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SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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NEW LICENSE PLATES ARE ON THE WAY

Office Improvements Lead To Faster, More Efficient Delivery

SPRINGFIELD — Secretary of State Jesse White announced today that the distribution process for new license plates began this week as more than 640,000 notices for new plates were mailed to motorists whose vehicle registrations expire in August.

The new design plates will be distributed based on renewal month, beginning with August 2001 expirations. All passenger plates will be distributed by July 2002, and all other plate categories will be distributed in 2003.

"Our goal is to produce and distribute the new license plates in the most reliable and cost-effective manner possible, using an aggressive distribution schedule and a process that provides maximum convenience for our customers," said White. "To achieve that goal we have overhauled a massive, outdated system."

When vehicle owners are due to get the new design plates, the words "Replating Renewal" will be marked on the top right hand corner of their renewal notices. Motorists can order their new plate using one of four renewal methods: online at www.cyberdriveillinois.com, using the touch-tone phone system, by mail, or by visiting a Driver Services facility, participating bank or currency exchange.

Illinois motorists, by law, have the right to retain their current letter and number combinations on their new design plates. If a motorist chooses to retain the number, he or she will be given a Temporary Renewal Sticker to affix to the old license plate until the new plates are manufactured and

delivered to the motorist. White added that it is important for motorists to make certain their addresses are up to date to ensure prompt delivery of the new-design plates.

If a motorist does not care to retain his or her current letter and number combination on the new plate, random-number plates will be available immediately over-the-counter at Driver Service Facilities. They are also available through the other three renewal methods and will be delivered by mail.

White outlined a variety of improvements his office has completed as it prepares to distribute an unprecedented number of license plates in one year. During the state's last replating cycle, it took three years to distribute 4.8 million standard passenger plates.

"We used this replating project as an opportunity to replace an outdated renewal processing system with state-of-the art technology," White said. "Our new computerized order management system is more convenient for our customers, more efficient for the office and more effective for law enforcement."

The technological improvements extend from the moment the motorist renews his or her plate, along to the manufacturer and Secretary of State databases, through shipping and final delivery:

- Motorists can now renew license plates online
- Renewal stickers will have tracking numbers that correspond to the license plates and can be traced by law enforcement through LEADS
- Customer service representatives can check the status of a plate order via computer and provide customers with up-to-the-minute information
- Registration records are updated within minutes of a transaction, in most cases
- Everything from individual plates to plate skids will be bar-coded and tracked through a computer system for better inventory control
- High-powered equipment has been utilized for faster mail opening, remittance processing and plate sorting

In addition to improving customer service and office efficiency, White addressed the concerns of the law

enforcement community. His office is now using special ink that makes vehicle registration ID cards less susceptible to fraud and is redesigning the specialty plates to incorporate the larger, standard letters and numbers.

The entire vehicle registration system also employs real-time transactions that allow police to better track the registration and have up-to-date information when they stop a vehicle.

The replating project began in 1999 when the Illinois General Assembly appropriated \$10 million from the FY 2000 General Revenue fund. That funding, along with \$4 from each title transfer fee, has paid for the upgrades, equipment and license plates. There is no additional cost to customers for the new plates. Motorists will receive new plates when they pay their standard annual renewal fee.

Macon Resources, Inc. in Decatur, Illinois' primary license plate manufacturer, is the first plate production facility in the nation to combine digital press technology with electronic ordering. MRI employs disabled individuals. To ensure a smooth and constant plate production schedule, the Secretary of State has hired a second company that utilizes the same technology.

For more information on replating, or to view a web presentation on the [history of Illinois license plates](#) culminating in the new-design plate, go to www.cyberdriveillinois.com.