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Southeast Lighthouses FDOI
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Thank you, Becky, for that kind introduction. And let me thank all our special guests for being here with us today.

Isn't Tybee Island beautiful? We couldn't ask for a more perfect setting to dedicate the new Southeastern Lighthouses stamp series.

These stamps depict five historic lighthouses: Old Cape Henry, Cape Lookout, Morris Island, Hillsboro Inlet, and of course, Tybee Island.

America's lighthouses are part of our nation's earliest history. The first American lighthouse was built to protect the busy Boston Harbor way back in 1716. It was lit with candles.

In the years that followed, lighthouses were built up and down the Atlantic coast as our nation grew.

As America expanded her borders, lighthouses were also built along the Great Lakes and the Pacific coast.

From the air, at night, the coastlines of our nation are lined with a spectacular necklace of coded, blinking lights. Navigators work hard to learn the unique pattern for each light.

They study these flashing beams of light like their lives depended on them – because they do.

In the daylight, these handsome towers stand proudly at land's end – as different in shape as they are in lights. Some are made of brick, some of wood. Other are made of granite or even iron.

But they all serve a common purpose – they make our coastlines safe and navigable.

There is another way in which each lighthouse is unique. Each one has its own stories – a history of legends and folk tales, of shipwrecks and daring rescues, of romance and broken hearts, and yes, even ghosts.

It is perhaps this three-fold combination of safety, style and tales that draws our curiosity and imagination to these beautiful structures.

That's why I enjoy this part of my job so much. It transcends the day-to-day workings of the Postal Service.

Special events like this one give me the opportunity to take a step back and reflect on the larger picture of what the Postal Service means to the American people.

We know the power our stamps have in honoring and depicting the people, events, and places in our history who have made this nation great.

Over the years, we have produced stamps that pay tribute to many exceptional buildings and places because of our commitment to reflect American culture and history.

Our postage stamps remind us of what is unique about our nation—our people, our creativity, our heritage.

Today, with these stamps, we commemorate five unique and historic symbols of our maritime heritage, the Southeastern lighthouses.

Think about what these structures have seen. The light station here at Tybee Island has witnessed our nation's battle for independence, the terrible ravages of the Civil War, and America's rise as the world's pre-eminent naval power.

Spanning the coast of the United States from Virginia to southern Florida, the lighthouses on these stamps typify the beauty and colorful history of the many structures that have protected our nation's sailors for centuries.

And these images will travel on letters and packages to every single household in America and around the world.

That is the Postal Service's responsibility of universal service to every address, every day.

And we take that responsibility very seriously.

Every day, the men and women of the Postal Service are working hard to deliver the mail for all Americans, and they share my enthusiasm and pride in the strides we make to improve service every single day.

Our stamp images, which artist Howard Koslow just spoke about, help us to honor two things – our nation's proud maritime heritage and the beautifully functional lighthouses that have protected that heritage.

As you've heard from our other speakers today, preservation is an important issue for those who care about our nation's lighthouses. There are a number of major efforts under way across the country to protect and preserve these historic structures.

Now, with our stamps, we have another way to focus attention on preserving these glorious lighthouses for future generations.

At this time, I'd like to ask the platform guests to join me in officially dedicating the Southeastern Lighthouse=commemorative stamps.

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