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U.S. Postal Service Celebrates La Florida's 500th Anniversary *Four Elegant Forever Stamps Dedicated Today Mark the Occasion*

ST. AUGUSTINE, FL — The U.S. Postal Service today commemorated the 500th anniversary of the naming of Florida with the issuance of a block of four colorful Forever stamps, titled "La Florida." This bouquet of stamps evokes the beauty of the state's lush flora. The stamp dedication ceremony was held at Flagler College in St. Augustine.

The 46-cent La Florida Forever stamps are produced in four designs. They are good for mailing 1-ounce First-Class letters anytime in the future regardless of price changes and are available for purchase at local Post Offices, online at usps.com/stamps or by calling 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724).

"From the moment Ponce de Leon arrived on these shores, Florida has been a destination for dreamers," said U.S. Postal Service Southern Area Operations Vice President Jo Ann Feindt in dedicating the stamps. "This state occupies a special place in the American imagination, and so these stamps give people another way to share the wonders of Florida."

“Being a fifth-generation Floridian who has visited every part of the state and even seen it from space, I can tell you it’s unmatched in its beauty and diverse heritage,” said U.S. Senator Bill Nelson. “It’s fitting the U.S. Postal Service is creating a stamp to commemorate the 500 years of history since Ponce de León.”

Joining Feindt in dedicating the new stamps were U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson of Florida and St. Augustine Mayor Joseph L. Boles. Also participating were Florida Department of State Secretary Ken Detzner; Flagler College President Dr. William T. Abare; and actor Chad Light, who portrays Juan Ponce de León for the State of Florida.

To create the La Florida stamps, artist Steve Buchanan of Winsted, CT, evoked a tropical feel, with bouquets of flowers native to the state. He chose flowers of different sizes and colors for distinction but harmonized as a group, much like a garden. He drew and painted the flowers using Photoshop. Art director Ethel Kessler designed the stamp pane, choosing an illustration of explorers to highlight the celebration of the first Spanish explorations of Florida.

Known today for its towering palm trees, flourishing orange groves and opulent displays of flowers, the state earns the name — La Florida — given by the Spanish in 1513.

The first written record of European exploration was the landing of Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León in March 1513. Traveling with three ships, Ponce de León came within sight of the peninsula during Easter week of 1513. He named the land La Florida after Pascua Florida, “Feast of the Flowers,” Spain’s Easter celebration, and for the verdant display of vegetation visible beyond the shores.

In 1845, 332 years after Ponce de León first stood on its shores, Florida became the 27th U.S. state.

The Postal Service previously observed the 400th anniversary of the settlement of Florida with a 1965 stamp portraying Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. The Postal Service also honored Juan Ponce de León with his own stamp in 1982 and celebrated the 150th anniversary of Florida’s statehood with a 1995 stamp.

Customers can view the La Florida stamps, as well as many of this 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 [beyondtheparf.com/2013-preview](https://www.beyondtheparf.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.

Ordering First-Day-of-Issue Postmarks

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase the new stamps at local Post Offices, at usps.com/stamps or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should address the stamps envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

La Florida Stamp
U.S. Postal Service
99 King Street
St. Augustine, FL 32084-9998

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 for fewer than 50 requests. All orders must be postmarked by June 3.

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* catalog, online at usps.com/stamps or by calling

800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

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

Philatelic Products

Seven philatelic products are available:

- 470606, [Press Sheet with Die Cuts](#), \$73.60 (print quantity of 2,500).
- 470608, [Press Sheet without Die Cuts](#), \$73.60 (print quantity of 2,500).
- 470610, [Keepsake \(Pane & Digital Color Postmark Set of 4\)](#), \$13.95.
- 470616, [First-Day Cover Set of 4](#), \$3.60.
- 470621, [Digital Color Postmark Set of 4](#), \$6.44.
- 470623, [Notecards](#), \$13.95.
- 470630, [Ceremony Program \(random\)](#), \$6.95.

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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About The U.S. Postal Service

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation: 152 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 more than 31,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, *usps.com*, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 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 42nd in the 2012 Fortune 500. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for seven years and the fourth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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