



POSTAL NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 24, 2005

Contact: Community Relations
202-268-4924
Stamp News Release No. 05-017
www.usps.com

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE AT CENTER OF WORLD'S LARGEST STAMP SHOW

WASHINGTON - Beginning Memorial Day weekend 2006, visitors to the Washington 2006 World Philatelic Exhibition-the world's premier showcase of rare stamps-have the unique distinction of being able to buy stamps from the only location in the world selling postage from 70 countries. Free admission to the show, May 27 through June 3, 2006, at the Washington, DC, Convention Center, also entitles visitors to view the rarest stamps and collections from more than 60 nations.

The U. S. Postal Service is joining other major players in the world of stamp collecting to support this pinnacle event of the philatelic world, one that occurs only once every ten years in the United States under the auspices of the Fédération Internationale de Philatély (FIP), which represents national stamp collecting organizations of 70 countries. Event participants include the American Philatelic Society (APS), the American Stamp Dealers Association, the Smithsonian National Postal Museum and the Washington 2006 organization.

"All of us in the Postal Service are extremely excited about being part of the coalition that brings this world-class event to our nation's capital," said David Failor, Executive Director of Stamp Services, U. S. Postal Service. "For eight days, the eyes of the stamp collecting world will be focused on Washington, DC, and this philatelic celebration."

Gordon C. Morison, Washington 2006 Executive Director, added, "Stamp collecting is a great hobby the entire family can enjoy. Stamps are a rich and vibrant record of the world's cultural heritage."

"With the support and enthusiasm we are seeing," said Morison, "this free exhibition will attract new people to the hobby that is already a passion for so many. We look forward to parents and teachers bringing children to sample the hobby of a lifetime."

As part of its commitment, the Postal Service will conduct several first-day-of-issue stamp dedication ceremonies and host a youth activity area featuring fun interactive displays along with an assortment of new computerized games.

The Postal Service will host the most extensive exhibit area including an on-site Post Office with twelve philatelic window counters, a sales area to merchandise postal products and a full-service counter for mailing letters and shipping packages directly from the exhibition floor. Representatives of foreign postal administrations will offer stamps from more than 70 countries.

Many additional elements and displays will dazzle visitors at the show. One of the most significant will be unique and seldom-seen items from the remarkable "Postmaster General's Collection." This exhibit will feature many historical "firsts" in U.S. philatelic history.

Daily show postmarks will also be offered throughout the Washington 2006 exhibition. Hand-back service will be available for each daily postmark, and collectors also have the option of dropping off their letters in one of eight on-site collection boxes to obtain the postmark of their choice.

While admission to the eight-day exhibition is free, visitors are encouraged to pre-register. Complete details can be found on the show's web site at <http://www.washington-2006.org>

Washington Philatelic Exhibition, Inc., a not-for-profit organization also known as Washington 2006, was selected by the APS to conduct this world exhibition in Washington, DC. The APS is the national stamp collecting organization in the U.S., and as such, is the U.S. representative to the FIP. The show will be held under the authority of the FIP which is composed of national philatelic federations representing stamp collectors in 70 countries.

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 more than \$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.