



POSTAL NEWS

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202-268-2155
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TWO NEW DEFINITIVE STAMPS TO TAKE WING IN 2003 American Eagle Coming June 26; Snowy Egret on Oct. 24

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Postal Service today announced two new definitive postage stamps scheduled for issuance in 2003. The American Eagle stamp will be issued at noon on June 26 at the Postage Stamp Mega-Event show, Santa Clara Convention Center, 5001 Great American Parkway, Santa Clara, Calif. Kim R. Fernandez, Postal Service Senior Plant Manager, San Jose Performance Cluster, will be the dedicating official.

The Snowy Egret stamp will be issued at noon on Oct. 24, the second day of the fall Postage Stamp Mega-Event show at Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Hall E, 655 W. 34th Street, New York, N.Y. This show is sponsored by the American Stamp Dealers Association, the American Philatelic Society and the Postal Service.

The non-denominated (25-cent value) Presorted First-Class American Eagle stamp will be issued in self-adhesive coils of 10,000 stamps, which are generally used by high-volume mailers.

The stamp design features an artistic rendering by Tom Engeman of a detail of the Great Seal of the United States. The design includes the head and outstretched right wing of the American bald eagle, a portion of the shield on its breast, and the tip of the olive branch held in its right talon. The coil includes 10 stamps based on the original eagle design. In each version the eagle — in gold, green, blue, red or gray — appears against a background of a contrasting color.

On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress appointed a committee of three men — Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson — to design a national seal for the newly independent United States of America. The assignment proved to be

unexpectedly difficult, and Congress did not approve their proposed design. Two subsequent committees also failed to create an acceptable seal.

The committees' work, however, was not in vain. In 1782, Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Continental Congress, chose the best features of their proposals. His new design, which Congress adopted on June 20, 1782, gave prominence to the American bald eagle. This majestic raptor, a native of North America, became a symbol of freedom as well as the emblem of our country.

In the Great Seal the eagle supports a shield composed of 13 red and white stripes representing the 13 original states with a blue bar uniting the shield and representing Congress. The Latin motto *E Pluribus Unum* (Out of Many, One) refers to this union and is inscribed on a scroll held in the eagle's beak. The olive branch and 13 arrows grasped in the eagle's talons allude to peace and war, powers solely vested in Congress. The constellation of stars above the eagle's head symbolizes the new nation taking its place among the other sovereign powers.

Today the U.S. government uses the Great Seal on official documents some 3,000 times a year, according to the Department of State. Its design also appears on currency, postage stamps, flags, military uniforms, and public buildings. The Secretary of State is the official custodian of the Great Seal, which is on display in the department's Exhibit Hall.

The 37-cent Snowy Egret stamp features an artistic rendering by Nancy Stahl of a snowy egret. Admired for its graceful plumage, the snowy egret is considered one of the most beautiful American birds.

A slender white heron, the snowy egret (*Egretta thula*) has black legs and bright yellow feet, sometimes described as "golden slippers." Its black bill contrasts with its yellow eyes and lores — the area between the eyes and the bill. When flying or searching for food, it can curve its long neck into a compact "S" shape.

The snowy egret lives in marshes, swamps and other wetlands. A wading bird, it feeds in shallow water on fish and other aquatic animals. Its long, thin bill is adapted for spearing prey.

In the breeding season the adult has long, lacy plumes on its head, neck and back. These graceful plumes, called aigrettes, were once used as decorations for ladies' hats. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the snowy egret and its larger cousin, the great egret (*Ardea alba*), were hunted almost to extinction for their plumes. The National Audubon Society was founded to save egrets and other endangered bird species. Conservation efforts were successful and today the egret population is flourishing.

The Snowy Egret stamp will be issued in coils of 100 stamps, replacing the Antique Toys stamps coil. A booklet format may be issued at a later date. The stamp art, based on photographs, depicts the head and upper body of a snowy egret against a blue background. More technical information will be available later this year.

To see the American Eagle and Snowy Egret stamps, visit the Postal Service Web site and open the online version of this press release at www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/welcome.htm.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by calling toll free 1 800 STAMP-24. In addition, a selection of stamps and other philatelic items are available at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 141 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 mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The Postal Service delivers more than 43 percent of the world's mail volume—some 203 billion letters, advertisements, newspapers, magazines and packages a year—and serves 7 million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.



TECHNICAL DETAILS

Issue: American Eagle
Item Number: 782100
Denomination & Type of Issue: Presorted First-Class Nondenominated Definitive
(25-cent value)
Format: Coil of 10,000 (10 designs)
Series: N/A
Issue Date & City: June 26, 2003, Santa Clara, CA 95050
Photographer: N/A
Designer: Tom Engeman, Brunswick, MD
Art Director: Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Typographer: Tom Engeman, Brunswick, MD
Modeler: Donald H. Woo
Manufacturing Process: Gravure
Engraver: Southern Graphics
Printer: Sennett Security Products (SSP)
Printed at: American Packaging Corporation, Columbus, WI
Press Type: Rotomec, 3000
Stamps per coil: 10,000
Print Quantity: 310 million stamps
Paper Type: Nonphosphored, type III
Adhesive Type: Pressure sensitive
Processed at: Unique Binders, Fredericksburg, VA
Colors: PMS 135 (Yellow), PMS 186 (Red), PMS 348 (Green), PMS 7461(Blue), PMS 646 (Dark Blue),
PMS 431 (Gray), Black
Stamp Orientation: Vertical
Image Area (w x h): 0.72 x 0.832 in./18.28 x 21.13 mm
Overall Size (w x h): 0.87 x 0.982 in./22.09 x 24.74 mm
Full Pane Size (w x h): N/A
Plate Size: 400 stamps per revolution
Plate Numbers: "S" followed by seven (7) single digits (every 20 stamps)
Coil Back Number Frequency: Every 10 stamps
Marginal Markings: N/A
Catalog Item Number(s): 782140 Full Coil of 10,000 — \$2,500.00
782130 Strip of 25 — \$6.25
782162 FDC (2 stamps) — \$0.88

HOW TO ORDER THE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE POSTMARK

Customers have 90 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 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: AMERICAN EAGLE PRESORTED FIRST-CLASS MAIL STAMP POSTMASTER 1200 FRANKLIN MALL SANTA CLARA CA 95050-9991 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 Sept. 25, 2003.