



POSTAL NEWS

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Mighty Mississippi Flows Forever *New Stamps Commemorate America's Superhighway*

MEMPHIS, TN — The U.S. Postal Service celebrated the beauty and majestic wonder of the Mighty Mississippi River — America's quintessential waterway — during a first-day-of-issue stamp ceremony at the Beale Street Landing in Memphis.

"In addition to its many recreational and natural attributes, the Mississippi is also the backbone of the U.S. economy — serving as a riparian superhighway, transporting more than 175 million tons of freight annually," said Gary Barksdale, the Postal Service's chief postal inspector, who served as the dedicating official. "Today, we continue the Postal Service's tradition of celebrating our nation's wonderful heritage with the dedication of 10 truly special Forever stamps honoring the Mighty Mississippi."

Joining Barksdale to dedicate the stamps were master of ceremonies Alex Bernhardt; cruise director of American Queen Voyages; Jim Strickland, mayor of Memphis; Tyree Daniels, board chair of Memphis River Parks; John Waggoner, founder and chairman of American Queen Voyages; Frank Rivera, riverlorian of American Queen Voyages; and Quintin R. Smith, pastor of the Historical First Baptist Church of Millington.

"Travelers have been captivated by the Mississippi River — romanticizing the steamboats transporting them from Minnesota to Louisiana — throughout history," said Waggoner. "Our flagship American Queen is an iconic symbol of those mighty paddle-wheelers, and we are honored to have her grace the collection."

The Mighty Mississippi Forever stamps are being sold in panes of 10. News of the stamps is being shared with the hashtag **#MightyMississippiStamps**.

Mighty Mississippi Forever Stamps

The portfolio of 10 exquisite photographic stamps each represent a state along the course of the river. With five rows of two stamps each, the pane's arrangement corresponds to the states' north-south and west-east sequence. Art Director Ethel Kessler designed the pane using existing photographs.

Minnesota's stamp shows the Mississippi's source waters of Lake Itasca, as shown in a photo taken by Dana Holm. Wisconsin is represented by Jay Olson-Goude's photo showing an autumn view of the Great River Road.

The Iowa stamp shows David Sebben's photo of the steamboat American Queen near the city of Bettendorf. In Illinois, a sailboat passes limestone bluffs adorned with fall foliage, as depicted by Walter Blackledge.

Missouri is represented by Evan Spiler's photo of the St. Louis skyline at sundown, punctuated by the Gateway Arch. Kentucky is seen in the city of Wickliffe, just downriver from where the Ohio River spills in, as captured in a photo by Larry Braun.

A Mississippi River Parkway Commission photo shows an Arkansas levee curving parallel to a river meander near forest and farmland. In Tennessee, M.J. Scanlon photographed a towboat pushing cargo barges upriver toward Memphis.

Louisiana is represented by Sean Pavone's photo of the New Orleans skyline and the twin-span Crescent City Connection bridges. In the state of Mississippi, within the wilds of a delta bayou, photographer Ron Levine captured cypress trees that seem to drip with Spanish moss.

Background on the Mississippi River

The Mississippi is at the core of the nation's heritage, and is often referred to as America's backbone, its heart and its soul. From Lake Itasca's trickling overflow in Minnesota, the Mississippi flows and grows for 2,300 miles.

The Mississippi streams through varied topography in Wisconsin's Driftless Area, past Iowa's millennium-old effigy mounds and by the remains of Cahokia, the nation's largest pre-Columbian city, in Illinois.

The Ohio River, flowing in along Kentucky's northern border, doubles the Mississippi's volume. The Lower Mississippi is a riparian superhighway. Massive engineering works — channels, locks, dams and levees — help accommodate barge tows more than 1,000 feet long, common along the Arkansas-Tennessee boundary and beyond.

Abundant bayous in Mississippi and Louisiana split the river into a bird-foot-shaped delta. The New Orleans area hosts the river's largest port.

At the point where the Mississippi reaches the Gulf of Mexico, the trickle that started in Lake Itasca has intermingled with waters from 31 states.

Postal Products

Customers may purchase stamps and other philatelic products through the [Postal Store](#) at usps.com/shopstamps, by calling 844-737-7826, 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.

A video of the ceremony will be available on facebook.com/usps. Information for ordering first-day-of-issue postmarks and covers is at usps.com/shop.

The Postal Service generally 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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