

For Immediate Release

The North Star State Is The Star of the Minnesota State Quarter

The Minnesota State Quarter will be released in 2005, and 139 million quarter collectors will be waiting for it. Thanks to MPI Coin and the MBA, they might just find it in your lobby.

The Minnesota State Quarter will be the second State Quarter of 2005 and will celebrate the abundant natural beauty of the "Land of 10,000 Lakes." There is one boat for every six Minnesotans, so it's no surprise there's a boat in the quarter design. Two fishermen are aboard, and they share their lake with Minnesota's state bird, the common loon. Governor Tim Pawlenty unveiled the design at the Governor's Fishing Opener on May 14, 2004, and remarked: "The fishing opener is the perfect opportunity to unveil Minnesota's quarter. When people from around the world see our quarter, they will immediately associate Minnesota with the beautiful woods and waters of our natural resources."

Through MBA, member banks can offer the Minnesota State Quarter to their customers through MPI Coin's State Quarter Collection. They can also offer the many other State Quarter Collections currently available as part of MPI Coin's Coins of America program. Member banks enjoy special MBA discounts when they start, and can take advantage of Guaranteed Starter Packages, which offer a full six-month exchange on the coins in the Package.

Banks that start their programs now will be well-positioned to take advantage of the excitement and interest that will be generated throughout the state when the Minnesota State Quarter is released.

To contact MPI Coin, call 1-800-459-9487. You can see marketing materials promoting the Minnesota State Quarter Collection at www.mpicoin.com/mba.asp.

Since 1996, Coins of America has helped financial institutions across the country use coins and coin sales to attract new customers and make new connections to their existing accounts. "It's an idea that worked from the start," says MPI Coin president Andrew Schwartz. "Americans are always attracted to an opportunity to shop. And coin sales are an obvious extension of a bank's core services. Put them together, and you've got a unique way to promote yourself that also returns a profit."

MPI Coin takes U.S. Mint and other specialty mint coins, adds their own packaging to create unique coin products, and sells them to banks at wholesale prices. Banks use the coins for premiums, promotions and direct sales, helped by the marketing materials that MPI Coin provides free of charge.

The State Quarters are clearly the stars of this show. "There's never been anything like them," says Schwartz. "They single-handedly brought coin collecting into the American mainstream." The State Quarters were introduced by the U.S. Mint in 1999. Every year through 2008, five quarters will be released with a special reverse celebrating one of the 50 states. Citizens of the home state submit the designs, and also vote to select the final choice.

The success of the Collections speaks for itself: Coins of America sells more than two million Collections annually through the 6,500 financial institutions that offer the program.

"We turn each quarter into a celebration of home state pride," says Schwartz. Each Collection features two State

Quarters in a colorful tri-fold display card, which opens up to reveal information about the state: famous natives, notable sites, and historical facts and trivia. "There are two quarters, one from each coinage mint," says Schwartz. "Serious coin collectors want both mints; it also allows us to display both sides of the coin." The Collections are exclusive to Coins of America. "Lots of people can sell you a quarter; no one else can sell you something like this," says Schwartz.

For banks, the main benefit of the State Quarters is consistent return visits. Most people who buy the quarters will start a collection. A new quarter is released every 10 weeks, and collectors quickly get in the habit of stopping by their local branch five times a year to buy the latest release. This will continue through 2008, and maybe beyond; the Mint is considering producing a series of quarters in 2009 celebrating Washington D.C. and the United States Territories.

Home State Quarters are always the most popular. "The Mint promotes them, the governor's office promotes them, the local media runs stories," says MPI Coin Marketing Director Sean Morrison. "If you've got the quarters, this is all free publicity. People see your ads side by side with articles in the newspapers and on television. And home state pride has a powerful effect on people's curiosity; everybody wants to see what the home state quarter looks like."

Interest peaks when the State Quarter is released, and banks that already have their program in place enjoy the best return from this one-time event.

"The Collection should make everyone who reads it want to visit the state," says Morrison, who writes the Collections. "It's my favorite job. I always learn a lot when I do the research, and the hardest part is figuring out what to leave out." His favorite stories? "It was very interesting learning about the history of cooperatives in the state, and Minnesota's political history is one of the most colorful in the country. The Kensington Rune Stone is fascinating — if it's not a hoax. But it's hard to resist the world's largest ball of twine!"

To see which other stories made the cut, look for the Minnesota State Quarter Collection. The best place to find one will be in your lobby.

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