

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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***Just in time for Valentine's Day***

**CANDY HEARTS STAMP TO DEBUT IN JANUARY**

WASHINGTON — Candy hearts – a Valentine's tradition for more than a century – adorn the latest stamp in the U.S. Postal Service Love series bearing the sweet message I LOVE YOU. The Love: Candy Hearts stamp will be made available for the first time on Jan. 14 at a ceremony at the New England Confectionery Company (NECCO), 135 American Legion Highway, Revere, Mass. The stamp will be available nationwide the following day.



“Since 1973, the Love stamp has been a popular addition to cards and letters mailed to friends and loved ones all year long and particularly to celebrate Valentine's Day,” said David Failor, executive director of Stamp Services for the Postal Service. “In 2004, the candy hearts — those little tokens of affection — will help spread good cheer on millions of letters mailed in virtually every town across America.”

To help celebrate the issuance of the 2004 Love stamp, NECCO, makers of Sweethearts® Conversation Hearts, will manufacture a special run of candy hearts with the I LOVE YOU message included in boxes with perennial favorites such as “Be Mine,” “Marry Me” and “Cutie Pie.”

“People have been using Sweethearts to express their affection since the 1800s. We're very honored the Postal Service is using these candy images on their new Love postage stamp to help people further communicate their sentiments,” said NECCO President Domenic M. Antonellis. “Our hearts have been passed down from generation to generation and the new stamp is a testament to our candy's place in U.S. history.”

To meet demand for its Sweethearts, NECCO produces approximately 8 billion hearts per year at three manufacturing facilities in the United States. The entire production — roughly 100,000 pounds a day — sells out in just six weeks.

For the 2004 Love stamp design, artist Michael Osborne of San Francisco, Calif., illustrated two hearts — one yellow, in the foreground, and one pink, slightly behind it — and added in red the letter “I” and a heart symbol on the yellow candy and the word “YOU” on the pink candy to spell out “I love you.” Osborne also illustrated the two colorful 2002 Love stamps, whose designs featured stylized block letters and a heart-design “V” spelling the word “LOVE.”

The first Love stamp was issued by the Postal Service in 1973 with a denomination of 8 cents and an iconic design by pop artist Robert Indiana. Since that time, Love stamps have featured a wide range of subjects, including flowers, animals, cherubs and love letters as well as abstract designs.

To see the Love: Candy Hearts stamp, and other stamps in the 2004 U.S. commemorative stamp program, visit the Postal Store at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop) and click on “Release Schedule” in the Collector’s Corner.

Current U.S. stamps and stationery, as well as a free catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 1 800 STAMP-24. In addition, a selection of stamps and other philatelic items are available at the online Postal Store at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop). Custom-framed art prints of original stamp art are available at [www.postalartgallery.com](http://www.postalartgallery.com).

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits more than 141 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$68.9 billion, it is the world’s leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world’s mail volume — some 202 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year — and serves seven million customers each day at its 40,000 retail locations nationwide.

The New England Confectionery Company (NECCO) was founded in 1847 and is the oldest multi-line candy company in the United States. Popular brands include: NECCO® wafers, Clark® bars, Sweethearts® Conversation Hearts, Mary Jane®, Haviland® Thin Mints and Mighty Malts® Malted Milk Balls and Sky Bars®. Manufacturing facilities are located in Revere, Mass.; Pewaukee, Wis.; and Thibodaux, La. The company employs approximately 1,200. More than 500 seasonal and year-round products are produced at the facilities.

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

Issue: *Love – Candy Hearts*  
Item Number: 672800  
Denomination & Type of Issue: 37-cent Special  
Format: Convertible booklet of 20 (1 design)  
Series: N/A  
Issue Date & City: January 14, 2004, Revere, MA 02151  
Designer: Michael Osborne, San Francisco, CA  
Engraver: Keating Gravure  
Art Director: Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD  
Typographer: Michael Osborne, San Francisco, CA  
Modeler: Avery Dennison, SPD  
Manufacturing Process: Gravure with Scrambled Indicia®  
Printer: Avery Dennison (AVR)  
Printed at: AVR, Clinton, SC  
Press Type: Dia Nippon Kiko (DNK)  
Stamps per Booklet: 20  
Print Quantity: 750 million stamps  
Paper Type: Prephosphored, Type I  
Adhesive Type: Pressure-Sensitive  
Processed at: AVR, Clinton, SC  
Colors: Yellow, Magenta, Cyan, Black  
Stamp Orientation: Vertical  
Image Area (w x h): 0.770 x 1.050 in./26.67 x 19.558 mm  
Overall Size (w x h): 0.910 x 1.190 in./23.114 x 30.226 mm  
Booklet Size (w x h): 4.55 x 5.00 in./115.57 x 127 mm  
Plate Size: 420 stamps per revolution  
Plate Numbers: "V" followed by four (4) single digits  
Marginal Markings: Plate numbers • "Peel here to fold" • Self-adhesive stamps  
DO NOT WET • © 2003 USPS"  
Catalog Item Number(s): 672840 Double side Book of 20 — \$7.40  
672861 First Day Cover — \$0.75

## HOW TO ORDER THE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE POSTMARK

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first day of issue postmark by mail. They may purchase the new stamps at their local post office, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store Web site at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop). They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to: CANDY HEARTS STAMP, POSTMASTER, P.O. BOX 9696, BOSTON, MA 02205-9696.

After applying the first day of issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by February 12, 2004.

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first day covers for new stamp issues and postal stationery items postmarked with the official first day of issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by writing to: INFORMATION FULFILLMENT, DEPT 6270, US POSTAL SERVICE, PO BOX 219014, KANSAS CITY MO 64121-9014, or by calling 1 800 STAMP-24.

First day covers remain on sale for at least one year after the stamp's issuance.