

Dept. of Transportation: New blackout and retro license plates top 10,000 in first month

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In the first month since their debut, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Division of Motor Vehicles has issued just over 10,000 Blackout and Retro license plates (10,694):

- Blackout plates totaled 9,493 and nearly half of those were personalized (4,634)
- Retro plates totaled 1,201 and nearly half of those were personalized (631)

The overwhelming majority so far were issued via DMV's new online process, wisconsin.dmv.gov/specialplates. More than 1,600 non-personalized plates have also been acquired at DMVs, at participating dealers and via third parties who already stock Wisconsin plates.

The clean design of the Blackout plate has a black background with white lettering and edge. The unique sequence began with ZAA. ZAB* and ZAC are already in circulation. The Retro yellow or butter license plate features black letters on a sharp, yellow background reminiscent of the 1970s and began with YAA 1001. The simplified design on each allows for up to seven characters for those wanting to personalize their plates.

Both plates come with a one-time \$15 issuance fee, plus an additional \$25 annual fee. The income generated from the registration of these plates will help finance infrastructure improvement projects. WisDOT estimates over a half million Blackout plates could be on the road within three years.

Ideal time to order, updated online process

Customers do not have to wait to obtain these plates. And, anyone whose license plates are peeling or hard to read should replace those plates and can do so online by using the replacement plates online app or simply begin at wisconsindmv.gov/specialplates.

Customers whose online plate request does not have a personalized message or require special eligibility, which includes the Blackout and Retro plate, can receive their plates within a few days instead of the several weeks via the traditional mail-in process. Approximately 25% of plates ordered through the new app are mailed out the next day.

The guided online process allows a customer the option to personalize their plate with a custom message. The plate is then previewed to show the personalized message on the plate as they type it. The message is concurrently verified with the database to check for duplicates or known inappropriate words or phrases. All personalized messages are then reviewed by a DMV staff member prior to plate issuance.

This convenient process continues by allowing the customer to renew their vehicle registration at the same time. Finally, instead of needing to mail a check or money order, customers can pay online using modern, secure payment methods.