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Contact: Mark Saunders  
202-268-6524

[mark.r.saunders@usps.gov](mailto:mark.r.saunders@usps.gov)

[usps.com/news](http://usps.com/news)

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## **Postal Service Sneak Peek at 2012 Stamps** *Celebrates Lunar New Year with Year of the Dragon Forever Stamp*

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WASHINGTON — The Postal Service continues its sneak peek at some of its 2012 Forever stamps by previewing the Celebrating Lunar New Year: Year of the Dragon stamp today through social media outlets.

“We are using social media to engage broader, more diverse audiences,” said Stephen Kearney, manager, Stamp Services, referring to the initiative that began July 18 with a preview of the Cherry Blossom Centennial Forever stamps. Select stamps from the 2012 commemorative program will be previewed one at a time throughout the summer.

Customers may preview the stamps on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://facebook.com/USPSStamps), through [Twitter @USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or on the website Beyond the Perf at [beyondtheperf.com/2012-preview](http://beyondtheperf.com/2012-preview). Beyond the Perf is the Postal Service’s online site for the back story on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

### **Celebrating Lunar New Year: Year of the Dragon**

“We are excited to celebrate the 2012 Lunar New Year with this beautiful Year of the Dragon Forever stamp,” said Kearney. “We introduced the Celebrating Lunar New Year series in 2008. This is the fifth stamp in that series, which continues through 2019 with stamps dedicated to the lunar years associated with the snake, horse, ram, monkey, rooster, dog and boar.”

The Lunar New Year is celebrated primarily by people of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tibetan and Mongolian heritage in many parts of the world. Parades, parties and other special events are common. Images associated with some of these widespread customs are depicted in the Celebrating Lunar New Year series.

People born in the year of a particular animal are said to share characteristics with that animal. In the Chinese cultural tradition, dragons are not to be feared, but are respected and considered magical or divine. Individuals born during the Year of the Dragon are said to be flamboyant, powerful spirits and irrepressible innovators.

Art director Ethel Kessler of Washington, DC, worked on the series with illustrator Kam Mak of Brooklyn, NY. The artwork focuses on some of the common ways the Lunar New Year holiday is celebrated. For the Year of the Dragon, which begins Jan. 23, 2012, the art depicts a colorful dragon figure manipulated by dancers welcoming the new year. The illustration, based on a photograph by Mak, was originally created using oil paints on panel.

Kessler’s design also incorporates elements from the previous series of Lunar New Year stamps, using Clarence Lee’s intricate paper-cut design of a dragon and the Chinese character — drawn in grass-style calligraphy by Lau Bun — for “dragon.”

Other 2012 Forever stamps previewed to date include the 2012 Cherry Blossoms Centennial, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Love Ribbons, a stamp honoring Ebony founder John H. Johnson and Bicycling.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 150 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, [usps.com](http://usps.com), the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$67 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 29th in the 2010 Fortune 500. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency six consecutive years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.