

# License Plates

## Hub

April 22, 1915 – A committee asked the county supervisors to apply their share of the license plates funds to the seedling mile to be constructed that summer instead of putting it into the road fund. The board was not sure it could legally do that.

April 23, 1915 – Board voted to take \$1,000 out of the auto license fund, which has \$3,500 in it, to the Seedling Mile construction.

Nov 8, 1916 – Sherm Hawley held the first state auto license ever issued.... Originally the number was assigned too the auto owned by A. U. Dann, the former Kearney banker. Then it was transferred to the late Charley Dungan and now has fallen into Sherm's hands.

Feb 1920 – small tags with the year were issues to be attached over last year's date. Car owners were advised to rivet them on so they did not come lose and get lost.

Mar 10, 1920 – Estimated 4,000 cars to be licensed in Buffalo County plus several hundred new cars through the year.

Jan 21, 1921 – New plates were issued by the state instead of tags like last year.

Jan 29, 1921 – Only about 2,000 license plates had been renewed so far. County treasurer's office issued an extension of deadline to Feb 1 but state law does not allow for extensions beyond Jan 1. Further difficulties caused by applications for renewal being made directly to the state instead of having the county treasurer's offices distribute them upon application.

March 8, 1921 – Still 500 licenses have not been renewed. Sheriff's office gearing up to arrest those with delinquent licenses. Those arrested will get fines up to \$50 and required to renew their licenses.

April 14, 1921 – 26 cars with expired plates were spotted by the sheriff. In each case the owner had the new plates. They just had not put the on yet.

<http://www.dmv.ne.gov/dvr/plates/plthistory.html>

## History of Nebraska Passenger Vehicle License Plates

Motor vehicles were first registered in June 1905. Individuals made their own plates, and registrations were recorded with the Secretary of State. The plates were made of leather with metal numbers. This practice continued until 1915 when the Department of Motor Vehicles began issuing the plates. The Department assigned numbers to the plates, which were then made of metal. From 1915 to 1939 the plates were two colors, which changed every year. In 1922, the state established the practice of using prefix numbers to identify the counties in which vehicles were registered. Each county was assigned a number based on the number of registered vehicles in the county at that time. The county with the most

vehicles, Douglas, was assigned the number 1; the county with the second highest number of vehicles, Lancaster, was assigned number 2; and so forth. From 1903 to 1920 only a single plate was issued for each vehicle. In 1921 two plates were issued for each vehicle.

Except for 1920, plates were issued annually until 1943. In 1942 the plates returned to two colors, changing annually. A metal revalidation tab was issued in the years 1920, 1943, 1944, 1947, 1953 and 1959, but after 1960 the tabs became a decal-type material. In 1952 to 1955 the Goldenrod was added to the plates. In 1966, special reflective sheeting was used while numbers were stamped and painted on the plates.

In 1940 - 1941 the Statehouse Emblem was added. Beginning with the 1956 license plates, a slogan "The Beef State" was embossed on the plates and remained until 1965. In 1966, the word "Centennial" was embossed on the plates in honor of the States Centennial Celebration in 1967 for the license plate series expiring in 1968. In 1969, the slogan "Cornhusker State" was embossed on the plate until 1975.

In 1976 a bicentennial plate honoring the United States Bicentennial was issued to all passenger vehicles. It had the word "Nebraska" on a red banner at the top and the slogan "1776 Bicentennial 1976" on a blue banner at the bottom. In the upper left and corner was a blue sketch of a covered wagon and in the upper right-hand corner was a blue sketch of a Native American Chief.

Beginning with the 1984 blue on white license plate with no slogan or graphic design, plates were to be reissued every three years.

In January of 2002 the State began with issuance of the Alpha/Numeric License Plates. These plates are issued to residents of the three largest counties, Lancaster, Sarpy and Douglas.

From 1962 through 2004, with the exception of the United States Bicentennial License plate series utilized from 1976 through 1983, new distinctive license plates were issued every three years. Starting with issuance of the 2005 plate series, issuance of new license plates changed from every three years to every six years. The reason for the long use of the Bicentennial plates series was the result of budgetary considerations. License plate production had been state general fund expenditure and to save funds, the then Governor and Legislators delayed that expenditure to save money.

A new method of funding the license plate production began with the 1984 plate series. At that time, Highway Trust Funding was used to provide the upfront cost of materials and license plate production. The Legislature established a fee to cover the cost of each license plate and its validation decals. The individual then paid that fee at the time a new plate(s) were issued. The fees collected were then provided to the Highway Trust Fund to replenish those funds. This process of plate funding continues to the present.

Issuance of flat digital license plates began in November 2003.

Beginning with the 2005 issuance of license plates, reissuance will occur every six years. Issuance of full size trailer plates also began in 2005.

1903 - 1914 – Made with metal numbers by the individual and recorded with the Secretary of State.

**County codes:** From 1922 through 1950 and from 1952 to the present Nebraska has coded the plates numerically by county as a prefix. In 1951, Nebraska used county letters. Numbers were assigned by population with the largest receiving number 1 and so on.

In 1951 counties were grouped according to their initial letter. The first county got to use the letter as a single letter. The next counties used the initial letter and the next letter in their name provided it was not an U, O, or Q. If the second letter was unusable then the third was tried etc. Each subsequent county in that group did the same avoiding not only I, O, and Q but also any letter used by a previous county in their grouping. Douglas County (Omaha) was assigned the letter "X" arbitrarily so it would have a single letter prefix and thus be able to issue more plates for the State's most populous county. "Z" was assigned to Otoe County because "O" was not permitted. Dodge County became DG when it should have been DD - apparently identical double letters were not considered satisfactory. Blaine County should have been BL but was given BA so that BL could be reserved for Butler.

The 93 county numbers are as follows:

1	DOUGLAS	X	2	LANCASTER	L	3	GAGE	G
4	CUSTER	CS	5	DODGE	DG	6	SAUNDERS	SU
7	MADISON	M	8	HALL	H	9	BUFFALO	BU
10	PLATTE	PL	11	OTOE	Z	12	KNOX	K N
13	CEDAR	CE	14	ADAMS	A	15	LINCOLN	LN
16	SEWARD	SE	17	YORK	Y	18	DAWSON	D W
19	RICHARDSON	RC	20	CASS	C	21	SCOTTS BLUFF	SC
22	SALINE	S	23	BOONE	BN	24	CUMING	CU
25	BUTLER	BL	26	ANTELOPE	AN	27	WAYNE	W A
28	HAMILTON	HA	29	WASHINGTON	W	30	CLAY	CL
31	BURT	BT	32	THAYER	T	33	JEFFERSON	J
34	FILLMORE	F	35	DIXON	DX	36	HOLT	HL
37	PHELPS	PH	38	FURNAS	FU	39	CHEYENNE	CY
40	PIERCE	PR	41	POLK	K, PK	42	NUCKOLLS	N U
43	COLFAX	CF	44	NEMAHA	NE	45	WEBSTER	W

						E		
46	MERRICK	ME	47	VALLEY	V	48	RED WILLOW	R
49	HOWARD	HW	50	FRANKLIN	FR	51	HARLAN	HR
52	KEARNEY	K	53	STANTON	ST	54	PAWNEE	P
55	THURSTON	TU	56	SHERMAN	SR	57	JOHNSON	JH
58	NANCE	N	59	SARPY	SA	60	FRONTIER	FN
61	SHERIDAN	SH	62	GREELEY	GE	63	BOYD	BY
64	MORRILL	MR	65	BOX BUTTE	BX	66	CHERRY	CR
67	HITCHCOCK	HT	68	KEITH	KE	69	DAWES	D A
70	DAKOTA	D	71	KIMBALL	KM	72	CHASE	CH
73	GOSPER	GS	74	PERKINS	PE	75	BROWN	BR
76	DUNDY	DU	77	GARDEN	GA	78	DEWEL	DE
79	HAYES	HY	80	SIoux	SX	81	ROCK	RK
82	KEYA PAHA	KY	83	GARFIELD	GR	84	WHEELER	W H
85	BANNER	B	86	BLAINE	BA	87	LOGAN	LG
88	LOUP	LU	89	THOMAS	TH	90	MCPHERSON	M C
91	ARTHUR	AR	92	GRANT	GN	93	HOOKEr	H K