

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 4, 2004

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Stamp News Release Number 04-066

**CLOUDSCAPES STAMPS LIFT NATIONAL STAMP
COLLECTING MONTH TO NEW HEIGHTS**

BOSTON – Students and their families will become “weather-wise” as part of National Stamp Collecting Month activities kicking off with today’s issuance of the 37-cent *Cloudscapes* commemorative postage stamps and postal cards. Both stamps and cards depict strikingly beautiful photographs of various cloud types. Information on the back make them unique educational “flash cards.” These, and other philatelic collectables are available in Boston Post Offices today, and in Post Offices and Philatelic Centers nationwide, Tuesday, Oct. 5.



This year’s theme for National Stamp Collecting Month, which runs through October, is “*Reach for the Sky and Collect Stamps!*” It involves an alliance with The Weather Channel, the American Meteorological Society and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Weather Service to familiarize stamp collectors with atmospheric sciences.

“This is a great way to educate people about the atmosphere above us,” said William Johnstone, Secretary of the Board of Governors, U.S. Postal Service, who officiated at the first-day-of-issue dedication ceremony at the Blue Hill Meteorological Observatory.

Located just outside of Boston, Blue Hill (bluehill.org) is the home of the oldest continuous weather records in North America.

“I hope the stamps remind everyone of the science, knowledge and extraordinary beauty of the ever-changing canvas in the sky above us,” added Johnstone, a former Air Force weather observer.

The *Cloudscapes* stamp sheet includes 15 stamps based on photographs of nine cloud formations. They are arranged on the stamp pane according to altitude. Information about each cloud is on the back of the pane behind the stamp. A booklet of twenty 23-cent *Cloudscape* stamped postal-cards,

which feature the 15 stamp designs also can be used as flash cards. Both were designed by Howard Pane of Delaphane, VA.

A unique philatelic product created to celebrate National Stamp Collecting Month — the “*Cloudscapes* Stamp Collecting Scrapbook” — is available through the USA Philatelic catalog, online at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop or by calling toll free 1-800-STAMP 24. This soft-cover book features cloud-type references for each of the stamps, as well as fun facts and ideas for preserving cloud-related keepsakes.

Throughout National Stamp Collecting Month, the Postal Service focuses on stamp collectors, both veteran collectors and those new to the hobby. Stamp collecting is a great way to learn about the world and its many wonders. It opens the door to an exciting world of history, science, geography, the arts, technology and sports.

The Weather Channel (weather.com), the American Meteorological Society (AMS) (ametsoc.org) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Weather Service (weather.gov) are using the *Cloudscapes* stamps to promote atmospheric sciences.

Many of the nation’s television meteorologists, who also are AMS members, are highlighting the stamps during their October forecasting segments, and incorporating the *Cloudscapes* stamps into their community outreach initiatives. The *Cloudscapes* stamps also will be included in the National Weather Service’s outreach programs.

An educational kit celebrating weather and teaching students to become “weather-wise” was created by the Postal Service, working in conjunction with The Weather Channel and Dr. Jacqueline Hansen, Assistant Professor of Education, Murray State University. The kit, available later this month, will be linked through weatherclassroom.com and USPS.com. The Weather Channel is also educating students about meteorology on Comcast’s “Cable in the Classroom” program.

The cloud types shown on the stamp pane are: Cirrus radiatus, Cirrostratus fibratus, Cirrocumulus undulatus, Cumulonimbus mammatus, Cumulonimbus incus, Altocumulus stratiformis, Altostratus translucidus, Altocumulus undulatus, Altocumulus castellanus, Altocumulus lenticularis, Stratocumulus undulatus, Stratus opacus, Cumulus humilis, Cumulus congestus and Cumulonimbus with tornado.

In the early 19th century, Englishman Luke Howard — a chemist by trade and meteorologist by avocation — created a system for classifying clouds using Latin names. He described the three most common shapes as cirrus (curl of hair), stratus (layer) and cumulus (heap); he also defined four compound cloud forms that derive from the three primary shapes, including nimbus (rain). Later scientists added terms such as humilis (small) and incus (anvil) to designate other cloud properties. The International Cloud-Atlas, first published in 1896, is based on this classification system.

As Milton is a branch of the Boston Post Office, Boston area Post Offices beginning with ZIP Codes 021, 022 or 024 will be the only locations in the nation where the stamps and postal cards will be available that day. Boston area customers may obtain first-day-of-issue postmarks on-site at the Blue Hill

Observatory, the Milton Branch postal facility and the Boston Main Post Office that day. Customers may also obtain First-Day postmarks by mail (see: How to Order First-Day-of-Issue Postmark). The *Cloudscapes* stamps and postal cards will be available in Post Offices and Philatelic centers nationwide on Tuesday, Oct. 5.

To see the *Cloudscape* stamps and other images from the 2004 commemorative stamp program, visit the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop and click on "Release Schedule" in the Collector's Corner.

Current U.S. stamps and stationery, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free telephone order at 1-800-STAMP 24. A wide selection of stamps and other philatelic items also are available at the Postal Store www.usps.com/shop. And www.postalartgallery.com offers beautifully framed prints of original stamp art for delivery straight to the home or office.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to about 141 million addresses 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 mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 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.

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How to Order First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 30 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 Web site 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:

CLOUDSCAPES COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS
POSTMASTER
P.O. BOX 9996
BOSTON, MA 02205-9996

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 November 1, 2004.

How to Order First-Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service 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 calling 1-800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

INFORMATION FULFILLMENT
DEPT 6270
PO BOX 219014
KANSAS CITY MO 64121-9014

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