

The “D” Rate-Change Stamps of 1985

PURPOSE & SCOPE: This is a Traditional 1-frame exhibit of the “D” non-denominated (22¢) stamps issued in 1985 for the rate change from 20¢ (for First Class mail up to one ounce), that went into effect on February 17, 1985. Shown are the three formats of the “D” stamp: Sheet, booklet and coil. The postal stationery issued for the rate-change are not within the scope of this exhibit.

TREATMENT: Each of the three formats of the stamp are shown as a separate section, with each “chapter” following the traditional format. Unfortunately, there are no known essays, proofs or other pre-production items in collectors’ hands.

For each section, the plate data will be followed by plate blocks and other items showing plate marginal markings and plate varieties, if available. Errors, freaks and varieties are then shown to illustrate the production process, and what could go wrong.

The exhibit concludes with examples of use. Covers shown are contemporary uses. A number of covers are either over-paid or under-paid demonstrating the confusion that the non-denominated stamps caused among the public, as well as postal personnel.

Key and important items are highlighted with a green border.

BACKGROUND/IMPORTANCE:

The United States Postal Service introduced non-denominated stamps as a stop-gap measure to address the problem of producing enough stamps to satisfy consumer demand when rates changed. The time between the approval of a rate change and the effective date became unpredictable, making it difficult for the new USPS to produce enough stamps for any new rate. The first non-denominated rate change stamp was designated by the letter “A”. With each subsequent non-denominated rate change stamp to be assigned a letter in sequence, the USPS was assured of providing enough stamps for 26 rate changes, a simple, but elegant solution.

RARITY & CONDITION: Given that this is a “modern” issue, material chosen for the exhibit goes “above and beyond”. Each error, freak or oddity shown exceeds the minimum requirement, and attempts to raise the challenge factor to the highest possible level. All recorded major errors of these stamps are included in this exhibit, as well as a great variety of significant freaks and oddities.



Engraved Artcraft FDC signed by stamp designer, Bradbury Thompson