

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 20, 2004

Media Contacts: Liz Carter 202-268-5188
Cathy Yarosky 215-931-5057
USPS Web Site: www.usps.com
Stamp News Release Number 04-029

POSTAL SERVICE TO ISSUE STAMP HONORING OLYMPIC GAMES

WASHINGTON — The U. S. Postal Service will issue a postage stamp to honor the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece during a special June 9 stamp dedication ceremony in Philadelphia.

“Just as the Postal Service touches the lives of every American in every city and town in the country, our stamp program continues to touch on the meaningful events in our nation's history, both at home and abroad,” said dedicating official S. David Fineman, Chairman of the U.S. Postal Service's presidentially appointed Board of Governors. “The Olympic Games Athens, Greece stamps are a most fitting tribute -- not only to the competitive spirit of participating athletes, but also to the unifying Olympic spirit of fair play and international camaraderie.”



The 10:30 a.m. ceremony, free and open to the public, will take place at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 3260 South Street. A Greek gallery mini-tour, with emphasis on the ancient Olympics, will be offered following the ceremony.

As this is a first-day-of-issue ceremony, Philadelphia holds the unique distinction of being the only city in the nation where the stamp will be available that day. The stamp will be available at Post Offices and Philatelic Centers nationwide June 10.

Designed by Richard Sheaff of Scottsdale, AZ, and created by Artist Lonnie Busch of Franklin, NC, the stamp art features a stylized depiction of a Greek runner and is reminiscent of the artwork on ancient Greek black-figure vases. An ancient Greek vase from the University of Pennsylvania Museum's collection provided the specific inspiration for the stamp artists. On the stamp, the main figure appears in black; the same figure is repeated in red in front and behind the main figure. A classical design known as a meander or key pattern borders the top and bottom of the stamp. The Olympic rings appear below the denomination. Type along the bottom border reads, “2004 Olympic Games Athens, Greece.”

Seventy-one million self-adhesive 37-cent stamps have been printed. To see the 2004 Olympic Games Athens, Greece stamps and other images from the 2004 Commemorative Stamp Program, visit the Postal Service website and view this news release at www.usps.com/shop. Click on “Release Schedule” in the Collector's Corner.

“We look forward to experiencing the excitement of the Summer Games and to fostering the Olympic ideal of excellence through our stamp program.” said Alan Kessler, a member of the U.S. Postal

Service Board of Governors, who will also participate in the ceremony. "Now, people will have this exciting new stamp to inspire them to similar heights of excellence."

Scheduled to join Governors Fineman and Kessler are Dr. Judith Rodin, University of Pennsylvania President; Jeremy A. Sabloff, Director, University of Pennsylvania Museum; and past Olympic athletes.

"We're proud of the Penn Museum's exceptional collection of ancient Greek artifacts, its in-depth research into the history of the ancient Olympics, and its long involvement in archaeological research and exploration throughout the Mediterranean," said Dr. Rodin. "With the 2004 Olympic Games to be held in Athens this summer, it comes as a special honor and delight for the University, and the University of Pennsylvania Museum, to be able to host the first-day-of-issue ceremony for this year's United States Postal Service's commemorative Olympic stamp."

The first recorded Olympic Games took place in the Greek Sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia in 776 B.C., and were held every four years for nearly 12 centuries. Beginning with a single footrace called the "stadion," the games grew to include other events including boxing, javelin and discus.

The Roman emperor Theodosius I banned the games at the end of the 4th century A.D., but after an absence of more than 1,500 years they were revived in Athens in 1896 under the guidance of French sportsman Baron Pierre de Coubertin. The summer Olympic Games have been held every four years since then, with the exception of 1916, 1940, and 1944, when World War I and II forced the Games' cancellation.

During August 13-29, thousands of athletes from around the world will again return to historic Athens. Held in the shadow of the Acropolis and other ancient sites in the city, the XXVIII Olympiad will feature hundreds of competitive events in 28 sports.

Stamps featuring Olympic themes have been popular with collectors since the first modern Olympiad. To help finance the games, Greece issued 12 Olympic-themed commemorative stamps in 1896, and since then many nations have issued stamps that pay tribute to the Olympic spirit. Since 1932, numerous U.S. stamps have honored both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games.

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

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 about 141 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 \$68 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 43 percent of the world's mail volume -- some 202 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year -- and serves seven million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Issue: *2004 Olympic Games * Athens, Greece*
Item Number: 456300
Denomination & Type of Issue: 37-cent Commemorative
Format: Pane of 20 (1 design)
Series: N/A
Issue Date & City: June 9, 2004, Philadelphia, PA 19104
Designer: Richard Sheaff, Scottsdale, AZ
Engraver: N/A
Artist: Lonnie Busch, Franklin, NC
Art Director: Richard Sheaff, Scottsdale, AZ
Typographer: Richard Sheaff, Scottsdale, AZ
Modeler: Joseph Sheeran
Manufacturing Process: Offset/Microprint "XXVIII Olympiad"
Printer: Ashton Potter (USA) Ltd. (APU)
Printed at: Williamsville, NY
Press Type: Mueller Martini, A76 Modified
Stamps per Pane: 20
Print Quantity: 71 million stamps
Paper Type: Type 3 O PMU
Adhesive Type: Pressure-sensitive
Processed at: Ashton Potter (USA) Ltd.
Colors: Black, Cyan, Magenta, Yellow
Stamp Orientation: Horizontal
Image Area (w x h): 1.40 x 0.84 in./21.336x 35.56mm
Overall Size (w x h): 1.56 x 0.99 in./25.146 x 39.625 mm
Full Pane Size (w x h): 7.24 x 5.92 in./183.896 x 150.368 mm
Plate Size: 240 stamps per revolution
Plate Numbers: "P" followed by four (4) single digits
Marginal Markings: © 2003 USPS • Price • Plate numbers in four corners
Plate position diagram • Selvage Text • Barcodes in four corners on back
Catalog Item Number(s): 456320 Block of 4 — \$1.48
456330 Block of 10 — \$3.70
456340 Full Pane of 20 — \$7.40
456361 First Day Cover— \$0.75
456393 Full Pane w/First Day Cover— \$8.15

HOW TO ORDER THE FIRST DAY 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 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:

2004 OLYMPIC GAMES * ATHENS, GREECE COMMEMORATIVE STAMP
POSTMASTER
2970 MARKET STREET 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 July 8 2004.