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SPRING FLOWERS BLOSSOM ON NEW POSTAGE STAMPS

WASHINGTON - Echoing the real flowers at the Chicago Flower & Garden Show, four beautiful postage stamps honoring the iris, hyacinth, tulip and daffodil were dedicated today. These flowers are mainstays in gardens coast-to-coast, symbolizing new beginnings with their light pastel colors giving a hint of the summer colors to come.

"These four stamps truly dramatize each of these gorgeous flowers at the height of their beauty," said Jo Ann Feindt, Vice President, Area Operations, Great Lakes Area, U.S. Postal Service, who dedicated the stamps. "They are sure to be favorites among the public and stamp collectors."

Joining Feindt for the ceremony were Kenton Morris, Show Director, Chicago Flower and Garden Show; Anne-Marie St. Germaine, Vice President, External Affairs, Chicago Botanic Garden; and June Wood, President, National Garden Club, Inc. Honored guests included Denise Regent, Illinois State President, National Garden Club, Inc., and from the Postal Service, Dr. Akinyinka Akinyele, Chicago District Manager; Mark Tovey, Senior Plant Manager, Cardiss Collins Processing and Distribution Center; and Kelvin Mack, Postmaster, Chicago.

Watercolor paintings of the iris, hyacinth, tulip and daffodil by Massachusetts artist Christopher Pullman for the Spring Flowers stamps are based on photographs of blossoms purchased at a Boston flower market and images found in garden catalogs.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 1-800-STAMP-24. A selection of stamps and other philatelic items are also available at the online Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. In addition,



beautifully custom-framed prints of original stamp art are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

With the dedication of the Spring Flowers stamps, the Postal Service continues to offer the innovative First-Day Digital color postmarks. The First-Day Digital color postmark for Spring Flowers, designed by stamp art director Derry Noyes, is one of the first postmarks specifically designed to enhance the visual appeal of the stamp and cover. Cost for the First-Day Digital color postmark is \$1.50 per cover. Note: Digital color postmarks are not available on customer-submitted covers.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 142 million addresses 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 \$69 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume-some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year-and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.