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Total Eclipse of the Sun Forever Stamp to be Issued Tomorrow *First-of-its-Kind Stamp Reveals Second Image: #EclipseStamps*

WASHINGTON — Tomorrow, [Jim Cochrane](#), Chief Customer and Marketing Officer of the United States Postal Service dedicates the first-of-its-kind Forever stamp which transforms the solar eclipse image into the Moon from the heat of a finger. The [Total Eclipse of the Sun Forever stamp](#) commemorates the upcoming Aug. 21 eclipse.

Cochrane will be joined by NASA and University of Wyoming officials, and astrophysicist Fred Espenak aka [Mr. Eclipse](#) at the June 20, 1:30 p.m. MT/3:30 p.m. ET First-Day-of-Issue ceremony, which will take place at the [Art Museum](#) of the [University of Wyoming](#) (UW) in Laramie. The University is celebrating the summer solstice on June 20. Prior to the event, visitors are encouraged to arrive at 11:30 a.m. to witness a unique architectural feature where a single beam of sunlight shines on a silver dollar embedded in the floor, which occurs at noon on the summer solstice in the UW Art Museum's Rotunda Gallery.

The pane of 16 Forever stamps are available tomorrow at Post Office facilities nationwide and may be pre-ordered now at this [link](#) for delivery after June 20.

In addition to Espenak, scheduled to join Cochrane in the first-day-of-issue ceremony are NASA Astrophysicist [Madhulika "Lika" Guthakurta](#); and University of Wyoming Department of Physics and Astronomy Professor [Dr. Michael Pierce](#).

“With the release of these amazing stamps using thermochromic ink, we’ve provided an opportunity for people to experience their own personal solar eclipse every time they touch the stamps,” says Cochrane. “As evidenced by this stamp and other amazing innovations, the Postal Service is enabling a new generation to bridge the gap and tighten the connection between physical mail and the digital world.”

A total eclipse of the Sun occurs when the Moon completely blocks the visible solar disk from view, casting a shadow on Earth. The 70-mile-wide shadow path of the eclipse, known as the “path of totality,” will traverse the country diagonally, appearing first in Oregon (mid-morning local time) and exiting some 2,500 miles east and 90 minutes later off the coast of South Carolina (mid-afternoon local time) passing through portions of 14 states.

A total solar eclipse provides us with the only chance to see the Sun’s corona — its extended outer atmosphere — without specialized instruments. During the total phase of an eclipse the corona appears as a gossamer white halo around the black disk of the Moon, resembling the petals of a flower reaching out into space.

Tens of millions of people in the United States hope to view this rare event, which has not been seen on the U.S. mainland since 1979. The eclipse will travel a narrow path across the entire country for the first time since 1918. The back of the stamp pane provides a map of the August 21 eclipse path and times it may appear in some locations. Visit [NASA’s website](#) to view detailed maps of the eclipse’s path.

This stamp image is a photograph taken by retired NASA astrophysicist Fred Espenak of Portal, AZ, who is considered by many to be the world’s leading authority on total solar eclipses with 27 under his belt. The photograph shows a total solar eclipse seen from Jalu, Libya, on March 29, 2006.

“I’m honored to have my images on this unique stamp. But more importantly, the stamp will spread the news about America’s great eclipse to many more people than I could ever reach,” said Espenak, who began [collecting eclipse stamps](#) after witnessing his first as a teenager. “A total eclipse of the Sun is simply the most beautiful, stunning and awe-inspiring astronomical event you can see with the naked eye — but you’ve got to be in the 70-mile-wide path of totality that runs across the nation from Oregon to South Carolina. So where will you be on August 21?”

“Having witnessed so many total eclipses myself, I know that two minutes inside the moon’s shadow could have a profound impact on the younger generation,” said Guhathakurta. “The Sun can be viewed safely with the unaided eye only during the few brief seconds or minutes of a total solar eclipse. Partial eclipses or partial phases of total solar eclipses are never safe to watch without solar eclipse glasses.”

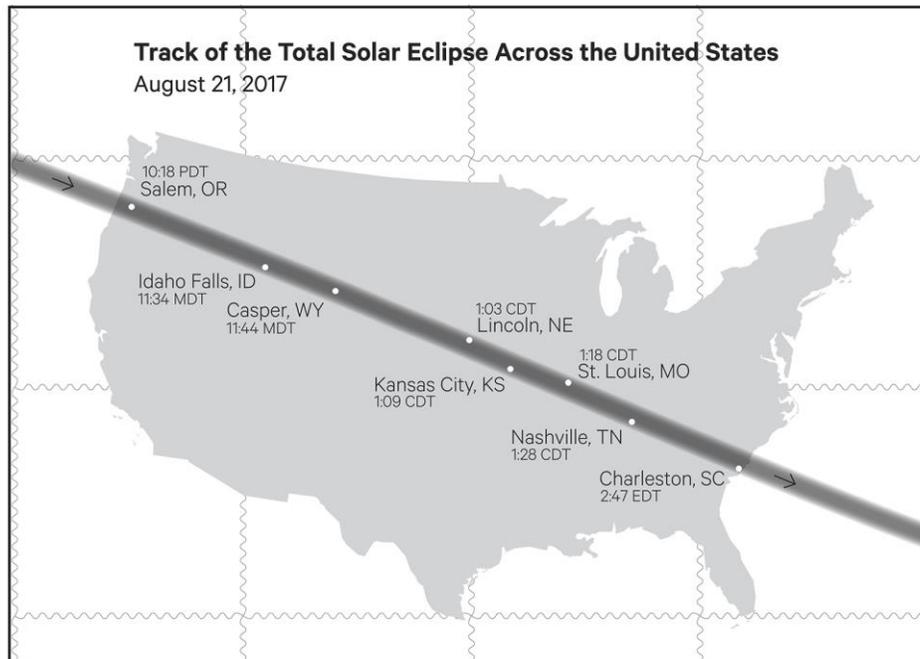
Guthakurta recommended learning more on solar eclipse safety, educational and science information at [eclipse2017.nasa.gov](#), [NASA TV](#) and [NASA.gov](#) will broadcast a live panel discussion and news conference starting at 1 p.m. ET Wed. June 21, from the [Newseum](#) in Washington, DC.

Share your experience on Social Media

Be creative and have with the stamps on social media using the hashtag **#EclipseStamps**.

- Take photos of friends, family and children holding the stamps next to their faces while wearing solar eclipse safety glasses.
- Take before and after photos of the stamp pane with a group of friends or children placing their thumbs on the black disc of the eclipse to reveal the moon. It’s a great way to get kids into stamp collecting.
- Share past eclipse stories and plans of where you’ll be Aug. 21.
- On the day of the eclipse, take a photo of the map on the back of the stamp pane with either your finger pointed to your location, or write in the name of your location and draw an arrow to it. Try to

include a recognizable landmark in the photo's background. If possible include other eclipse watchers in the background.



Thermochromic Ink

In the first U.S. stamp application of thermochromic ink, the Total Solar Eclipse stamps will reveal a second image. Using the body heat of your thumb or fingers and rubbing the eclipse image will reveal an underlying image of the Moon. The image reverts back to the eclipse once it cools.

Thermochromic inks are vulnerable to UV light and should be kept out of direct sunlight as much as possible to preserve this special effect. To help ensure longevity, the Postal Service is offering a special envelope to hold and protect the stamp pane for a nominal fee.

Art director [Antonio Alcalá](#) of Alexandria, VA, designed the stamp.

The Total Eclipse of the Sun stamp is being issued as a Forever stamp, which is always equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price.

Ordering First-Day-of-Issue Postmarks

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, at usps.com/shop, or by calling 800-782-6724. They must affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others, and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

FDOI – Total Eclipse of the Sun Stamp
USPS Stamp Fulfillment Services
8300 NE Underground Drive, Suite 300
Kansas City, MO 64144-9900

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 up to a quantity of 50. There is a 5-cent charge for each additional postmark over 50. All orders must be postmarked by Aug. 20, 2017.

Ordering First-Day Covers

The Postal Service 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*, online at usps.com/shop, or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free issue of *USA Philatelic* at usps.com/philatelic, by calling 800-782-6724, or by writing to:

U.S. Postal Service
USA Philatelic Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

Philatelic products for this stamp issue are as follows:

- 475306, Press Sheet with Die-cut, \$62.72.
- 475310, Digital Color Postmark Keepsake, \$9.95.
- 475316, First-Day Cover, 93-cents.
- 475321, Digital Color Postmark, \$1.64.
- 475329, Protective Sleeve, 25-cents.
- 475330, Ceremony Program, \$6.95.
- 475333, American Commemorative Collectible Panel, \$10.95.

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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