

NMplates.com
New Mexico License Plates
Newsletter #5
January 2019

Contents:

Archive of NMplates.com Newsletters
Annual New Mexico Land of Enchantment Plate Meet, March 17
New Mexico Boat Plates
Additional Varieties of New Mexico Plates Found
Additional types and years of Prorate Backing Plates and Stickers
Special Characters No Longer Available on Vanity Plates
New MVD Services on Replacement Plates
Early New Mexico License Plates book available
License Plates For Sale

Archive of NMplates.com Newsletters

All NMplates.com Newsletters are now being archived on the NMplates.com website. You can access the earlier ones, and all future ones as they are posted, at:

<https://nmplates.com/NMplatesNewsletterArchive.htm>

**Annual New Mexico Land of Enchantment Plate Meet in
Albuquerque March 17**

The annual Land of Enchantment Plate Meet will be held in Albuquerque on Sunday, March 17. A flyer with full details, registration form, etc., will be sent out in the coming weeks.

New Mexico Boat Plates

Boat plates are somewhat out of the mainstream of plate collecting, but they're significant in New Mexico because for the years they were issued they were made with the same blanks and using the same dies as were used for motorcycle plates. Consequently, they are frequently confused for motorcycle plates.

In the *Early New Mexico License Plates* book it was mentioned that boat plates are known for 1955, 1956, 1958 and 1959, and at the end of the chapter there are a couple of sentences specifically mentioning that they were not known for 1957.

In early October of 2018 a 1957 finally surfaced, being advertised (naturally) as a motorcycle plate. This plate was subsequently acquired by NMplates.com and the plate is now up on the NMplates.com website, along with illustrations of the modern (i.e., current) boat licensing system, at:

<https://nmplates.com/Boat.htm>

If it doesn't appear, click the reload button on your browser.

Previously Unknown Highway Commission Types Found

Highway Commission plates (bearing the HC monogram) in the maroon on reflective blue color scheme of Official plates have long been known to have been used in the 1960s, but the beginning and ending years have always been uncertain. Now, an HC plate has been documented with the "New Mexico USA" slogan, showing that these plates were in use at least as late as 1969. But in view of the fact that only one such plate has been found (and that one with a very low serial number), it seems unlikely that they were being issued beyond that year.

Also, another previously unknown type, Highway Commission Vice Chairman, also bearing the HC monogram has been found for the years 1972, 1974, and 1975. These and the aforementioned 1969 era HC plate can be seen at:

<https://nmplates.com/HighwayDepartment.htm>

and

<https://nmplates.com/HighwayDepartment.htm#HighwayCommissioner>

Additional Varieties and Variations of New Mexico Plates Found

Additional varieties of New Mexico plates have been documented, including a unique bolt hole pattern found in a very late issue 1914 tag. This plate, #2840, is just 250 from the last plate (#3090) issued that year.

The MVD publication, *New Mexico License Plates 1984 Edition*, reveals that there were two varieties of 1975 base plates made for at least six different types of non-passenger plates. We have recently found and photographed both varieties of all six types, i.e., twelve varieties in total. All twelve are now illustrated on the NMplates.com website, along with figures showing the production numbers of each variety, several of which were manufactured and issued in absurdly small quantities.

Numerous other varieties have also been identified and documented on the Varieties page. All of these and more can be seen at:

<https://nmplates.com/Varieties.htm>

Additional types and years of Prorate Backing Plates and Stickers

Additional types and years of prorated backing plates and stickers have been documented, and are illustrated at:

<https://nmplates.com/ProrateBackingPlatesAndStickers.htm>

We now illustrate 27 different stickers shown in this category, out of approximately 34 that were believed to have been issued during the era they were in use. (Additionally, there are a few duplicates shown as they are variations of one sort or another.)

Continued on next page.

Special Characters No Longer Available on Vanity Plates but Faster Turnaround on Vanity Applications

In the last Newsletter we mentioned that the New Mexico MVD had eliminated both the hyphen (-) and the apostrophe (') as available characters on Vanity plates for both cars and motorcycles, at least for applications submitted on line. Although there was no information to that effect on the MVD website, attempting to use the hyphen or the apostrophe resulted in an error message. At that time it appeared that characters then acceptable were numerals, the alphabet, the Spanish Ñ, blank spaces and the zia symbol.

Since then all of the remaining special characters (Spanish Ñ, blank spaces and the zia symbol) have also been eliminated, but now with instructions posted with the on-line application form stating that ONLY letters and numerals are acceptable. As already mentioned, blank spaces have been eliminated, greatly reducing the readability (and desirability) of countless choices that a motorist might want to request. It is unknown whether this is a permanent or temporary policy change.

For about the past year the MVD's on-line application form for vanity plates has been checking the applicant's three choices against existing registrations and notifying the applicant when a choice is already taken. This is a significant improvement over the past system with both on-line and mail applications where the choices were made blindly. It was usually weeks or months before a rejection notice was received and a new application could be started.

Nonetheless, the new system has a fundamental flaw, as there have been several documented cases where one or more choices are passed as being clear, but without further explanation the applicant ends up receiving the second or third choice, or none at all.

On the other hand, vanity plates requested on line are now being manufactured and delivered in as little as 15 days. This is a huge improvement over the 3 to 4 months that was typically the case for applications made by mail.

New MVD Services on Replacement Plates

The New Mexico MVD recently implemented two new services for applications made on line for replacement plates in the standard serial number series. The first is that the system shows you the serial number of the replacement

you will receive. (Formerly, you wouldn't know until the plate showed up in the mail.) The second is that if you don't want just whatever number they give you, you can choose to have the replacement plate made with the same serial number you currently have.

***Early New Mexico License Plates* book available**

In the previous Newsletter we mentioned that the last copy of the *Early New Mexico License Plates* book had been sold in January 2018, though our inventory records indicated that we still had two copies. Those two copies turned up in a box stored in a cabinet not long thereafter, one of which has since been sold, but there is still one available for sale. If you are interesting in having this book, ordering information can be found at:

<https://nmplates.com/book.htm>

License Plates For Sale

The New Mexico Transportation History Project (NMTHP), a not-for-profit entity, frequently purchases license plates and related items for the sole purpose of photographing them. Once photographed the images are posted on the NMplates.com website, at which point we have no further use for the plates themselves. These items are then made available for purchase by interested parties at or below our actual cost of acquisition. We make no profit on these sales.

In the past we have typically listed these items for sale on eBay, a time consuming process which adds to our cost through the fees we have to pay, thereby driving up the resale cost. For this reason we've established a "License Plates For Sale" page on NMplates.com where our photography subjects will be listed as they become available. The currently available plates may be seen at:

<https://nmplates.com/plates-for-sale.htm>

Please check this page periodically, as we will be adding additional plates to the page as we clear out a backlog of items for which photography has been completed.