



UNITED STATES MINT
Department of the Treasury
Serving America Since 1792

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 11, 2004

For more information:
Doug Hecox (202) 354-7577

United States Mint Launches Sale of Edison Coin at Museum in Dearborn
Greenfield Village is First Site to Sell Coin Commemorating 125th Anniversary of the Light Bulb

DEARBORN, Mich. –United States Mint Director Henrietta Holsman Fore traveled to Greenfield Village, the historic site that recreates Thomas Edison’s renowned Menlo Park laboratory, to begin sales today of the Thomas Alva Edison Commemorative Coin on the great inventor’s birthday. Surcharge proceeds from the sale of these coins go to eight organizations, including The Henry Ford’s Greenfield Village in Dearborn. Greenfield Village was the first spot in the nation where the coins could be purchased and taken home. The silver dollars commemorate the 125th anniversary of Edison’s invention of the incandescent light bulb.

“This United States Mint commemorative coin recognizes that Thomas Alva Edison’s greatest accomplishment was to gather the light from an electrified filament, harness it under glass and give it to the world with the flip of a switch,” said Director Fore. “The surcharge proceeds from this coin will benefit Edison’s Menlo Park lab in Greenfield Village here in Dearborn and seven other organizations that help enlighten us about Edison’s stellar achievements.”

In a ceremony to mark the 125th anniversary of the light bulb, thousands of the commemorative coins were displayed in the Menlo Park laboratory for 125 minutes. Several hundred of the silver dollars were then transported in antique electric cars on loan from The Henry Ford and DTE Energy to the village pavilion and gift store.

Today is the 157th anniversary of Edison’s birth. Starting at noon (E.T.), the Thomas Alva Edison Commemorative Coins can be purchased online through the United States Mint’s secure website at www.usmint.gov, or by calling toll-free 1-800-USA-MINT (872-6468) 8:00 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week.

“Edison’s true genius was his perseverance as he tested hundreds of materials in the development of the incandescent light bulb,” said Christian Overland, director of The Henry Ford, who led the festivities. “We are honored that Edison’s Menlo Park laboratory and images from our archives were used as inspiration for the design of the commemorative coin.”

The Henry Ford Curator and Edison expert Bill Pretzer, Edison re-enactor Ken Moody, State Representative Steve Bieda and area schoolchildren from the Henry Ford Academy and the Edison School also participated.

As authorized by Public Law 105-331, the United States Mint will produce a maximum mintage of 500,000 silver dollar coins in proof and uncirculated condition to commemorate Edison’s invention of the incandescent light bulb. In addition to The Henry Ford, seven other organizations -- the Museum of Arts and History (Port Huron, Michigan), the Edison Birthplace Association (Milan, Ohio), the National Park Service (West Orange, New Jersey), the Edison Plaza Museum (Beaumont, Texas), the Edison Winter Home and Museum (Fort Myers, Florida), the Edison Memorial Tower (Edison, New Jersey), and the Hall of Electrical History (Schenectady, New York) -- will receive surcharge proceeds from the sale

of the commemorative coins. The proceeds are to be used for the expansion of educational programs, construction of a museum and preservation of materials.

The obverse (heads side) of the coin, by United States Mint sculptor/engraver Donna Weaver, features a portrait of the great inventor in his laboratory holding an early experimental light bulb. The reverse (tails side) design, by United States Mint sculptor/engraver John Mercanti, features a rendering of Edison's 1879 light bulb with rays emanating from it. The inscription "125th ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIGHT BULB" is above the image and the inscriptions "1879-2004", "United States of America", "One Dollar" and "E Pluribus Unum" are below the image. The composition of the coin is 90 percent silver and 10 percent copper.

During the program's pre-issue sales period – February 11 to March 26, 2004 – the proof coin is \$33, and the uncirculated coin is \$31. To qualify for pre-issue prices, orders must be postmarked no later than March 26, 2004. After the pre-issue period, the proof coin is \$37 and the uncirculated coin is \$33. The price of each includes a \$10 surcharge, and both the proof and uncirculated coins will bear the mint mark of the United States Mint at Philadelphia.

Hearing- and speech-impaired customers may order by calling 1-888-321-MINT (6468) 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Mail orders may be sent to United States Mint, P.O. Box 382618, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-8618 (Attention: Order Processing). A shipping and handling fee of \$4.95 will be added to each order. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for shipping.

###