

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**PRISTINE SNOWFLAKE PHOTOGRAPHS
FLOAT ON U.S. POSTAGE STAMPS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Postal Service commemorated the winter holiday season with four new 39-cent stamps featuring photographs of snowflakes. The new *Holiday Snowflakes* commemorative stamps first-day-of-issue ceremony took place today at the New York Mega StampShow, New York, NY. The StampShow is sponsored by the American Stamp Dealers Association (ASDA).

As host to the event, New York City holds the unique distinction of being the only city in the nation where the stamps are available today. The stamps will be available nationwide Oct. 6.

“This is an important time of year for us at the Postal Service as well as an important time for our customers,” said Mary Anne Gibbons, Senior Vice President and General Counsel for the U.S. Postal Service, who dedicated the stamps. “We’re ready to meet all of our customers’ mailing needs. This year, we’re even making our own snowflakes to grace all of your favorite letters, cards and packages for the holiday season.”

“I am truly honored that the Postal Service has chosen my work to be depicted on postal stamps,” said Caltech Physicist Kenneth Libbrecht, photographer of the snowflakes on the *Holiday Snowflakes* stamps. “Snowflakes are wonderful examples of nature’s art, crafted by the winter clouds into endlessly varying patterns. Best of all, these tiny ice sculptures fall from the sky by the millions, waiting to be enjoyed.”

Joining Gibbons and Libbrecht were David Failor, U.S. Postal Service Executive Director, Stamp Services and Eric Jackson, President, American Stamp Dealers Association.

Libbrecht shot the snowflakes — which were not much bigger than Abraham Lincoln’s nose on a penny — using a high-resolution digital camera attached to a specially designed microscope. He picked up the individual crystals from a collection board using a small artist’s paintbrush, placing them on glass slides to be photographed. The work was all done outdoors in subfreezing temperatures with the camera placed in a heated box to keep it functional.

These stamps are photographs of two types of stellar snowflakes — three are stellar dendrites, which have tree-like branches, and one (lower left) is a sectored plate, which has broad branches divided by ridges. The crystals were photographed by Libbrecht in Michigan (lower left), Alaska (upper right), and



northern Ontario (the remaining two).

Falling from thousands of feet through frigid air, these intricate ice crystals form around tiny dust particles tumbling through the clouds. As they gather water molecules, the crystals blossom into endlessly different patterns because of the constantly changing atmospheric conditions. Like fingerprints, no two snowflakes are exactly alike.

Snowflakes can grow into many different forms, including simple hexagonal plates, hollow columns, slender needles, and a variety of stellar, or star-like, forms. The different shapes appear in different snowfalls, depending on the temperature and humidity. The most beautiful stellar snowflakes appear during light snowfalls when the temperature is low and there is little wind. When the humidity is high, stellar crystals grow many branches and sidebranches, giving them an almost plant-like appearance. When the weather is warmer, individual snow crystals often stick together and fall to earth as flimsy puff-balls.

The stamps will remain on display and for sale at the American Stamp Dealers Association (ASDA) Exhibition until Oct. 8, 2006.

The ASDA show provides an opportunity to buy and sell philatelic material. Represented there are national and international stamp dealers, postal administrations, agencies, societies and clubs from across the country.

Philatelic Products

There are two philatelic products available for this stamp issue.

- 568663 – First-Day Cover (Set of 4) - \$3.08
- 568693 - Cancellation Keepsake (Pane w/4 FDC) - \$10.88

Additional Product

- Santa Book - \$9.95
Title: "Santa's Smallest Helpers" An original scripted holiday story with beautiful original full color illustrations (14 pages, 8.5" x 8")
Inserts: four "Dear Santa / Wish List" cards;
16 special decorative snowflake stickers;
four envelopes;
four snowflake postage stamps

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

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 the Postal Store Website at www.usps.com/shop, by telephone at 1-800-STAMP-24, and at their local Post Office. 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:

HOLIDAY SNOWFLAKES STAMPS
POSTMASTER
421 EIGHTH AVE RM 2029B
NEW YORK NY 10199-9998

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 Nov. 4, 2006.

For more information on the Holiday Snowflakes commemorative stamps, visit [The 2006 Commemorative Stamp Program](#). Want more information on snowflakes? Visit Dr. Kenneth Libbrecht's website at www.snowcrystals.com. You can find the [American Stamp Dealer Association's website here](#).

Three additional stamps from the Holiday Celebration series will be issued at the Mega Stamp Show on Fri. Oct. 6. There will be no ceremony. These stamps will be available nationwide the following day: Kwanzaa, the celebration of family, community and culture; Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights; and EID, the Muslim Holiday.

Since 1775, the United States Postal Service and its predecessor, the Post Office Department, have connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency that visits more than 144 million homes and businesses every day, the Postal Service is the only service provider delivering to every address in the nation. It 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 \$70 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 212 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year — and serves ten million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

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