

Priority Mail, Priority Express Mail stamps issued Jan. 17, no ceremony

By Michael Baadke

The United States Postal Service has produced its first postage stamp to exceed a \$20 denomination: the \$22.95 Columbia River Gorge Priority Express Mail stamp was issued Jan. 17.

It is also the first U.S. stamp printed by Banknote Corporation of America using a plate number beginning with the letter B.

A second stamp intended for Priority Mail use, printed by Ashton Potter USA Ltd., was issued at the same time: a \$6.45 La Cueva del Indio stamp.

Both stamps were issued without ceremony in Washington, D.C., rather than at the scenic locations that they depict.

The stamps are the latest high-



A new \$6.45 U.S. postage stamp issued Jan. 17 depicts La Cueva del Indio, an archaeological site and natural reserve at Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

either the Priority Mail or Express Mail flat-rate envelopes.

Because these rates have increased over time, the face value of each newly issued expedited mail stamp has also climbed. A 5¢ drop in the Priority Mail rate in 2010 provided the only exception.

The new stamps have been issued in self-adhesive panes of 10.

Collectors have the option of purchasing press sheet segments consisting of 60 stamps for the \$6.45 stamp, or 30 stamps for the \$22.95 stamp. Both denominations are being offered with two varieties of sheet segments, either with or without the die cuts that normally separate individual stamps.

The quantities issued are 300 sheets of the \$6.45 stamp with die cuts and 500 sheets without, selling for \$387 for either variety; and 100 sheets of the \$22.95 stamp with die cuts, and 250 sheets without, priced at \$688.50 for either variety.

La Cueva del Indio ("the cave of the Indian"), shown on the \$6.45 stamp, is an archaeological site on Puerto Rico's north coast, near Arecibo, about 50 miles west of San Juan.

"La Cueva del Indio gets its name



The United States Postal Service sailed past the \$20 denomination mark Jan. 17 with the highest denomination U.S. postage stamp in history: the \$22.95 Columbia River Gorge stamp.

denomination stamps to feature the artwork of illustrator Dan Cosgrove in the American Landmarks series, which began in 2008 with the \$4.80 Mount Rushmore stamp (Scott 4268) and the \$16.50 Hoover Dam stamp (4269).

With the addition of the two new stamps, the series depicts 16 different natural or manmade sights from a dozen or so states and Puerto Rico.

Each stamp in the series has fulfilled the rate in effect at the time for

\$22.95 Columbia River Gorge Priority Mail Express stamp

FIRST DAY— Jan. 17, 2016; **city**— Washington, D.C., and nationwide.
DESIGN: **illustrator**— Dan Cosgrove, Chicago, Ill.; **designer, art director and typographer**— Phil Jordan, Falls Church, Va.; **modeler**— Michelle Finn and Sandra Lane.
PRINTING: **process**— offset with microprinting; **printer and processor**— Banknote Corporation of America, Browns Summit, N.C.; **press**— Alprinta 74; **inks**— cyan, magenta, yellow, black; **paper**— prephosphored overall tagged; **gum**— self-adhesive; **issue quantity**— 1.5 million stamps; **format**— pane of 10, from 150-subject cylinders; **size**— 1.42 inches by 1.085 inches (image); 1.56 inches by 1.225 inches (overall); 4.12 inches by 7.12 inches (full pane); 4.12 inches by 21.36 inches (press sheet); **plate numbers**— "B" followed by four single digits; **marginal markings**— plate numbers in two corners (stamp side); "©2015 USPS," plate position diagram, USPS logo, UPC code in two corners, UPC code behind each stamp; website information; **USPS item No.**— 119300.

First-day cancel ordering information

Collectors requesting first-day cancels are encouraged to purchase their own stamps and affix them to envelopes. The first-day cover envelopes should be addressed for return (a removable label may be used), and mailed in a larger envelope addressed to Columbia River Gorge Stamp, Special Events, Box 92282, Washington, DC 20090-2282.

Requests for first-day cancels must be postmarked by Marc 17.
 The Postal Service's uncached first-day cover for the Columbia River Gorge stamp is USPS item No. 119316 at \$23.39. USPS order numbers for stamps and FDCs also appear in *Linn's* 2016 U.S. Stamp Program on page 23.



The U.S. Postal Service prepared two digital color postmarks for the two new expedited mail stamps issued Jan. 17, and is offering individual first-day covers marked with the postmarks.

from the great number of engravings, known as petroglyphs, found on the cave's walls," according to the Postal Service. "The engravings are believed to be the work of the Taino, the pre-Columbian inhabitants of the island."

The area was declared a natural reserve in 1992 by the Planning Board of Puerto Rico, and it is managed by the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources.

The reserve extends nine nautical miles into the Atlantic Ocean and includes coral reefs and sea turtle nesting areas.

Almost 4,000 miles to the northwest of La Cueva del Indio is the Columbia River Gorge, featured on the \$22.95 stamp.

The 85-mile-long gorge is situated in the Pacific Northwest along the border separating Washington and Oregon, with the Columbia River running through it on its way to the Pacific Ocean.

The view in Cosgrove's illustration shows Crown Point, some 730 feet above the river, and the historic stone structure known as Vista House,

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United States American Landmarks series (2008-present), illustrations by Dan Cosgrove

Scott No.	Description	Issue date
4268	\$4.80 Mount Rushmore (South Dakota)	June 6, 2008
4269	\$16.50 Hoover Dam (Arizona-Nevada)	June 20, 2009
4378	\$4.95 Redwood Forest (California)	Jan. 16, 2009
4379	\$17.50 Old Faithful (Wyoming)	Jan. 16, 2009
4438	\$4.90 Mackinac Bridge (Michigan)	Feb. 3, 2010
4439	\$18.30 Bixby Creek Bridge (California)	Feb. 3, 2010
4511	\$4.95 New River Gorge Bridge (West Virginia)	April 11, 2011
4649	\$5.15 Sunshine Skyway Bridge (Florida)	Feb. 28, 2012
4650	\$18.95 Carmel Mission (California)	Feb. 28, 2012
4738	\$5.60 Arlington Green Bridge (Vermont)	Jan. 25, 2013
4739	\$19.95 Grand Central Terminal (New York)	Feb. 1, 2013
4872	\$5.60 Verrazano-Narrows Bridge (New York)	March 4, 2014
4873	\$19.99 USS Arizona Memorial (Hawaii)	March 13, 2014
4927	\$5.75 Glade Creek Grist Mill (West Virginia)	Sept. 29, 2014
to come	\$6.45 La Cueva del Indio (Puerto Rico)	Jan. 17, 2016
to come	\$22.95 Columbia River Gorge (Washington-Oregon)	Jan. 17, 2016

\$6.45 La Cueva del Indio Priority Mail stamp

FIRST DAY— Jan. 17, 2016; **city**— Washington, D.C., and nationwide.
DESIGN: **artist and typographer**— Dan Cosgrove, Chicago, Ill.; **designer and art director**— Greg Breeding, Washington, D.C.; **modeler**— Joseph Sheeran.
PRINTING: **process**— offset with microprinting; **printer and processor**— Ashton Potter USA Ltd., Williamsville, N.Y.; **press**— Muller A76; **inks**— cyan, magenta, yellow, black; **paper**— nonphosphored type III, block tagging; **gum**— self-adhesive; **issue quantity**— 12 million stamps; **format**— pane of 10, from 180-subject cylinders; **size**— 1.42 inches by 1.085 inches (image); 1.56 inches by 1.225 inches (overall); 4.12 inches by 7.12 inches (full pane); 8.24 inches by 21.36 inches (press sheet) **plate numbers**— "P" followed by four single digits; **marginal markings**— plate numbers (stamp side); "©2015 USPS," plate position diagram, USPS logo, bar code, UPC code behind each stamp, website information (back side); **USPS item No.**— 119100.

First-day cancel ordering information

Standard ordering instructions apply. Collectors requesting first-day cancels are encouraged to purchase their own stamps and affix them to envelopes. The first-day cover envelopes should be addressed for return (a removable label may be used), and mailed in a larger envelope addressed to La Cueva del Indio Stamp, Special Events, Box 92282, Washington, DC 20090-2282.

Requests for first-day cancels must be postmarked by March 17.
 The Postal Service's uncached first-day cover for the La Cueva del Indio stamp is USPS item No. 119116 at \$6.89. USPS order numbers for stamps and FDCs also appear in *Linn's* 2016 U.S. Stamp Program on page 23.