

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 20, 2007

Contact: Community Relations  
Lauren Sposato 202-268-8524  
Stamp News Release No. 07-005  
[www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)

**POSTAL SERVICE ISSUES**  
**INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEAR 2007-2008 STAMPS**  
*Polar Lights Seen From Around the World*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Postal Service will issue a souvenir sheet of two 84-cent international letter rate stamps to commemorate *International Polar Year 2007-2008*. The souvenir sheet will be available on Feb. 21 at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop) and through 1-800-STAMP-24, not at Post Offices.

Continuing the tradition of international cooperation that began with the first International Polar Year in 1882-1883, scientists will conduct field observations, research and analysis to increase our understanding of the roles that both polar regions play in global processes. This is the fourth International Polar Year in 125 years.

Currently, at least 50 countries are committed to participating in *International Polar Year 2007-2008*. This international effort will include various projects that will offer researchers a better understanding of the causes and implications of changing ecosystems, coastal erosion and other phenomena. The International Polar Year will run from March 2007 through March 2009.

This *International Polar Year 2007-2008* souvenir sheet will be issued as part of a booklet of similar sheets jointly issued by eight countries: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the United States. The booklet is available online at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop) and by calling 1-800-STAMP-24. The two stamps on the sheet also will be issued later this year as a pane of 20 first-class stamps under the title Polar Lights.

Karl Weyprecht (1838-1881), scientist and co-commander of an Austro-Hungarian expedition to the North Pole during the 1870s, is credited with inspiring the first International Polar Year. Weyprecht defined the basic principles of Arctic exploration and called for nations to establish a network of Arctic research posts and to collaborate in data collection and scientific observation. Twelve countries participated in the first International Polar Year. Between 1881 and 1884, they sent several expeditions to the polar regions, established research stations and collected data. Their work, which involved some 700 men working under dangerous Arctic conditions, set a precedent for international scientific cooperation.

Approximately 40 countries participated in the second International Polar Year in 1932-1933. In 1958, the U.S. Postal Service issued a three-cent stamp to commemorate the International Geophysical Year 1957-1958.

For international postage reference, please visit the following Web site: [usps.com/global/globalairmail.htm](http://usps.com/global/globalairmail.htm).

For additional information on *International Polar Year 2007-2008*, visit [www.us-ipy.gov](http://www.us-ipy.gov).



## **Souvenir Sheet Images Background**

The photograph of the aurora borealis — the northern lights — was taken by Fred Hirschmann of Wasilla, Alaska. It shows the northern lights over the Talkeetna Mountains in Alaska in January 2005. The photograph of the aurora australis, a phenomenon of the southern polar region, was taken by Per-Andre Hoffmann of Manila, Philippines. Hoffmann took the photo in the Bellingshausen Sea along the west side of the Antarctic Peninsula in March 2004.

The selvage photograph depicts a portion of the aurora borealis over Mt. McKinley in Denali National Park in Alaska and was made by Colin Tyler Bogucki of Minneapolis, Minn. The selvage paragraph reads, "Continuing the tradition of international cooperation that began with the first IPY in 1882-1883, scientists from around the world will initiate a new era in polar research by participating in IPY 2007-2008. Working across many disciplines, they will conduct field observations, research and analysis to build upon current knowledge and increase our understanding of the roles that both polar regions play in global processes."

## ***International Polar Year 2007-2008 Philatelic Fact Sheet***

### **Philatelic Products**

There are three philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- Item 569874, Joint Postal Portfolio - \$29.95
- Item 569862, First Day Cover Full Pane - \$4.18
- Item 569884, Uncut Press Sheet - \$25.20

### **How to Order First Day Covers**

Stamp Fulfillment Services (SFS) 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 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

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

### **How to Order First-Day-of-Issue Postmark**

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at the first day city Post Offices™, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, or 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:

*International Polar Year 2007-2008*  
POSTMASTER  
FIRST DAY OF ISSUE CANCELLATION  
PO BOX 79998  
FAIRBANKS AK 99707-9998

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 April 20, 2007.