

St. Louis expo confirms strength of stamp market, auctioneer says
 By Bill Evans
 According to David Kohl, president of Regency Superior Auctions, the stamp market is doing well. Kohl said second-bidding attendance at the recent St. Louis Stamp Expo was combined with strong bidding at the U.S. fair sale.

"Our two day auction was very well attended by collectors from across the country," he said. "In fact, the Expo set attendance records for this stamp show in St. Louis."

"It's a sure sign that the economy is starting to turn around in our industry based on the attendance on the show floor and auction," he continued. "It was a 'battle royale' for the country collections that began with the Niger Coast Protectorate collection."

The sale was held March 18-20 at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel. The auction took two hours longer than Kohl had anticipated, due to the bidding activity on the floor. He said the sale grossed \$1.3 million US including the buyer's premium. All prices quoted here do not include the premium.

The Niger Coast Protectorate was undoubtedly the high point of the sale. The remarkable assemblage was made up of 76 stamps, either mounted on specially paper or housed with their certificates, ranging from when it was known as the Old Rivers Protectorate, through provinces and seahabes, to the Niger Coast and Opobo River issues. Described in the catalogue as a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to acquire a solid collection of this fascinating area" it was originally estimated at \$55,000 to \$70,000 but that was lowered to \$40,000 to \$50,000 before the sale. They could have left the estimate alone, as it sold for \$93,000.

The sale also featured a rare selection of Canadian and British stamps, most of which went for very near the estimate before any premiums are added. Among the Canadian material was lot 1148, an 1851 Prince Albert of date value of \$20,000 before the sale. They could



This postcard, mailed in 1900 with a U.S. 65-cent Zeppelin stamp from Toledo, Ohio to Germany, sold for \$220 on an estimate of \$300 to \$320.



The Registry sale featured a selection of scarce Dorothy Knapp hand painted cachets, such as this one of the Castle of Chillon on Lake Geneva, Switzerland.

Stamp-faking ring busted in Montreal

By Bill Evans
 In the last week of March, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with the co-operation of several municipal police services conducted 24 searches of businesses and convenience stores in the Montreal area, breaking up a stamp-counterfeiting ring.

Two arrests were made in Montreal, and charges were also filed in Toronto. The names of the accused were not available at press time.

The RCMP say they were called in to the case after Canada Post investigators called for assistance to examine the possibility that "a network was engaged in the sale of counterfeit stamps might be active in the Montreal and Toronto areas." In addition, reused stamps were being sold over the Internet.

Since May 2010, authorities have seized more than 40,000 counterfeit stamps and 10,000 reused stamps. The stamps were sold as convenience store singly or in booklets of 10. Canadian Stamp News ran an article on the fake stamps in the March 29 issue. The fake stamps identified by the RCMP were the same as those described in that article: 49-cent Queen Elizabeth II definitives issued in 2003; Vancouver Olympic booklet stamps; and 2007 Canadian Highways definitives. Canada Post official Anick Lortie expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the investigation. "Canada Post is pleased that the investigation into the printing and selling of counterfeit stamps has resulted in an arrest and the shutdown of this illegal operation in the Montreal area," she said. "Our postal in-

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