

**By Carolyn Lee**

***The Imperial Republican***

The U.S. Postal Service has announced that the price of a first-class stamp will increase two cents on May 11, to 44 cents. Postal rates go up annually in May, with the new prices announced in February. The overall change is tied to the rate of inflation in the year before.

Imperial Postmaster Jerry Lines said that while the new rate covers the first ounce of first-class mail, the price for each additional ounce will remain at 17 cents.

Other changes on May 11 include the increase of a postcard stamp to 28 cents, a one-cent increase; the first ounce of a large envelope increases five cents to 88 cents, and the first ounce of a parcel increases five cents to \$1.22.

Lines said priority and parcel post services increased in January, so won't go up this time. Box rents and special services aren't affected, he added.

The Forever Stamps will continue to sell at 42 cents, Lines noted, until May 10, at which time they will cost 44 cents. They will remain valid in the future regardless of rate hikes.

In addition, Lines said the Postal Service will be offering a Forever printed envelope beginning May 12. That envelope, which may be ordered in quantities of 50, will include a pre-printed Forever stamp and the customer's return address, Lines noted.

Postal officials estimate that the increase will cost the average household \$3 per year.