

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Stamp of New Beginnings

USPS to Issue Lunar New Year Forever Stamp Celebrating Year of the Rat

WHAT:

The U.S. Postal Service celebrates the Lunar New Year with the release of the Year of the Rat Forever stamp. The Year of the Rat begins Jan. 25, 2020, and ends Feb. 11, 2021.

The stamp features a rat mask that calls to mind the elaborately decorated masks used in the dragon dance, a hallmark of Lunar New Year parades. The mask is mostly blue, which is said to be one of the lucky colors for individuals born during the Year of the Rat, and incorporates elements with symbolic meaning. Several of the patterns were created with the style of Asian textiles, and the circle in the center of the rat's head represents the new moon on which the Lunar New Year begins. The yellow motif atop the rat's head, similar to a crown, highlights the importance of the animal's position as the first of the 12 zodiac animal signs associated with the lunar calendar. A pop of red, another lucky color, ties the design to other common celebratory decorations.

Art director Antonio Alcalá designed the stamp with original artwork by Camille Chew.

News of the stamp is being shared with the hashtag **#LunarNewYear**.

WHO: Luke Grossmann, senior vice president of finance and strategy, stamp ceremony's dedicating official, U.S. Postal Service.

WHEN: Saturday, Jan. 11, 2020, 11 a.m. PST

WHERE: Lunar New Year Festival 2020 in Monterey Park
Garvey Avenue, between Garfield and Alhambra avenues
Monterey Park, CA 91754

RSVP: The event is free and open to the public. Registration is not necessary.

BACKGROUND: Lunar New Year is the most important holiday of the year for many Asian communities around the world and is primarily celebrated by people of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tibetan, Mongolian, Malaysian and Filipino heritage.

Known as Tet in Vietnam and the Spring Festival in China and elsewhere, Lunar New Year begins on the second new moon after the winter solstice and historically marks the arrival of spring. In communities across the United States, people shop for food and other supplies, hang decorations and ceremonially clean their homes and streets to welcome the new year with a fresh start. Filled with symbolic meaning, the colors red and gold appear everywhere during this auspicious time of year. Red is considered very lucky, while gold is said to bring wealth.

Postal Products

Customers may purchase stamps and other philatelic products through The Postal Store at usps.com/shopstamps, by calling 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724), by mail through *USA Philatelic*, or at Post Office locations nationwide. Forever stamps will always be equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price. Information on ordering first-day-of-issue postmarks and covers is at usps.com/shopstamps under "Collectors."

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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