

F L O R I D A L I C E N S E P L A T E H I S T O R Y



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INTRODUCTION

Did you know the State of Florida issued its first motor vehicle registration certificate on August 1, 1905?

This comprehensive book contains very useful information and pictures on the history of motor vehicle registration in Florida. To understand how our division began in the early 1900's our story unfolds with the registration of motor vehicles and their drivers. Just imagine, at the turn of the century motorized vehicles were a figment of the imagination. The most popular mode of transportation was by horseback or horse and buggy. Life was much simpler then and regulatory involvement was not necessary as it is today. Now, over one hundred years later, motor vehicles and autonomous vehicles are an integral part of our lives. As our dependency on motor vehicles grew, so did our need for public and fraud protection. The Division of Motor Vehicles developed ways to regulate the motor vehicle industry with its popular demand. This includes the operation and ownership of vehicles, along with the manufacturing and sales of motor vehicles.

We appreciate those who've reserved this history and provided their public service throughout the years. Registration of motor vehicles began with manual typewriters, then electric typewriters, and has progressed to the on-line computer age as technology has advanced. Motor vehicle registration records were once maintained in a paper file, then on microfilm and now an on-line electronic filing system.

We invite you to review the various sections of this book to reminisce about the decade in which you registered to drive a motor vehicle. Maybe you have a specialty license plate and you want to check the history of when the license plate became available. You may find it interesting to view the pictures of the old style of license plates. Our hope is that you will enjoy reading the history of motor vehicle registration and regulation by the State of Florida and find these resources useful.

Thank you!

Florida's First State Motor Vehicle License Plate Law Early 1900's

In 1905, the Florida Legislature passed Chapter 5437, Florida Statutes, which required all vehicles propelled by other than muscle power to be registered with the Secretary of State. On May 11, 1905, the 19th Governor **Napoleon Bonaparte Broward** (right) signed a new law requiring all resident owners to pay a \$2.00 fee to register their motor vehicles with the Secretary of State and to provide make, description, serial number and horsepower of the automobiles. The Secretary of State in return issued a motor vehicle registration certificate the number of which was displayed prominently on the rear of the vehicle, and recorded a transaction on the book – Record of Registration of Automobiles and Other Motor Vehicles. The owner was thus required to provide his own license plate, a practice common to many states and localities prior to about 1910.



Florida's first license plate, which was made of leather, was issued in 1906. Although it was not required, some license plates displayed the "FLA" state designation. License plates of wood, leather (left), and metal are known, some being homemade while others were made by local sign smiths or purchased from a mail-order firm. These permanent numbers were required until September 30, 1915. In 1905 (August-December), Florida had 132 automobiles registered. In 1906, Florida had 174 automobiles registered. In 1907, Florida had 184 automobiles registered, and in 1908, Florida had 242 automobiles registered. In 1909, Florida had 563 automobiles registered, and from August 1, 1905 to December 31, 1909, the total registration was 1,295. In the early days, people purchased their license plates at the local hardware store. There was no uniform size to the early license plates because size was determined by the amount of numbers on the license plate.

The permanent number (#1) was not registered to the Governor in 1905, because Governor **Napoleon B. Broward** did not own a car. On August 1, 1905, **R.E. Brand** registered his automobile (Standard 3 ½ horsepower, and factory number #3307 from the manufacturer – The Locomobile Company of America). In 1906, Mr. Brand made the license plate out of leather and stamped #1 on it.

Early City License Plate Ordinances 1906 – December 31, 1917

From 1905 through 1917, the State issued permanent license plate numbers. Over 10,000 registered owners in the State of Florida, local police agencies were quickly faced with the numerous of auto crashes, drunk driving, violations, and a new crime - auto theft.

From 1906 to December 31, 1917 - license plates were issued based on city ordinances. Florida cities exercised local option during the pioneer motoring era by imposing licensing requirements similar to the states. Jacksonville, Pensacola, Palatka, Ocala, Orlando, Miami, Tampa, and even a small town such as Brooksville are just a few municipalities known to have required motor vehicle registration and number displays.

In 1910, leather was replaced with metal and “**FLA**” appeared for the first time on the license plates.

In 1911, motor vehicle registration became a county responsibility. Residents were required to register their vehicle in the county where they lived and the fees were used to build roads and bridges in the county where they were collected. By the year 1911 a total of 4,211 motor vehicle registrations were issued.

County-Issued Annual License Plates October 1, 1911 to December 31, 1917

From October 1, 1911 to December 31, 1917 - each county issued annual license plates. While state motorists displayed the permanent numbers and in some cases permanent and/or annual city numbers, in 1911 the state mandated that they display annual county numbers as well. Imagine having to display state, county, and city license plates on one vehicle! The county license plates were issued by each tax collector for the fiscal year period October 1 through September 30. Fees were based upon horsepower rating and ranged from \$3.00 (less than 10 HP) to \$50.00 (over 70 HP). “For Hire” vehicles were charged a slightly higher fee than privately owned vehicles. County-issued license plates were not standardized statewide (each county being responsible for supplying it’s own license plates), which accounts for the bewildering array of size, shape, color, and format of these plates. Typically, porcelain license plates ordered from northern sign manufacturers were used.

In 1912, Florida changed to a porcelain or enamel license plate, which was manufactured in Baltimore, Maryland (right). The state also turned the licensing authority over to the individual counties so that a tighter reign could kept on people who just weren’t buying license plates. Problems arose, however, when some counties with larger cities, like Jacksonville and Tampa, decided to issue their own license plates, forcing many people to buy both a county and city license plate.



In 1915, it became unlawful for a person to operate an automobile while intoxicated and in

1917, speed of more than 25 miles per hour was considered reckless driving. The drivers of motor vehicles were required to stop on the signal from the driver of a horse drawn vehicle, or rider of a horse, and turn off the motor if the horse was frightened.

In 1917, the Florida Legislature passed the Motor Vehicle Act, which re-established motor vehicle licensing and registration as a state function. The use of the term “motor vehicle” was established in Florida Regulatory Law, and this term also included airplanes and mobile homes. The State Comptroller assumed the task of issuing the number of license plates (two) to a car.

State-Issued Annual License Plates January 1, 1918 to Present

In 1917, the Florida Legislature created the Sunshine State’s first uniform statewide annual license plate. Florida was the last of the old 48 states to issue uniform motor vehicle license plates.

In 1918, tin replaced the porcelain license plates and for the next four years, license plates were issued in pairs for both the front and back of the motor vehicle. Fees were based on vehicle type, horsepower, and capacity. During the Depression years, stealing license plates became common because people simply couldn’t afford them.

Weight Fees 1921-1925

In 1921, licensing fees based upon weight were established. Sales of motor vehicles were to be recorded with the Comptroller, which was the beginning of the present title certificate system by which ownership is recorded.

In 1922, single license plates were issued. Gross weight and capacity tabs were affixed to license plates 1922 through 1925 (right).



In 1923-1926, the state outline was embossed on license plates.

Act 34, Florida’s First Title Law 1923



In 1923, the state enacted its first title law (Act 39, Laws of Florida). Title certificates (*left*) were issued to each owner of a motor vehicle with a provision for carrying evidence of liens or other encumbrances against the vehicle. The primary purpose of the title certificate system was to prevent the theft of automobiles, and the proceeds from fees were put into what was known for many years as the auto theft fund.

License Inspectors 1925

In 1925, Florida's Comptroller employed eight license inspectors to investigate motor vehicles without proper license plates. The Comptroller was also allowed to appoint a tag agent in each county to sell license plates and collect a service fee of 50 cents per license plate.

Martin Building Construction and MV Commissioner 1927 – 1932

In 1927, the Florida Legislature took the license plate and title functions from the Comptroller and created the Office of the Motor Vehicle Commissioner who was appointed by the governor for a four-year term. The Governor named the inspectors and designated the license plate agents for the counties. The new state motor vehicle department was moved to the newly constructed, Martin Building on October 1, 1927 (Figure 1). The 24th Governor, **John Martin**, appointed **W.F. Allen**, mayor of Titusville, to be motor vehicle commissioner on October 1, 1927 until he resigned on January 26, 1929. Honorable **Doyle Carlton**, the 25th Governor, appointed **D.B. Pinkston**. He served as Commissioner from January 26, 1929 to June 30, 1929. He was succeeded by **W.S. McLin**, who was Acting Commissioner from July 1, 1929 to January 1, 1932.



Figure 1. This picture of Martin Building was taken in 1929.

Raiford Prison License Plate Plant 1927



Figure 2. This picture was taken in 1928 showing an inmate making a license plate at the Florida State Prison in Raiford, Florida.

Florida State Prison at Raiford, under the direction of Warden **J.S. Blich**, opened an auto license plate plant (Figure 2) in 1927 after the 1927 Legislature created the State Motor Vehicle Commission.

The number of commercial trucks and buses had increased so much by 1929 that the Legislature transferred their regulation to the Florida Railroad Commission (now the Public Service Commission).

Large License Plate Reduction 1930-1933

Large license plates were reduced in size to 5" x 12".

Commissioner Changes 1932-1935

W.S. McLin was commissioned on January 1, 1932 to February 1, 1933 by Governor Carlton. The 26th Governor **David Sholtz** appointed **George F. Wilder** to be acting commissioner on February 2, 1933 to October 15, 1935.

Theft-Proof or Locking Plates 1934-1935

In 1934 and 1935, Florida responded with a special theft-proof license plate that had an extra strap for more security.

Grapefruit License Plate 1935



The Chamber of Commerce got into the act in 1935 and decided to sell the State of Florida license plates. They came up with a license plate, picturing a grapefruit in the corner. This license plate lasted only one year because the picture of the grapefruit looked more like a bomb. This became known as the "bomb tag" (left).

Commissioner Changes 1935-1941

B. F. Mizelle of Tallahassee was commissioned by Governor Sholtz on October 15, 1935 until his resignation on January 4, 1937. The 27th Governor, **Fred Cone**, commissioned **Thomas W. Long** of Tavares on January 18, 1937 until he resigned in September 1937. He was succeeded by interim **D.W. Finley** of Tallahassee on September 22, 1937. Mr. Finley was commissioned on Sept. 30, 1939 until his resignation on January 27, 1941.

County Prefix 1938 - 1975

In 1938, counties were assigned numbers based on each counties population based on the 1935 census. Even though these county designations are no longer used on license plates, these same codes assigned to counties between 1938-1977 are still used today in the Florida Real-Time Vehicle Information System (FRVIS) for reporting and operational purposes. This was beginning of identifying license plates by county.

State Department of Public Safety 1940

In 1940, the Florida Legislature's Act 556 created the State Department of Public Safety consisting of the Division of the Florida Highway Patrol and Division of State Motor Vehicle Driver Licenses. Driver Licenses were required.

Driver Licenses 1941

In 1941, the Legislature enacted a title lien law and placed its enforcement with the Motor Vehicle Commissioner. This law required that the certificate of title issued to each motor vehicle registered in Florida must represent a complete abstract of the title including the current mortgage status. Aircraft, also defined as motor vehicles, were required to be registered and were assessed a license tax like automobiles.

Commissioner Changes 1941-1945

The 28th Governor, **Spessard Hollard**, appointed **H.J. Driggers** of Ft. Lauderdale as Motor Vehicle Commissioner on January 27, 1941 until January 1945.

Metal Tab 1943

In 1943, during World War II, there were steel shortages and the state mandated issuance of a metal tab that attached to a 1942 license plate in lieu of a full-size license plate. The 1943 tab was affixed over the date of the 1942 license plate (right). These were issued for only one year.



Commissioner Changes 1945-1949

The 29th Governor, **Millard Caldwell**, commissioned **George H. Asbell** of Blountstown on January 2, 1945. He resigned on August 4, 1947 and **John Kilgore** of Tallahassee was appointed until January 1949.

Sunshine State Logo 1949



In 1949, the Florida Chamber of Commerce appeared once again and the first “*Sunshine State*” license plates were issued (left).

Commissioner Changes 1949-1953

The 30th Governor, **Fuller Warren**, appointed **Arch Livingston** (Figure 1) to serve as Motor Vehicle Commissioner from January 5, 1949 until January 1953.

An “*Amateur Radio*” license plate was established for any Florida resident that is the holder of a valid official amateur radio station license issued by the Federal Communications Commission bearing the call letters of that station.



Figure 3. The portrait of State Motor Vehicle Commissioner Arch Livingston (1949-1953) was taken in 19--.

1950's

In 1951, a "**Disabled Veteran**" license plate was established for any Florida resident, who is a veteran with 100% service connected disability.

In 1951, a "**Keep Florida Green**" logo appeared on the license plates, (right) but never to be seen again because tourists felt that it implied a negative feeling that Florida wanted all their money.



E.V. Fisher of DeLand was commissioned by 31st Governor **Dan McCarty** on January 6, 1953. Governor McCarty died in September 1953 and Mr. Fisher continued as Commissioner during the term of Acting Governor **Charley Johns**.

Commissioner Changes 1955-1961

Mrs. **Ina S. Thompson** of DeFuniak Springs was commissioned by 33rd Governor **LeRoy Collins** on January 4, 1955 to January 4, 1961. She was the first woman to administer the Motor Vehicle Commission and the first to be a member of the group of gubernatorial appointees known as the "little cabinet." In fact, the small building, which is located behind Neil Kirkman Building, is named after her. A daycare center for the state employees' kids is currently housed in the building.



Figure 4. The portrait of State Motor Vehicle Commissioner Ina S. Thompson (1955-1961) was taken in 1955.

Uniform Size Act 1956

The Uniform Size Act was passed in 1956, mandating that all license plates conform in size. Regular size license plates increased to 6 x 12 inches.

Horseless Carriage 1957

In 1957, a "**Horseless Carriage**" license plate for vehicles the age of 35 years and older that are equipped with an engine of the age of 35 years and older was established for vehicles that are only operated or moved over the highway for historical exhibition.

Commissioner Changes 1961-1965

Arch Livingston was Motor Vehicle Commissioner appointed by the 34th Governor, **Farris Bryant**, on January 3, 1961 and was reappointed Commissioner by 35th Governor, **Haydon Burns**, on January 1965.

Motor Vehicles Redefined 1963

In 1963, the Constitution was amended to define “motor vehicles” to include mobile homes, trailer coaches, house trailers, and camper type mobile homes. This amendment exempted those vehicles affixed permanently to land and made it necessary for motor vehicle inspectors (55 persons for the entire state) to check all mobile home parks as well as isolated mobile homes parked on private or individual lots, for violations. Inspectors were cautious not to issue citations to tourists or to active duty military personnel. Tax warrants were issued to those owners who refused to register their mobile homes. Fees were shared by the Board of County Commissioners and the County School Board in the county where collected.

Motor Vehicle Commission becomes Department of Motor Vehicles 1965

The Motor Vehicle Commission became the Department of Motor Vehicles on July 1, 1965 by the act of the 1965 Legislature. The Department’s Director was hired and supervised by an Executive Board (“Cabinet”) composed of the Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Comptroller, Treasurer, Superintendent of Public Instruction and Commissioner of Agriculture. **Arch Livingston** was appointed by the Executive Board on July 1, 1965 until he retired in June 1971. The Director was charged with administering and enforcing the laws of the state relative to motor vehicles. He employed clerical assistants and appointed enforcement deputies. The license inspectors had full police powers to enforce laws regarding traffic on the public highways of the state. This was in addition to enforcing the registration of motor vehicles. Each license inspector received a salary of one hundred fifty dollars per month. Upon the recommendation of the Director, the Governor could elect to appoint or eliminate inspectors.

National Guard License Plate 1965



In 1965, the “*400th Anniversary*” logo (left) appeared on license plates to honor the St. Augustine Quadricentennial Celebration for when Florida was discovered by Ponce De Leon. A “*National Guard*” license plate was established for any resident, who is an active member of the Florida National Guard.

License Plate Double-Date 1967-1971

1967-1971 license plates bore double-date format: 1967-68, etc. This was done to shift Florida's license plate issuance from a calendar year (expiring December 31st) to a fiscal year (expiring June 30th).

Governmental Reorganization Act 1969

The passage of the Governmental Reorganization Act of 1969, combined the duties and responsibilities of the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Motor Vehicles to form the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. The Department is currently composed of five Divisions: Administrative Services, Motor Vehicles, Driver Licenses, the Florida Highway Patrol and Information Systems Administration. The 1969 Florida Cabinet appointed Colonel **Neil Kirkman** to be the Executive Director on August 15, 1969 until he retired on February 11, 1970. **Arch Livingston** was appointed to be the Division Director of Division of Motor Vehicles in 1969 after the reorganization, and served until his retirement in June 1971.



Figure 5. This picture of Neil Kirkman Building was taken in 1969.

Seminole Miccosukee Indian License Plate 1971

The **Seminole and Miccosukee Indian** license plates were established for residents of the State of Florida who are members of the Seminole or Miccosukee Indian Tribe of Florida. These license plates are issued by the respective Tribal Clerks Office.

Personalized License Plates 1972

The **Personalized license plate** program started and allowed individuals to select up to a 7-digit combination (letters or numbers with a hyphen or space) for an additional \$12.00 annual use fee.

Wheelchair Symbol 1974

The **Wheelchair Symbol** license plate was provided for any resident who is permanently confined to a wheelchair. Beginning July 1, 1974, legislation required the Regular Issuance Florida license plate to be issued to and remain in the name of the owner and could be transferred from a motor vehicle to another motor vehicle that the owner acquired. The license plates no longer remained with the motor vehicle.

Last Embossed Expiration Year 1975

This was the last year that the **expiration year** was embossed on license plates.

Renewal Decals or Stickers 1976

Renewal decals or "stickers" appeared on the 1975 base-plate. Decals became a nationwide method to economize on the annual production of license plates.

Alpha-Numeric coding 1977

Increased vehicle population required the use of **Alpha-Numeric** coding system on Florida license plates.

Alpha/Numeric characters 1978

The license plate program began which combined **alpha/numeric characters**. This began with "AAA001". Prior to this the combination of county number prefix, classification and sequence number was used.

Street Rod License Plate 1983

A **Street Rod License Plate** was established for a modified motor vehicle manufactured before 1949, which is used primarily for exhibition and not for general transportation.

A **US Reserve** license plate was established for any resident, who is an active member for any branch of the U. S. Armed Forces Reserves.

An **Ex-Prisoner of War** license plate was established for any Person, who was a US Armed Forces or the armed forces of an Allied Nation, who was held as a prisoner of war at the time when the Armed Forces of the United States were engaged in combat.

The **Pearl Harbor Survivor** license plate was established for members of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, who are residents of Florida.

Front End Emergency Service 1984

Front End Emergency Service License plates were established for display on the front of any motor vehicle owned by anyone involved in the Emergency Service (Emergency Medical Technician or Paramedic, Firefighter, Law Enforcement Officer, Emergency Management Personnel (Civil Defense)).

Medal of Honor 1985

Medal of Honor license plate was established for recipients of the Medal of Honor.

Alpha-Numeric Colors 1986

The **colors of the Alpha-Numeric** license plates were reversed for mandatory 5-year replacement of license plates. The alpha-numeric sequence was also changed to accommodate the increase of motor vehicles being registered. License plates were changed to a green Florida graphic and orange characters.

Challenger/ Collegiate 1987

January 1, 1987 the **Challenger** license plate program was implemented for a specific time period, however, on September 30, 1991 it was extended indefinitely. This plate was issued to commemorate the astronauts, who died when the space shuttle Challenger exploded.

October 1, 1987, **COLLEGIATE** license plates were established to raise funds for educational scholarships for the following nine state universities:

FLORIDA A & M UNIVERSITY

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

UNIVERSITY WEST FLORIDA

The **Paralyzed Veterans of America** license plate was established for members of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, who are residents of Florida.

Florida Salutes Veterans 1989

October 1, 1989, the Florida Salutes **Veterans** license plate was established to create a fund for the construction, operation, and maintenance of domicile and nursing homes for veterans.

October 1, 1989, the **Super Bowl** license plate was established to raise funds to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Super Bowl, which was held in Tampa, Florida. This license plate became obsolete January 1, 1994.

An **Honorary Consul Corps** license plate was established for residents of the State of Florida, who are members of the Florida International Affairs Commission, who act as an Honorary Consular for foreign countries.

University of Miami license plate was created October 1989.

Save the Manatee 1990

January 1, 1990, the **Save the Manatee** license plate was incorporated to honor the official state marine mammal. Fifty percent of the funds raised are deposited in the Save the Manatee Trust Fund and may only be used for Manatee research.

October 1, 1991, the **Florida Panther** or communities trust license plate was implemented to raise funds for the protection of and redesigned May 1993 to increase its attractiveness and marketability.

Quincentennial 1991

The **Quincentennial** license plate was approved for issuance of educational and promotional activities for the **500th anniversary** celebration and Florida's participation in the 1992 World's Fair in Seville, Spain. This plate became obsolete January 1, 1994.

A decision was made to phase in the issuance of a new license plate with **the orange graphic design and green characters**, when the supply of the green graphic license plates was exhausted.

United States Olympic Spirit/ Purple Heart 1992

Legislature approved the issuance of a **United States Olympic Spirit** license plate. Moneys collected shall be distributed to the Florida Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Amateur Sports.

Legislature approved the issuance of the Combat Wounded Veteran (**Purple Heart**) license plate for a recipient the Purple Heart Medal.

Lease Removed 1993

The designation of "**Lease**" on license plates was removed as a safety precaution for tourists.

New License Plates 1994

The following new license plates were established by the 1994 Legislature:

Florida Special Olympics: The first \$5 million collected annually shall be distributed to the Florida Developmental Disabilities Planning Council to be used solely for the Special Olympics Program as determined and approved by the Council. Any additional fees collected will be deposited into the General Revenue Fund.

January 1994, four of the **Collegiate** license plates were redesigned. They are the **Florida A&M University, Florida International University, University of North Florida and University of South Florida** license plates.

April 1994, **Florida State University National Champions** limited edition license plate was approved for sale in recognition of the Florida State University winning the 1993 Collegiate Football National Championship. The regular Florida State University license plate will not be considered obsolete.

New License Plates 1995

The following new license plates were established by the 1995 Legislature: Invest in Children:

The annual use fee must be deposited into the Juvenile Crime Prevention and Early Intervention Trust Fund within the Department of Juvenile Justice. The proceeds are to fund programs and services designed to prevent juvenile delinquency.

State of the Arts: All annual fees collected must be forwarded to the Division of Cultural Affairs of the Department of State, together with a report setting forth the amount of such fees collected in each county, and must be deposited into the Florida Fine Arts Trust Fund to support art organizations, programs, and activities with the county.

Professional Sports Teams: Fifty-five percent of the proceeds from these license plates must be deposited into the Professional Sports Development Trust Fund. These funds must be used solely to attract and support major sports events in this state. The remaining proceeds must be distributed to the Florida Sports Foundation to be used to promote the economic development of the sports industry. The sports team license plates authorized were:

Florida Marlins
Florida Panthers
Jacksonville Jaguars
Miami Dolphins
Miami Heat
Miami Hooters
Orlando Magic
Orlando Predators
Tampa Bay Storm
Tampa Bay Lightning

Florida Supports Education: In each school district that has a district pre-kindergarten through grade 12 public school foundation or a direct-support organization, the moneys raised in that school district through the sale of Florida Education License Plates must be distributed to the foundation or organization for enhancing educational programs.

Indian River Lagoon: The annual use fees must be earmarked for each of the six lagoon basin counties (Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie Martin, and Palm Beach) to be expended in those counties for habitat restoration, including water quality improvement, and environmental education projects. At least 80 percent of the use fees must be used for restoration projects, and not more than 20 percent may be used for environmental education in each county.

New License Plates 1996

The following new license plates were established by the 1996 Legislature:

Police Athletic League: Annual use fees are distributed to the Florida Police Athletic League, Inc., to provide educational materials, athletic equipment, transportation, food, medical checkups, counseling and other direct expenses incurred by the league in conducting its youth program.

Girl Scouts: Annual use fees are distributed to the Citrus Council of Girl Scouts, Inc., who distributes funds to 7 Girl Scout councils equal to the annual use fees received from counties served by each council.

Boy Scouts of America: The annual use fees are forwarded to the Central Florida Council with statistics on sales of the license plates which are tabulated by county. The distribution is made to nine councils from the sales in the counties within the respective council.

Florida Agriculture: The annual use fees must be used for the sole purpose of funding and promoting Florida Agriculture in the classroom program established within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Largemouth Bass: The annual use fees are distributed to the State Game Trust Fund and used by the Game and Freshwater Fish Commission to fund conservation programs that maintain current levels of protection and management of this state's fish and wildlife resources, including providing hunting, fishing and nonconsumptive wildlife opportunities.

Florida Gulf Coast University: The annual use fees are distributed to the college to be used for education purposes.

Bethune Cookman College: The annual use fees are distributed to the college to be used for education purposes.

Tampa Bay Devil Rays: The annual use fees are distributed the same as set up for the Professional Sports Team in 1995.

Collectible: Created to be issued on vehicles 20 years or more, back to the manufacture year 1946.

New License Plates 1997

The following new license plates were established by the 1997 Legislature:

Sea Turtle: The annual use fees are deposited in the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund in the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. It will be used to conduct sea turtle protection, research, recovery programs and by the Florida Marine Turtle Protection Program for sea turtle conversation activities.

March 1997 the **University of Florida 1996 National Champs** plate was redesigned.

December 1997 the **Miami Hooters** sports license plate was discontinued.

New License Plates 1998

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS: The annual use fees are distributed the same as set up for the Professional Sports Team in 1995.

The following new license plates were established by the 1998 Legislature:

CONSERVE WILDLIFE: The annual fees are to be used for marketing the Conserve Wildlife license plate and the remaining proceeds used for programs and activities of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission that contribute to the health and well-being of Florida black bears and other wildlife diversity.

FLORIDA SHERIFFS YOUTH RANCHES: Annual use fees shall be distributed to the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches, Inc. for its operation.

EVERGLADES RIVER OF GRASS: The annual fees shall be distributed to the Everglades Trust Fund, administered by the South Florida Water Management District and used for the conservation and protection of the natural resources and abatement of water pollution in the Everglades. Fifty percent of the annual fee must be used for Everglades research.

PROTECT WILD DOLPHINS: The annual use fees shall be distributed to the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, Inc., to fund research of the Florida Bottlenose Dolphin.

KEEP KIDS DRUG FREE: The annual use fees shall be distributed to the Keep Kids Drug-Free Foundation, Inc. for activities to reduce substance abuse among residents of this state.

BARRY UNIVERSITY: The annual use fees are distributed to the college to be used for education purposes.

New License Plates 1999

The following new license plates were established by the 1999 Legislature:

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS: The annual use fees shall be distributed to the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund and the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation Inc. to assist Marine Corps Junior ROTC and Young Marine programs.

SHARE THE ROAD: The annual use fees shall be distributed to Bike Florida, Inc., up to 25 percent is used for marketing and promotion of the license plate.

FLORIDA WILDFLOWER: The annual use fees shall be distributed to the Wildflower Account established by Keep Florida Beautiful, Inc. to establish native Florida wildflower research programs.

TAMPA BAY ESTUARY: The annual use fees shall be distributed to the Tampa Bay Estuary Program to implement the Comprehensive conservation and Management Plan for Tampa Bay.

CHOOSE LIFE: The annual use fees shall be distributed to each county where fees are collected for plates within the state. Each county shall distribute funds to nongovernmental, not-for-profit agencies within the county for counseling and meeting physical needs of pregnant women who are committed to placing their children for adoption.

FLORIDA MEMORIAL COLLEGE: The annual use fees are distributed to the college for education purposes.

COLLECTIBLE - Abolished.

Specialty License Plates 2001

The special legislative session passed two specialty license plates:

AMERICAN RED CROSS- Fifty percent of the annual use fees shall be distributed to the American Red Cross Chapter of Central Florida for distribution. Fifty percent statewide to three approved poison control centers to combat bio-terrorism and other poison-related purposes.

UNITED WE STAND- Fifty percent shall be distributed to the Department of Transportation to enhance security at airports throughout the state. Fifty percent shall be distributed to the United States State Department's Rewards for Justice program to be used solely to apprehend terrorists and bring them to justice. Effective 2005 the distribution was changed by the Legislature to require 100% of the annual use fees to be distributed to the Department of Transportation to fund a grant program to enhance security at airports throughout the state.

New License Plates 2002

Orlando Predators, Girl Scouts and Tampa Bay Storm specialty license plates were **de-authorized** 2/20/02 due to lack of sales.

The following new license plates were established by the 2002 Legislature:

NEW COLLEGE: The annual use fees are distributed to the college for education purposes.

FLORIDA SALUTES FIREFIGHTERS –The annual use fee shall be distributed to Florida Firefighters Charities.

POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Florida Police Benevolent Association Heart Fund, Inc.

PROTECT FLORIDA WHALES – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, Inc. to fund whale research, rehabilitation, and education programs.

FLORIDA GOLF – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Florida Sports Foundation for the administration of the Florida Youth Golf Program.

BREAST CANCER RESEARCH – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Florida Breast Cancer Coalition Research Foundation for research and education.

New License Plates 2003

CHALLENGER/COLUMBIA – This license plate was redesigned to also commemorate the astronauts, who died when the space shuttle Columbia exploded.

UNITED STATES PARATROOPER – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund.

PROTECT OUR REEFS – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Mote Marine Laboratory, Inc. to fund Florida reef research, conservation and education programs.

FISH FLORIDA – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Florida Foundation for Responsible Angling, Inc. to fund aquatic education, marine resource stewardship and ethical angling practices in this state.

MILITARY SERVICES (ARMY, NAVY, AIR FORCE, COAST GUARD) – The annual use fees shall be deposited into the State Home for Veterans Trust Fund and must be used solely to construct, operate and maintain domicile and nursing homes for veterans.

STOP CHILD ABUSE – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Children’s Home Society of Florida and the Florida Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers for child abuse prevention and intervention.

HOSPICE: EVERY DAY IS A GIFT – The annual use fee shall be distributed to Florida Hospices and Palliative Care, Inc. to be used as follows:

To fund projects relating to hospice care for special groups, such as children, veterans and ethnic, religious, gender or minority groups, or to provide disease-specific research or outreach.

To fund education and outreach for hospice volunteers, patients, families and health care professionals.

To fund informational and educational media programs regarding the availability of hospice services.

To fund expansion or enhancement of the Florida Hospices and Palliative Care, Inc. toll-free referral line operated to provide hospice information.

To fund the expansion or enhancement of the Florida Hospices and Palliative Care, Inc. Internet website.

STOP HEART DISEASE – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Florida Heart Research Foundation, Inc. to provide for a peer review grant solicitation and award process to distribute fees for cardiovascular disease research, education and prevention within the state.

MOTORCYCLE SPECIALTY – The annual use fee shall be distributed to The Able Trust as custodial agent for administrative costs then the remaining funds distributed at 25% for each of the following agencies: Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program Trust Fund, Prevent Blindness Florida, Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation to support the Personal Care Attendant Program, and to the Florida Association of Centers for Independent Living for the purpose of setting up Direct-Support Organizations for each center and for program and activities serving disabled Floridians.

The following additional **COLLEGIATE** license plates were established to raise funds for scholarships for education purposes:

CLEARWATER CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

ECKERD COLLEGE

EDWARD WATERS COLLEGE
EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY
FLAGLER COLLEGE
FLORIDA COLLEGE
FLORIDA HOSPITAL COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
FLORIDA SOUTHERN COLLEGE
JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY
LYNN UNIVERSITY
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
PALM BEACH ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
RINGLING SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN ROLLINS
COLLEGE
SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY
SAINT THOMAS UNIVERSITY
STETSON UNIVERSITY
SOUTHEASTERN COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA
WARNER SOUTHERN COLLEGE

The **REGULAR ALPHA/NUMERIC** license plate was redesigned with a graphic design that included two oranges and an orange blossom on the green graphic of the State of Florida. The license plate characters were in green. For the first time, the web-address "**MYFLORIDA.COM**" was printed at the top of the license plate.

New License Plates 2004

SAVE OUR SEAS – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, Inc. for marine science research and education programs.

AQUACULTURE – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, Inc. for aquaculture research and education programs.

FAMILY FIRST – The annual use fee shall be distributed to Family First to fund programs, projects, seminars, events, and family resources that promote principles for building marriages, guiding parents, and raising children.

SPORTSMEN’S NATIONAL LAND TRUST – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Sportsmen’s National Land Trust to be used to fund programs and projects within the state that preserve open space and wildlife habitat, promote conservation, improve wildlife habitat, and establish open space for the perpetual use of the public.

LIVE THE DREAM – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Dream Foundation, Inc. to be used as follows:

For grants for programs that provide research, care and treatment for sickle cell disease.

For the March of Dimes for programs and services that improve the health of babies through the prevention of birth defects and infant mortality.

For the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions to decrease racial disparity in infant mortality and to increase healthy birth outcomes.

For local Healthy Start Coalitions to provide services and increase screening rates for high-risk pregnant women, child under 4 years of age and women of childbearing age.

For the Community Partnership for Homeless, Inc. for programs that provide relief from poverty, hunger, and homelessness.

IMAGINE – The annual use fees shall be distributed to the Florida Association of Food Banks, Inc., to fund programs to end hunger in this state.

DISCOVER FLORIDA’S OCEANS – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Wildlife Foundation of Florida, Inc., to be used for ocean, estuarine, or coastal scientific research, conservation and education projects.

FAMILY VALUES – The annual use fee shall be distributed to Sheridan House, Inc. to be used to fund residential care programs, family counseling, social services for single parents and their children, resources materials, and facility construction.

PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE – The annual use fee shall be distributed to The Gathering/USA, Inc. to fund personal counseling for parent marriage seminars, Dads and Moms That Make A Difference seminars, father-and-son retreats, mother-and-daughter retreats, and personal parenting behavioral assessments.

SUPPORT SOCCER – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Lighthouse Soccer Foundation, Inc., to be used as follows:

For the Florida Youth Soccer Association for programs and services that foster the physical, mental, and emotional growth and development of Florida’s youth through the sport at all levels of age and competition,

including a portion for the TOP Soccer program to promote participation by the physically and mentally disadvantaged.

For grants for programs that promote and support the construction of field and soccer-specific infrastructure and programs that foster and promote health, physical fitness, educational opportunities through soccer.

KIDS DESERVE JUSTICE – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Florida Bar Foundation, Inc. to operate a grant award process to fund legal services programs for children, including legal services programs, programs to obtain federal benefits for disabled children, programs to obtain testing and services required by law for learning-disabled children, and programs to obtain permanent placement for abused and neglected children.

ANIMAL FRIEND – The annual use fee shall be distributed to the Humane Society of the United States for animal welfare programs and spay and neuter program in this state. Effective 2005 the Legislature amended the law to change the distribution of the annual use fees to the Florida Animal Friend, Inc., for spay and neuter programs in the state.

The following additional MOTORCYCLE SIZE license plates were established in September 2004 to provide better customer service:

MOTORCYCLE SIZE TEMPORARY – A new 4 X 6 inch paper, temporary license plate was developed to be displayed on motorcycles.

MOTORCYCLE SIZE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA – A new 4 X 6 inch metal license plate was developed to be displayed on motorcycles registered to a qualified Paralyzed Veteran.

MOTORCYCLE SIZE MICCOSUKEE AND SEMINOLE INDIAN – New 4 X 6 inch metal license plates were developed to be displayed on motorcycles registered to qualified Miccosukee and Seminole Indians.

New License Plates 2006

In the spring of 2006, four of the specialty license plates were redesigned. They are the **Florida Atlantic University, University of North Florida, Nova Southeastern University,** and **Share The Road** license plates.

The following new license plates were established by the 2006 Legislature:

MOTORCYCLE UNDER 21 – A special motorcycle size 4 X 6 inch license plate (unique in design and color) required for a motorcycle registered to a person under 21 years of age.

STATE OF VISION – The annual use fee is distributed to the Florida Association of Agencies Serving the Blind, Inc. to fund direct-support services to blind and visually impaired people.

FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA – The annual use fee is distributed to the Florida Future Farmers of America Foundation, Inc. to fund activities and services (agricultural education) of the Future Farmers of America.

DONATE ORGANS-PASS IT ON – The annual use fee is distributed to the Transplant Foundation, Inc. to provide statewide grants for patient services, including preoperative, rehabilitative, and housing assistance, organ donor education and awareness programs, and statewide medical research.

HOMEOWNERSHIP FOR ALL – The annual use fee is distributed to Homeownership For All, Inc. to be used to fund programs that provide, promote, or otherwise support affordable housing in this state.

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM – This license plate may be issued to a current or former member of the United States military, who was deployed and served in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM – This license plate may be issued to a current or former member of the United States military, who was deployed and served in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom.

HOUSE SPEAKER – This license plate may be issued to any current or former Speaker of the House of Representatives.

SENATE PRESIDENT – This license plate may be issued to any current or former President of the Senate.

In the summer of 2006, the **Southeastern College** specialty license plate was redesigned to change to Southeastern University.

New License Plates 2007

In the spring of 2007, two of the specialty license plates were redesigned. The Florida Memorial College was changed to the **Florida Memorial University**. The University of Florida specialty license plate was redesigned to reflect their **Gator Nation** logo.

The following new license plates were established by the 2007 Legislature:

FLORIDA NASCAR – The annual use fee is distributed to the Florida Sports Foundation to be used to attract sporting events to Florida and market motor sports-related tourism. Fifty per cent of the funds go to the NASCAR Foundation, which is a charitable organization, to support Florida-based charitable organizations.

CORRECTIONS FOUNDATION – The annual use fee is distributed to the Corrections Foundation, Inc. to continue and expand the charitable work of the foundation to provide assistance to staff, spouses, and dependent children in instances of death, illness, accidents, house fires or other disaster relief.

PROTECT FLORIDA SPRINGS – The annual use fee is distributed to the Wildlife Foundation of Florida, Inc. for education programs, conservation and springs research.

TREES ARE COOL – The annual fee is distributed to the Florida Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture, Inc. to provide education and training statewide with respect to tree care and tree safety.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS – The annual use fee is distributed to Support Our Troops, Inc. to be used for the benefit of Florida troops and their families. A 35% portion of the funds is distributed to the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund within the Department of Veterans’ Affairs State Homes.

CUSTOM VEHICLE – A unique license plate established for use on a custom vehicle defined as 25 years or older and a model year after 1948 or a vehicle manufactured to resemble such a vehicle.

GOLD STAR FAMILY – A license plate established for family members of service members who have been killed while serving in the Armed Forces. Eligible family members include a surviving spouse and surviving parents, who have met qualifications.

In the fall of 2007, the **MANATEE** specialty license plate was redesigned to provide a more realistic, serene look to boosting sales. The color of the license plate characters was also changed from red to black.

New License Plates 2008

The following new license plates were established by the 2008 Legislature:

PLAY TENNIS – The annual use fee is distributed to the Florida Sports Foundation for grants by the United States Tennis Association Florida Section Foundation to be distributed to nonprofit organizations to operate youth tennis programs, adaptive tennis programs for special populations of all ages, and for building, renovating, and maintaining public tennis courts.

VISIT OUR LIGHTS – The annual use fee is distributed to the Florida Lighthouse Association, Inc., to be used to fund the preservation, restoration, and protection of the 29 historic lighthouses remaining in the state.

IN GOD WE TRUST – The annual use fee is distributed to the In God We Trust Foundation, Inc., to fund educational scholarships for the children of Florida residents who are members of the United States Armed Forces, the National Guard, and the United States Armed Forces Reserve and for the children of public safety employees who have died in the line of duty who are not covered by existing state law. Funds shall also be distributed to other 501 (c) (3) organizations that may apply for grants and scholarships to provide educational grants to public and private schools to promote the historical and religious significance of American and Florida history.

HORSE COUNTRY – The annual use fee is distributed to PCMI Properties, Inc., to fund programs involved in the rehabilitation of at-risk youth to provide educational materials, athletic equipment, transportation, food, medical services, counseling, scholarships, and other direct administrative and program expenses. Special consideration shall be given to programs using horses and other livestock in the efforts to redirect at-risk youth.

Additionally, the 2008 Legislature amended the law concerning **THE REGULAR ALPHA/NUMERIC LICENSE PLATE**. The amendment provides in addition to choosing either the county name or “Sunshine State” embossed at the bottom of the license plate, the choice of having the state motto of “In God We Trust”.

In December of 2008, two of the specialty license plates were redesigned. The logo and font on **the TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS LICENSE PLATE** were given an updated look. The Tampa Bay Devil Rays was changed to a new design to reflect the change in name and logo to the **TAMPA BAY RAYS LICENSE PLATE**.

The statute changed to provide for a three-year moratorium (July 1, 2008 - July 1, 2011), during which no new license plates were to be created.

New License Plate 2009

One new license plate was created: **SUPPORT AUTISM**

The **CORRECTIONS FOUNDATION** license plate was discontinued for failure to meet minimum sales. The proceeds of the Golf License plate were redistributed to the Dade Amateur Golf Association. The Department changed from a six year to a **10-year license plate**.

New License Plates 2010

The presale process was created, wherein each new license organization must sell 1,000 vouchers in 24 months or less before the plate is produced. The vouchers replaced the previous application process (survey and marketing plan).

Nine new license plates were created:

ST JOHN'S RIVER (placed in presales in 2014, discontinued in 2016 for failure to reach 1,000).

HISPANIC ACHIEVERS (placed back in presale in 2014, discontinued in 2016 for failure to reach 1,000).

CHILDREN FIRST (discontinued in 2012 for failure to sell 1,000 vouchers).

VETERAN OF FOREIGN WARS (discontinued in 2012 for failure to sell 1,000 vouchers).

ENDLESS SUMMER

FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

CATCH ME RELEASE ME (name changed to Support Our Oceans in 2014).

FLORIDA HORSE PARK

FLORIDA BIODIVERSITY FOUNDATION

New License Plates 2011

In 2011, the U.S. Middle District Court in Orlando declared the **specialty license plate application process** as it existed in 2009 to be unconstitutional. The pre-sale methodology that was created in 2010 became the single method for creating a new license plate. All other application portions of s. 320.08053 (1), F.S., (i.e. scientific survey, application fee, market plan) could no longer be enforced. This subsection was removed from statute in 2015.

New License Plates 2012

The **VETERANS OF FOREIGN WAR** (VFW) and **CHILDREN FIRST** license plates were the first organizations in the pre-sale voucher process. Both plates were discontinued on September 30, 2012 for failure to meet the minimum voucher requirement in a two-year period.

New License Plates 2013

Four new license plates were created:

Freemasonry

American Legion

Lauren's Kids

Big Brothers Big Sisters

The University of Miami license plate was redesigned.

New License Plates 2014

Four new license plates were created:

Fallen Law Enforcement Officers

Florida Sheriffs Association

Keiser University

Moffitt Cancer Center

Statute changes the name of two license plates and one organization; both license plates were redesigned in 2015.

Catch Me Release Me became **Protect Our Oceans**.

Sportsman's National Land Trust (Deer plate) became **Wildlife Foundation of Florida**.

This involved a change in organization, which resulted in a lawsuit by the SNLT organization.

Hispanic Achievers and **St. John's River** were moved from the active sales and placed in the presale phase.

Existing license plates could be renewed, but no new or replacement license plates could be issued. Both license plates failed to reach the 1,000 minimum in more than two years. The presale period for both ends June 30, 2016. If either license plates fail to reach a combined presale, active plate count of 1,000 they will be discontinued.

New License Plates 2015

The following license plates were redesigned:

Florida State

NASCAR

Miami Dolphins

Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Protect Our Oceans

Wildlife Foundation of Florida

Florida International University

University of Tampa

University of West Florida

The **Clearwater Christian College** license plate was **discontinued** in September 2015 when it ceased operations.

The **Donate Organ Pass It On** organization (Transplant Foundation Inc.) reported they are winding down operations and planning to pass their operations, which include the specialty plate to the **Donate Life Florida**.

New License Plates 2016

The **American Red Cross** license plate was **discontinued** in March 2016 for failure to maintain 1,000 active registrations for more than 12 months.

The **St. John's River** and **Hispanic Achievers** license plates were both discontinued on July 1, 2016 for failure to reach a minimum of 1,000 active registrations/vouchers. The plates were first sold in 2010 before the voucher process was created. In 2014, the legislature placed them in the voucher phase, which provided the organizations an additional two-years to reach a combined "active registration and voucher" count of 1,000.

The **Donate Organs Pass It On** specialty license plate was **discontinued** when the Transport Foundation Inc. organization ceased operations.

The following plates were redesigned:

University of Tampa

University of Central Florida

Animal Friend

Florida Panthers Hockey

New License Plates 2017

The **Florida Panther** (hockey) specialty license plate was redesigned in July 2017.

New License Plates 2018

The following plates were redesigned:

Flagler College
University of South Florida
Miami Heat
Support Education
State Wildflower

The **Support Soccer** specialty license plate was **discontinued** when the organization closed.

New License Plates 2019

The following plates were redesigned:

Miami Marlins
Tampa Bay Lightning
Miami Dolphins
Jacksonville University
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Visit Our Lights

New License Plates 2020

The following plates were redesigned:

Conserve Wildlife
Support Law Enforcement
Special Olympics
Nascar
University of Miami

The **Parents Make a Difference** specialty license plate was **discontinued**.

Sources

The Weekly True Democrat, 1905,

Register of Automobiles, 1905-1917,

Secretary of State (Vol. 1 1905-1913 RG150 Series 644), Florida Statutes

Members of FLHSMV

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A Safer Florida!

OUR VALUES

We Believe In:

SERVICE

by exceeding expectations;

INTEGRITY

by upholding the highest ethical standards;

COURTESY

by treating everyone with dignity and respect;

PROFESSIONALISM

by inspiring confidence and trust;

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by fostering creativity;
and

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Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT SERVICES

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