

# New colorful license plate doesn't rekindle debate of '83

By Kent Endacott  
Staff Reporter

The switch from the generic, blue-on-white Nebraska license plates to a new, multi-colored plate scheduled for January 1987 should be smooth and non-controversial, state Department of Motor Vehicles officials say.

Lynne Haas, public information officer at the motor vehicles department, said an early start on the new plates will help avoid another "great license plate debate," which occupied the Legislature for three months in 1983. Production on the 2.9 million plates will begin in February 1986.

This year the department's 1985-86 budget submitted to the Legislature during the 1985 session included appropriations for the new 1987 license plate. Normally the license plates are not included in the budget until one year before the plates are produced. But the department decided to ask for plate appropriations to avoid problems that it had in 1984, said Jeff Elliott, deputy director of the department.

In 1984, the Legislature's debate caused a production delay. The delay caused some people to have to get temporary license plate renewal stickers since not all the plates were ready. They also were unable to get the same

number on their license plate as their previous plates.

State Sen. Shirley Marsh said since the Legislature couldn't resolve the license plate issue in 1984, the motor vehicles department took the responsibility. They did so by not taking action, she said.

### No agreement

The Legislature's inaction on the license plate issue during the 1985 session could have been partly because it had more important issues to deal with, Marsh said.

In 1983, senators debated what slogan should be printed on the new plates. In the end, no agreement could be reached on a specific slogan or design, resulting in the generic plates.

Nevertheless, the Legislature passed a bill that requires Nebraska to issue new license plates every three years. The law also requires that the color of the plates be changed each time new license plates are issued.

The new license plates will be red, black, gold and white and similar to the state Economic Development Department's "Discover Nebraska" bumper sticker.

The new design was chosen by Motor Vehicle Department Director Holly Jensen from three designs drawn up

and submitted for bids.

### \$1 charge

The new plates will cost 90 cents, about 6 cents more per plate than the generic plates and will be produced by inmates at the Nebraska State Penitentiary.

No money from the state's general budget will be used to produce the more elaborate plates, Elliott said.

"The new license plates will be funded entirely through an appropriation from the highway department," he said. "Under law, there is a \$1 charge on every new plate purchased. This money will go to repay the highway department's trust fund."

Haas said the new plates will force everyone to register their vehicles, producing revenue for the state.

"The new plates will help the law enforcement officers to spot unregistered vehicles," she said.

The plate design that represents a sunset, already has proven to be very popular in a tourism campaign launched by the state Department of Economic Development, Haas said.

"It's looked on by a lot of people as the signature of the state," she said. "It's showing up everywhere. People associate it with the good life."

## Holiday lights in HSS courtyard

From Staff Reports

Residents in Harper-Schramm-Smith residence complex can enjoy the holiday season every night by glancing out their windows to the courtyard below. With the help of maintenance personnel, members of the complex social committee decorated the courtyard's trees with Christmas lights.

Bob Shambora, committee member, said the committee came up with the idea.

Shambora said the money for the project came out of the social committee fund, which was "about \$150." Maintenance

people helped by providing ladders and equipment to put up the lights, he said.

### Interviews required

Graduating seniors who received a National Direct Student Loan while attending UNL must attend an exit interview to comply with federal regulations. Interviews must be completed before graduation. Interviews will be in the Nebraska Union today at 10:30 a.m.; Wednesday at noon; Thursday at 3 p.m.; and in the Nebraska East Union Friday at 5:30 p.m.

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