

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**U.S. POSTAL SERVICE CELEBRATES 300 YEARS OF RENAISSANCE
MAN BENJAMIN FRANKLIN WITH FOUR NEW POSTAGE STAMPS**

PHILADELPHIA, PA— Historians, scientists, statesmen and Postmasters came to the National Constitution Center at 11 a.m. to witness the dedication of four U.S. Postal Service postage stamps honoring the 300th birthday of Benjamin Franklin. The 39-cent stamps depict Franklin's accomplishments as a printer, statesman, scientist and postmaster. The stamps, available only in Philadelphia today, will be issued nationwide tomorrow, Saturday, April 8.

"We've captured the well-lived life of a remarkable man," said Alan C. Kessler vice chairman of the U.S. Postal Service's presidentially appointed Board of Governors, who dedicated the stamps. "We are very proud to preserve Benjamin Franklin's legacy with these spectacular new stamps."

Joining Kessler at the ceremony was Dennis Wint, Chairman of the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary; Dr. Mark Skousen, 6th generation grandson of Franklin; Frank Neri, District Manager of the U.S. Postal Service Philadelphia Metro District and Judith Martin, Postmaster of Philadelphia.



Art director, designer and typographer, Richard Sheaff used historical elements from Franklin's life to create these stamp collages that have educational, historical and scientific value reflecting the heritage of the United States and the U.S. Postal Service. Benjamin Franklin holds the unique distinction of being the second only to George Washington as the most popular subject to be commemorated on a postage stamp with over one-hundred stamps since 1847. His connection to the U.S. Postal Service as the first Postmaster General under the Continental Congress in 1775 has earned him a cherished place in the history of the organization.

Franklin's successful printing businesses published materials including government documents, currency, religious tracts and books. Design elements in the Printer stamp include: a portrait of Franklin in a printer's smock by illustrator Michael Dooling; a 1729 edition of the Pennsylvania Gazette, a 1733 edition of Poor Richard's Almanack; and a five-pound currency note printed by Franklin in 1770.

Intellectually curious, Franklin was one of the greatest scientists of his day. Design elements in the Scientist stamp include a 19th-century Currier and Ives lithograph of the legendary electricity experiment with a kite; a depiction of water spouts and a "magic square" from "Experiments and Observations on Electricity"; the "three-wheeled clock" from the book "Select Mechanical Exercises" by James Ferguson; and a depiction of Franklin at a desk from a mural by Charles Elliott Mills.

Design elements in the Postmaster stamp include: a graphic device used by the Boston Post-Boy newspaper; a 1775 colonial postal cover and dated postmark from Marlboro, MD; an 18th-century painting by Charles Wilson Peale after a portrait by David Martin. A reference at the bottom of the stamp refers to Franklin's personal franking signature, "B. Free Franklin, Postmaster."

Franklin, born on January 17, 1706, was deeply involved in politics and civic life and enjoyed a distinguished career as a statesman. The Statesman stamp includes: a painting by John Trumbull of the signing of the Declaration of Independence; a copy of Franklin's 1754 "Join or Die" political cartoon urging colonial unity; the top of the Declaration of Independence; a pastel portrait of Franklin by Joseph-Siffred Duplessis; and the Treaty of Alliance with France, which was negotiated and signed by Franklin.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 1-800-STAMP-24. A wide selection of stamps and other philatelic items is also available at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. Beautifully framed prints of original stamp art for delivery straight to the home or office are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

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 new stamps at their local Post Office, by telephone at 1-800-STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store Web site at 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:

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN STAMPS
POSTMASTER
2970 MARKET ST RM 525
PHILADELPHIA PA 19104-9611

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 May 6, 2006.

How to Order First-Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service 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 calling 1-800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

INFORMATION FULFILLMENT
DEPT 6270
US POSTAL SERVICE
PO BOX 219014
KANSAS CITY MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

There are nine philatelic products available for this stamp issue.

- 459120 – Block of 4 - \$1.56
- 459130 – Block of 10 - \$3.90
- 459140 – Pane of 20 - \$7.80
- 459163 – First Day Covers (Set of 4) - \$3.08
- 459165 – Digital Color Postmark Random Single - \$1.50
- 459168 – Digital Color Postmark FDC (Set of 4) - \$6.00
- 459175 – USPS Gold Series 2006 FDI PM Folder (w/4 stamps) - \$7.95
- 459199 – Digital Color Postmark Keepsake (pane w/4 DCP) - \$13.80
- DVD w/FDI Postmark Cover (4 stamps cancelled) - \$7.95

These products will be available while supplies last online at www.usps.com/shop, by telephone at 1-800-STAMP-24 and at Post Offices.

Since 1775, the Postal Service and its predecessor, the Post Office Department, has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 144 million homes and businesses every day, six days a week and is the only service provider delivering 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 mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The Postal Service delivers more than half of the world's mail volume — some 212 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year — and serves seven and a half million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide. Its website, usps.com, attracts more than 21 million visitors each month.

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