



POSTAL NEWS

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STUNNING 2005 LUNAR NEW YEAR SOUVENIR SHEET UNVEILED IN HONOLULU

HONOLULU, Hawaii – At a ceremony here last night, Postmaster General John E. Potter gave a preview of the Lunar New Year Commemorative Stamps Souvenir Sheet, the grand finale of the award-winning Lunar New Year stamp series, to be available in 2005.

The Lunar New Year Commemorative Stamp Souvenir Sheet is a stunning compilation of the Lunar New Year stamps – from the Year of the Rooster (1992) through the Year of the Monkey (to be issued Jan. 13, 2004) – displayed on a bed of bright orange. The words "Happy New Year" are found in English across the top of the Souvenir Sheet, and the words "Lunar New Year" are displayed in Lau Bun's grass-style Chinese calligraphy down the left side.

"It has been a great honor for us to celebrate the twelve years of the Zodiac with the remarkable stamps designed by artist Clarence Lee," said Potter. "The rich, multi-cultural heritage of Asian-Americans contributes substantially to America, and is an important and fascinating part of the history of our comparatively young nation."

Stamp designer Clarence Lee commemorates this unique Zodiac using intricate paper-cut designs to honor each animal mentioned in an ancient Chinese New Year fable. According to the fable, every animal was told to report to the emperor on the first day of the new year, and the first twelve to reach the palace were to be rewarded with a year named after them. And so, the Rooster, Dog, Boar, Rat, Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Ram and Monkey, each with its own distinctive characteristics and fate, came to symbolize a year in the Zodiac.

To view an image of the Lunar New Year Souvenir Sheet, visit the Postal Store online at www.usps.com/shop. Simply click on "Release Schedule" in the Collector's Corner.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 1 800 STAMP-24. A selection of stamps and other philatelic items are also available at the online Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. In addition, beautifully custom-framed prints of original stamp art are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits more than 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 \$68 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 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.

