new photo digital passport. The new passport book will no longer employ the lamination process, but will have the data page coated with a secure coating that will be applied by GPO's new silk screen press. This new process will eliminate photo substitution and fraud. Employing the silk screen press adds one task to press operations and eliminates a task in binding operations. The new passport book will be produced in English, French, and Spanish.

New GPO Deposit Accounts Eliminate Costly Agency Paperwork And Save Taxpayers Money

In another step to make the Federal printing process work better and cost less, GPO began offering a new payment option for agency printing customers called GPO deposit accounts in 1998. This new option streamlines agency accounting procedures for printing jobs, eliminates invoices from GPO, and cuts the cost of Government printing.

Under the old system, agencies were burdened with the paperwork associated with requisitioning printing jobs from GPO. When each job was ordered, agency officials would record the estimated cost as an obligation in their accounting records. When the job was completed, a bill would be sent by GPO and more records would have to be created to liquidate the original obligation. This labor-intensive process took time to produce the complicated paperwork in both the customer agency and GPO, generating increased costs.

With the new deposit accounts, this time-consuming practice is eliminated. Agencies can simply electronically transfer sufficient funds to a deposit account to cover the anticipated cost of printing. When an agency submits an order for printing, the order will be charged to the account automatically. No longer do agency program managers have to go through their accounting offices before submitting their printing orders to GPO. The increased lead