



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 31, 2000

- CONTACT: Dave Druker
or
- CONTACT: Randy Nehrt

New License Plates Are Leading To New Technology & Improved Service

SPRINGFIELD - Beginning in July 2001, Secretary of State Jesse White will deliver more new license plates in a faster timeline than any previous administration. In order to supply new license plates for more than 8.5 million Illinois vehicles, his office has been working to modernize an outdated and cumbersome vehicle services department.

"In many ways, the Secretary of State's office has not kept up with the demand for service or utilized the technology available," said White. "It is my mission to run this office more like a business and we are taking steps to improve service for drivers and vehicle owners throughout Illinois.

"Our re-plating project is about more than getting new license plates on vehicles," said White. "It's an opportunity to improve the entire ordering and distribution process."

All 8.5 million passenger vehicle owners will receive the new design plates within a one-year time period beginning with July 2001 expirations. The last time new license plates were distributed was in 1984. At that time, 4.5 million sets of plates were distributed over a three-year time frame.

White said his goal is to improve the level of service customers will receive no matter how they reach his office. In the future, customers would be able to select vanity or personalized license plates or renew their plate registrations on-line during their expiration period. Currently there is a cumbersome mail process to select vanity and personalized plates and customers have to wait in line to renew their registration.

In addition, customers who do not have a preference for a specific

number/letter combination will be able to receive new random number license plates at the time of purchase at any Secretary of State facility. In past replating cycles, customers had to wait to receive new plates through the mail.

Many of the internal distribution operations are also being improved through new technology. The replating program calls for the installation of a new machine to sort license plates by zip code order. The machine can sort 90 plates per minute compared to the current manual process in which 30 plates are sorted per minute.

Two new remittance processors that will be used to process checks and renewal coupons are capable of running 1,000 documents per minute and imaging them, thus eliminating the need for manual microfilming. Comparatively, it currently takes almost a full day to process and validate 1,000 documents manually. New mail opening equipment will allow workers to sort 7,000 pieces of mail per day. Today, one person can open and sort only 1,000 mail pieces per day.

"I am looking to improve service in every department within our office," said White. "I don't think we can ever be satisfied, because there is always an opportunity to improve."

White said that in addition to the license plate and registration process, he has also ordered a new computer and software to more efficiently process the state's title and vehicle registration renewal transactions. In past years, prisoners were used to input data for many of the state's vehicle registration records, including 1.8 million renewals last year. When the legislature outlawed that practice, the additional volume of transactions entered by Secretary of State employees placed too great of a load on the aged computer system.

White has also hired Accudata, a data processing firm in Carlinville, to enter vehicle title transactions. The firm already handles data entry work for the Illinois Department of Revenue.

"I am proud to have established this partnership with Accudata that will allow our office to handle title transactions more efficiently," said White. "Accudata has a proven track record with the state of Illinois."