National Postal Museum Begins Construction of William H. Gross Stamp Gallery

*World’s Premier Museum Gallery Dedicated to Philately Opens September 2013*

The Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum has begun construction of the William H. Gross Stamp Gallery. When completed, the gallery will be the world’s premier museum gallery dedicated to philately. Scheduled to open in September 2013, the gallery will enable the museum to reach its full potential by dramatically increasing the collection’s visibility, advancing its educational mission and reinvigorating public interest in philately.

A construction project to perform infrastructure renovation for the new gallery was awarded to Clark Construction Group LLC, one of the largest general contractors in the United States. Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Clark was selected by the Smithsonian Institution on the strength of its technical and cost proposals in a two-step, full and open competition. The project, which will convert the site of the former Capital City Brewery restaurant in the Postal Square building into the new gallery, includes heating, ventilation, air conditioning, electrical, sprinkler and security upgrades, as well as windows with stamp graphics, new restrooms, elevators and stairs. Mezzanine renovations, providing new space for the museum’s educational programs, are part of the project as well.

Named after its primary benefactor, the William H. Gross Stamp Gallery will provide an experience available nowhere else and will offer something for everyone, from casual visitors to experienced collectors. As visitors move through six thematic areas, stunning displays and interactive moments will reveal the stories that unfold from the museum’s unparalleled collection. Distributed throughout the thematic areas will be hundreds of pullout frames containing more than 20,000 objects, providing ample opportunities to view noteworthy stamps that have never been on public display.

A glowing wall of windows featuring reproductions of 54 historic U.S. stamps will provide a backdrop to the 12,000 square feet of exhibits and continually remind visitors that the history of stamps is intertwined with the history of America.
Several other new museum projects will complement the gallery and further enrich visitors’ experience:

- “Windows Into America,” the spectacular wall of windows featuring stamp art, will announce to people outside what wonders await them within the museum.
- The main historic postal lobby will be transformed into a welcome center that orients visitors and prepares them to get the most out of their visit.
- Within the historic lobby, a social network center featuring eight touch-screen kiosks will enable visitors to personalize their museum experience and share feedback with other visitors.
- An adjoining postmaster’s suite will present rotating, high-caliber philatelic exhibitions on topics of special interest.
- New education spaces, including a learning loft above the stamp gallery and an education innovation center, will provide students, educators and families with diverse programming that incorporates the newest media.

The National Postal Museum is devoted to presenting the colorful and engaging history of the nation’s mail service and showcasing one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of stamps and philatelic material in the world. It is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C., across from Union Station. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). For more information about the Smithsonian, call (202) 633-1000 or visit the museum website at www.postalmuseum.si.edu.

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