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Alaska Statehood Stamp Features Iditarod Musher
50th Anniversary stamp highlights the Last Great Race on Earth

High-resolution images of the stamp is available for media use only by emailing nancy.b.ross@usps.gov

WASHINGTON — The spirit of Alaska and its colorful past were celebrated today when the U.S. Postal Service issued the 50th Anniversary *Alaska Statehood* commemorative stamp in the Discovery Ballroom of The Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage, AK. The stamps went on sale nationwide today.

In celebration of Alaska's past, with the treaty ratification with Russia on April 9, 1867, the purchase and transfer to the United States on Oct. 18, 1867, to it becoming an official U.S. territory in 1912, and the 49th state on Jan. 3, 1959, Alaska remains "the last frontier." The name of the state derives from an Aleut word meaning "great land."

"The stamp is emblematic of the State of Alaska, and one of which we can all be very proud." said Dianne Horbochuk, USPS district manager for customer service in Alaska.

Joining Horbochuk in today's stamp dedication were Alaska Governor Sarah Palin (R), United States Senator Lisa Murkowski (R), stamp photographer Jeff Schultz and KTUU Chief Meteorologist Jackie Purcell, Channel 2, NBC News who acted as master of ceremonies.

"We are so pleased to work with the United States Postal Service in presenting a design that most certainly displays what Alaska is all about," said Governor Palin. "As we celebrate our Golden Anniversary

of statehood we are mindful of our pioneers who came before us to make the path to statehood. This statehood stamp stands for the courage and determination of our statesmen, the strength and resilience of our people and the promise of a bright future for all Alaskans.”

The stamp features Jeff Schultz’s photograph of a dog musher taken during the 2000 Iditarod. Fifteen degrees above zero, Schultz was 75 miles from the nearest town following the trail along the Rainey Pass just as the dog sled team raced across the foreground. Unlike any other race in the world, Iditarod competitors traverse more than 1,150 miles of the most extreme and beautiful terrain known to man to include mountain ranges, frozen rivers, dense forests, desolate tundra and windswept coastline.

Today, much of Alaska consists of parks, forests, and wildlife refuges managed by the federal government. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge encompasses more than 19 million acres in northeastern Alaska, while 23 million acres of northern Alaska comprise the National Petroleum Reserve. Although around 80 percent of state revenue derives from petroleum extraction, other vital Alaskan industries include seafood, mining, timber, oil and gas, and tourism. The state is also home to important military bases.

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 new stamps at The Postal Store Web site at www.usps.com/shop, by calling 800-STAMP-24 or by visiting a local Post Office.

Customers 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:

Alaska Statehood Stamp
Station Manager
344 3rd Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501-2713

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 March 4, 2009.

How to Order the Alaska Statehood 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
US Postal Service
PO Box 219014
Kansas City MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

There are four philatelic products available for the Alaska Statehood stamp issue:

464161 First-Day Cover, 80¢
464165, Digital Color Postmark, \$1.50
464191 Ceremony Program, \$6.95
464199 Digital Color Postmark Keepsake, \$9.90

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nearly half the world's mail.