

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER CESAR E. CHAVEZ TO BE HONORED
ON U.S. POSTAGE STAMP**

WASHINGTON – Civil rights and farm labor leader Cesar E. Chavez will be honored April 23 when the U. S. Postal Service issues the Cesar E. Chavez commemorative postage stamp.

The official first day of issue ceremony for the new stamp will take place at 12 noon (PT) in the mall area of the Court of Historic Flags, 320 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles, Calif. 90012. The stamp will be available for sale at post offices in the Los Angeles area beginning that day and at post offices nationwide starting the following day.

“Cesar E. Chavez was a man of strength and conviction whose life serves as an example of determination and humility to all of us,” said Postmaster General John E. Potter, who will dedicate the stamp. “He understood the hardships of working people and fought hard to bring about justice and quality of life for them and their families. The Postal Service is proud to have this opportunity to highlight such an important social advocate through our stamp program.”

“My father’s teachings of compassion, justice and dignity still ring true almost a decade after his passing,” said Paul Chavez, Chairman of the Cesar E. Chavez Foundation. “The Cesar E. Chavez commemorative stamp is a powerful vehicle to introduce a new generation of Americans to his vital legacy, teaching them that through determination and hard work they can improve their own lives and communities.”



Chavez is best known as the founder of the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO (UFW). He was a tireless advocate for nonviolent social change and dedicated his life to working in service of others. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy once called Chavez “one of the heroic figures of our time.”

A second-generation American, Chavez was born on March 31, 1927, near his family’s farm in Yuma, Ariz. At age 10, his family became migrant farm workers after losing their farm in the Great Depression. Throughout his youth and into his adulthood, Chavez migrated across the Southwest, laboring in the fields and vineyards where he was exposed to the hardships and injustices of farm worker life.

After achieving only an eighth-grade education, Chavez left school to work in the fields full-time to support his family. He attended more than 30 elementary and middle schools. Although his formal education ended then, he possessed an insatiable intellectual curiosity and was self-taught in many fields and well read throughout his life.

Chavez joined the U.S. Navy in 1946 and served in the Western Pacific in the aftermath of World War II. He returned from the service to marry Helen Fabela, whom he had met working in the vineyards of central California. The Chavez family settled in the East San Jose barrio of Sal Si Puedes (get out if you can) and would eventually have eight children and 31 grandchildren.

Chavez’s life as a community organizer began in 1952 when he joined the Community Service Organization (CSO), a prominent Latino civil rights group. While with the CSO, Chavez coordinated voter registration drives and conducted campaigns against racial and economic discrimination primarily in urban areas. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Chavez served as CSO’s national director.

Chavez’s dream, however, was to create an organization to protect and serve farm workers, whose poverty and disenfranchisement he had shared. In 1962 Chavez resigned from the CSO to establish the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers of America.

For more than three decades Chavez led the first successful farm workers union in American history, achieving dignity, respect, fair wages, medical coverage, pension benefits and humane living conditions as well as countless other rights and protections

for hundreds of thousands of farm workers. Against previously insurmountable odds, he led successful strikes and boycotts that resulted in the first industry-wide labor contracts in the history of American agriculture. His union's efforts brought about the passage of the groundbreaking 1975 California Agricultural Labor Relations Act to protect farm workers. Today, it remains the only law in the nation that protects the right of farm workers to unionize.

Chavez passed away on April 23, 1993, in San Luis, Ariz., only miles from his birthplace of 66 years earlier. More than 50,000 people attended his funeral services in the small town of Delano, Calif., the same community in which he had planted the seed for the UFW more than three decades before.

Chavez's life cannot be measured in material terms. He never earned more than \$6,000 a year. He never owned a house. When Chavez passed, he had no savings to leave to his family.

His motto in life—"si se puede" (it can be done)—embodies the uncommon and invaluable legacy he left for the world's benefit. Since his death, dozens of communities across the nation have renamed schools, parks, streets, libraries and other public facilities and awards and scholarships in his honor, as well as enacting holidays on his birthday, March 31. In 1994 he was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in America.

The stamp image was painted by freelance illustrator Robert Rodriguez and features a portrait of Chavez against a background of empty grape fields. Rodriguez based the portrait on a 1976 photograph of Chavez taken by Bob Fitch and provided to the Postal Service by the Cesar E. Chavez Foundation in Los Angeles, Calif. Rodriguez based the background on an aerial photograph taken in the 1960s by Ted Streshinsky.

The following text appears on the back of the stamp: "Civil rights leader Cesar E. Chavez (1927-1993) founded the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO. A tireless advocate for justice and equality for all people, he dedicated his life to working in service of others."

In addition to the stamp, a special cancellation keepsake cover/pane of the Chavez stamp will be available for \$8.15 at Postal Retail Stores or by calling 1-800 STAMP-24.

To see the Cesar E. Chavez stamp, locate the online version of this press release at www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/welcome.htm. Current U.S. stamps and philatelic products, as well as the free USA Philatelic catalog, are available by calling toll free 1 800 STAMP-24. A selection of U.S. stamps and gift items are also available online at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. Images of many current, past and future stamp issues can be found in the Stamp Issues section of the Collector's Corner.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 137 million homes and businesses 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 \$66 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 207 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves 7 million customers each day at its 40,000 retail locations nationwide.

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TECHNICAL DETAILS

Issue:	<i>Cesar E. Chavez</i>
Item Number:	454100
Denomination & Type of Issue:	37-cent commemorative
Format:	Pane of 20 (1 design)
Series:	N/A
Issue Date & City:	April 23, 2003, Los Angeles CA 90001
Designer:	Carl T. Herrman, Carlsbad, CA
Engraver:	N/A
Artist:	Robert Rodriguez, Pasadena, CA
Art Director:	Carl T. Herrman, Carlsbad, CA
Typographer:	Carl T. Herrman, Carlsbad, CA
Modeler:	Banknote Corporation of America, Inc. (BCA)
Manufacturing Process:	Offset/Microprint "USPS"
Printer:	Banknote Corporation of America, Inc. (BCA)
Printed at:	Browns Summit, NC
Press Type:	Man Roland, 300
Stamps per Pane:	20
Print Quantity:	75 million stamps
Paper Type:	Phosphor tagged, block
Gum Type:	Pressure-sensitive
Processed at:	Banknote Corporation of America, Inc. (BCA)
Colors:	Yellow, Magenta, Cyan, Black
Stamp Orientation:	Vertical
Image Area (w x h):	0.82 x 1.39 in./20.83 x 35.31mm

Overall Size (w x h):	0.99 x 1.56 in./25.15 x 39.62 mm
Full Pane Size (w x h):	5.90 x 7.26 in./149.86 x 184.40 mm
Plate Size:	240 stamps per revolution
Plate Numbers:	"B" followed by four (4) single digits
Marginal Markings:	© 2002 USPS • Price • Plate numbers in four corners • Plate position diagram • Barcodes and text on back
Catalog Item Number(s):	454120 Block of 4 — \$1.48 454130 Block of 10 — \$3.70 454140 Full Pane of 20 — \$7.40 454161 First Day Cover — \$0.75 454193 Full Pane w/FDC — \$8.15

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 the new stamps at their local post office, affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to: CESAR E. CHAVEZ COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP, POSTMASTER, 7001 S CENTRAL AVENUE ROOM 338 LOS ANGELES, CALIF 90052-9991. 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 23, 2003.

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first day covers for new stamp issues and postal 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 writing to: INFORMATION FULFILLMENT, DEPT 6270, US POSTAL SERVICE, PO BOX 219014, KANSAS CITY MO 64121-9014, or by calling 1 800 STAMP-24.

First day covers remain on sale for at least one year after the stamp's issuance.