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**NEW DIAMOND-SHAPED POSTAGE STAMP HONORING  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA UNVEILED AT LINCOLN THEATRE**

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service today unveiled a new commemorative stamp celebrating the District of Columbia — and Washington, the dynamic city within its boundaries.

The District of Columbia stamp was unveiled at a press conference held at the Lincoln Theatre, which is a cornerstone of the famed U street corridor of Washington, D.C. The stamps are scheduled to be issued in September 2003.

“This stamp is a wonderful addition to the nation’s commemorative stamp program. It shows that D.C. is much more than the seat of U.S. government,” said Delores J. Killete, postmaster, Washington, D.C. “Beyond the grand vistas, broad avenues and imposing public buildings, monuments and memorials, it is a vibrant, diverse community of more than half a million people.”

“The states have been recognized with state stamps and I want to thank the Postal Service for developing a stamp that celebrates the District of Columbia,” said Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.).

Joining Killete and Norton at the press conference was Washington, D.C., Mayor Anthony Williams.

The District of Columbia stamp is shaped like a diamond, as was the original 100-square-mile tract of land chosen to be the permanent site of the nation’s capital.

Early in U.S. history, different cities took turns serving as the U.S. capital. Then, in 1790, the U.S. Congress authorized the establishment of a permanent capital on federal land. That land would become the District of Columbia (for Christopher Columbus). President George Washington selected the exact site in the District where the capital city would be built (the city would eventually bear his name). The land for the District was ceded to the United States by Maryland and Virginia; about a third of that land was returned to Virginia in the mid-1800s, and the diamond shape was no more. Today the District encompasses almost 69 square miles.



Designed by Greg Berger, the District of Columbia stamp design features in its top quadrant a detail from a plan of Washington developed by Pierre Charles L'Enfant in 1791. This French-born engineer and architect was asked by President Washington to design the plan for the city. Though L'Enfant was dismissed from his job the next year, much of his plan was eventually implemented and can be seen in the wide avenues radiating from the White House ("President's House" on the plan) and the U.S. Capitol ("Congress House" on the plan). L'Enfant also envisioned the sweeping view from the Capitol westward along the National Mall — the long expanse of green visible near the center of the plan, as shown on the stamp.

The right quadrant of the stamp shows typical row houses in a Washington neighborhood. These particular houses are in the Shaw neighborhood. Shaw was designated an historic district in 1985.

Cherry blossoms fill the bottom quadrant of the stamp. In 1912 Japan presented Washington with cherry trees as a symbol of international friendship, and today more than 3,700 trees grow around the Tidal Basin near the Jefferson Memorial; in East Potomac Park; and on the Washington Monument grounds. Each spring hundreds of thousands of residents and visitors celebrate Washington's famous blooms at the annual Cherry Blossom Festival.

The left quadrant of the stamp is a view along the National Mall featuring three of the most widely recognized structures in the country: the U.S. Capitol (background), the Washington Monument (center) and the Lincoln Memorial (foreground). The red towers of the Smithsonian Institution Building, or "Castle," also can be seen just to the right of the Washington Monument.

To see the District of Columbia stamp, visit the Postal Service Web site and open this press release at [www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/welcome.htm](http://www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/welcome.htm).

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