

U.S. MINT'S FIRST STEAM PRESS WILL STRIKE MEDALS AT ANA SHOW

The first steam press used by the United States Mint will be exhibited and demonstration medals struck at the American Numismatic Association (ANA) World's Fair of Money 2000 in Philadelphia, August 9-13.

The press, given to the ANA last March by the Franklin Institute Science Museum in Philadelphia, will be operated at the show by the Gallery Mint Museum of Eureka Springs, Arkansas. The mint is repairing the press, which broke down at special March 23 ceremonies in Philadelphia, marking the 164th anniversary of the press' initial operation.

"It was heart breaking when we ran into mechanical problems," says Gail Baker, ANA education director and project coordinator. "Our original plans were to leave the press in Philadelphia, display it at the convention in August and then have it shipped to the ANA's Money Museum, where it will go on permanent display."

Due to the mechanical problems, the press was sent to the Gallery Mint, where Joe Rust, who originally helped refurbish the machine, could repair it. Once operational, the press was to be shipped to Colorado Springs.

"We didn't have the budget to return the press to Philadelphia for the show," Baker says. "However, Mark Borckardt, senior numismatist for Bowers and Merena Galleries, started a fund-raising drive that generated \$5,500, which will allow us to have the press in Philadelphia as originally planned."

Contributors include Jack H. Beymer, Douglas F. Bird, Mark Borkardt, Chris Victor McCawley, Numismatic Financial Corporation, Frank Patty, Joe Rust, Craig Sholley and Anthony Terranova.

Prior to the introduction of this steam-powered machine, the Mint produced coins on manually operated screw presses. The semi-automated, lever steam press greatly sped up the minting process, but by 1874 technology improved and the Mint discontinued its use.

The following year, George B. Soley, a Philadelphia die-sinker, bought the machine to strike commemorative medals and tokens at a variety of events. After his death, Soley's widow gave the press to The Franklin Institute Science Museum, which electrified and operated it for many years, striking medals for visitors to its museum in Philadelphia.

The ANA's gold, silver and copper commemorative medals, featuring designs similar to those used on the first pieces minted on the steam press in 1836, will be struck on the press while it is in Eureka Springs. Proceeds from their sale will be used to offset the costs of refurbishing and moving the press to Colorado Springs. The Gallery Mint will strike its own medal on the press that will be sold at the show in Philadelphia.

The ANA's gold and silver medals are sold out, and only copper pieces remain available at \$20 each (plus \$5 shipping and handling). To order a 27mm medal in .995 fine copper,

contact the ANA Education Department at 818 N. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3279; telephone 719/632-2646; fax 719/634-4085; or E-mail education@money.org.

The American Numismatic Association is a congressionally chartered nonprofit educational organization dedicated to encouraging people to study and collect money and related items. The ANA helps its 28,000 members and the public discover and explore the world of money through its vast array of education and outreach programs, as well as its museum, library, publications, conventions and seminars. For more information, call 719-632-2646 or go to www.money.org.