

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Minnesota's Sesquicentennial Honored**  
*Stamp dedication part of two-day statehood celebration*

ST PAUL, MN – The U.S. Postal Service will celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Minnesota's statehood May 17 with the issuance of the *Minnesota Statehood* Stamp. The ceremony, free and open to the public, will be held in St. Paul on the grounds of the State Capitol at 1:00 p.m.

The stamp design features a photograph made by Richard Hamilton Smith at the city of Winona, in southeastern Minnesota. Winona was settled in 1851 and was once a major shipping center for wheat and lumber. By 1860, about 2,500 people resided in Winona, making it one of the largest towns in Minnesota at the time. Today's population is almost 30,000. The view in the photograph is to the northwest. In the foreground is the MN-34/WI-54 bridge spanning the main channel of the Mississippi River. The islands above the bridge in the photo are part of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, which extends 261 miles along the Mississippi from Wabasha, MN to Rock Island, IL.

Starting May 17, the stamp will be made available at the event, online at the Postal Store at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop), at philatelic centers nationwide, by calling toll-free 800-STAMP-24 and at all Minnesota Post Offices.

"The U.S. Postal Service is proud to be a part of this special celebration," said Terry W. McCaffrey, Manager, Stamp Development for the Postal Service (and Minnesota native), who will serve as the dedicating official. "We are thrilled to honor Minnesota with a postage stamp to commemorate its sesquicentennial."

Joining McCaffrey will be the Honorable Betty McCollum, United States Representative from Minnesota's 4<sup>th</sup> District; the Honorable Walter F. Mondale, former United States Vice-President; Joan Adams Mondale, member of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee; Cay Shea Hellervik, Chair, Minnesota Sesquicentennial Commission; Dr. Retha Clark King, Commissioner, Minnesota Sesquicentennial

Commission; and stamp image photographer Richard Hamilton Smith.

Minnesota was admitted to the Union as the 32nd state on May 11, 1858; previously, its 86,939 square miles had been part of a large territory that stretched westward from the Wisconsin border to the Missouri River in the future states of North and South Dakota.

The name “Minnesota” derives from Dakota Indian words originally used to describe the color of the Minnesota River. Over the years, people have offered various interpretations of the state’s name, from “whitish or cloudy water” to the more evocative “sky-blue or sky-tinted waters.” In any case, Minnesota is a land of water, with thousands of lakes and rivers lying within or along its borders. Among the most notable are the Mississippi River, Lake Superior, Lake Itasca, and Lake of the Woods, whose northwestern shore is the northernmost point of land in the lower 48 states. There are well-known waterfalls, too, including “the beautiful falls of Minnehaha,” said by writer Mark Twain to be “sufficiently celebrated—they do not need a lift from me.” Pictures of these falls reportedly inspired Henry Wadsworth Longfellow during the writing of his epic poem “The Song of Hiawatha.”

Today, more than five million people live in Minnesota. Minneapolis is the largest city, with nearly 400,000 residents. Next is St. Paul, the state capital, with a population of almost 300,000. The people of Minnesota enjoy a strong, diverse economy; major products include timber, iron ore, and agricultural crops. Education and health care are among the best in the nation: Carleton College, in Northfield, for example, is number six on a recent list of America’s best liberal arts colleges, and the Mayo Clinic in Rochester is one of the top hospitals in the country.

The stamp dedication ceremony is part of the Minnesota Statehood Weekend Festival, two days of music, events and all things Minnesotan. A flyover of 25+ vintage aircraft including pre-WWII mail planes, WWII trainers, fighters and bombers and more will precede the stamp ceremony at 12:30 p.m.

## **Minnesota Statehood Philatelic Fact Sheet**

### **Philatelic Products**

There are three philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 462561, First Day Cover, \$0.80
- 462591, Ceremony Program, \$6.95
- 462593, First-Day-Cover Keepsake Full Pane, \$9.20

### **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 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment  
Dept. 6270  
U.S. Postal Service  
PO Box 219014  
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

## How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase the new stamped postcards at their local Post Office, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, or at the Postal Store website at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop). They should address the cards (to themselves or others) and place them in an envelope addressed to:

Minnesota Statehood Stamp  
Postmaster  
PO Box 645001  
Saint Paul, MN 55164-5001

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the cards through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by July 16, 2008.

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An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that visits every address in the nation – 146 million homes and businesses. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to pay for operating expenses, not tax dollars. The Postal Service has annual revenues of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.