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Lunar New Year Stamp Highlights Year of the Snake *Early Stamp Issuance Gives Customers Time to Usher in Celebrations with a Bang*

High-resolution images of the stamp is available for media use only by emailing lindsay.n.richardson@usps.gov.

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Postal Service released its 2013 Lunar New Year stamp, featuring firecrackers, paper-cut designs and Chinese calligraphy, to help customers usher in the Year of the Snake.

The Lunar New Year is celebrated primarily by people of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tibetan and Mongolian heritage in many parts of the world. In the United States, as elsewhere, the occasion is marked with parades, parties and other special events. This year, Lunar New Year is Sunday, Feb. 10 and the Postal Service issued the limited edition stamp in plenty of time for customers to mail new year's greetings.

"We are proud to celebrate this special time with our friends in the Asian community," said Nagisa Manabe, chief marketing and sales officer. "With this year's limited edition stamp, we're providing our customers the opportunity to appreciate the beauty of these stamps and use them in their new year's greetings to friends and family."

The Postal Service introduced the Celebrating Lunar New Year series in 2008. This is the sixth stamp in that series, which will continue through 2019 with the Years of the Horse, Ram, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Boar.

Illustrator Kam Mak, an artist who was born in Hong Kong, grew up New York City's Chinatown and now

lives in Brooklyn, has designed each stamp in the series and will continue through the remaining six in the 12-year series.

This year's stamp features one of the primary ways the Lunar New Year holiday is celebrated. For the Year of the Snake, which begins on Feb. 10, the illustration depicts firecrackers commonly used to greet the new year with a bang.

Firecrackers are used to scare off evil spirits and welcome a time of renewed hope for the future. Monetary gifts are given to children and others. Lucky foods are eaten — kumquats, for example — and festive lanterns, colored red for luck, are common Lunar New Year decorations.

The current series builds upon the Postal Service's original Lunar New Year stamp series, which was issued from 1992 through 2003. Two elements from the first series are revived in the current stamps: the intricate paper-cut design and calligraphy motifs.

Customers may view the Lunar New Year Forever stamps, as well as many of next year's other stamps, on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps), on Twitter [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or on the website *Beyond the Perf* at beyondtheperf.com/2013-preview. Beyond the Perf is the Postal Service's online site for information on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

There are three philatelic products for these stamps.

- 578684, Press Sheet with die cuts, \$48.60.
- 578686, Press Sheets without die cuts, \$48.60.
- 578623, Notecards (Set of 12 with stamps), \$16.95.

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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