As REAL ID deadline nears, Iowa OKs plan for new licenses, ID cards

By Tim Anderson [1]
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Iowa will issue driver’s licenses and state identification cards next year that meet the initial security standards set out under the federal government’s REAL ID program. According to the Quad City Times [3], all new driver’s license applicants will be given Iowa’s new cards. Individuals with existing licenses will not have to make the switch.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has given states until Jan. 15 [4] to be “materially compliant” with new security standards developed as a result of the REAL ID Act of 2005. Eighteen benchmarks are being used to evaluate the security of state driver’s licenses and ID cards. After Jan. 15, individuals with non-compliant licenses and ID cards will have to provide alternative documents or undergo additional screening at the nation’s airports and federal facilities.

According to the Coalition for a Secure Driver’s License [5], as of July 31, five states in the Midwest were materially compliant with all 18 benchmarks: Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Ohio and South Dakota. In addition, Michigan is offering “enhanced” licenses and ID cards that may be deemed acceptable by the Department of Homeland Security. Illinois was the only state in the Midwest meeting 10 or fewer benchmarks, the coalition reports.