

**May 18, 2009**

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If you or someone you know have been impacted by some of the topics covered in articles, reports and studies done by the Platte Institute, please let us know about it. In an effort to more effectively communicate issues facing Nebraskans, we are looking to humanize the issues facing our state. Please send us an email to [feedback@platteinstitute.org](mailto:feedback@platteinstitute.org) if you have an idea for us.

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# PLATTE CHAT

## NEBRASKANS PAY FOR "UGLY BETTY" LICENSE PLATES

Nebraska residents will soon discover what their new license plates for motor vehicles will look like. There has been plenty of public comment – mostly unfavorable – about the amateurish designs being considered. Regardless if you love or hate the new designs, you're getting new license plates in 2011.

Only a government would operate in this fashion. Not many businesses would long survive long if, when customers walked into their store, they handed you an unattractive product and then told you to like it or lump it. Clearly governments don't exactly play by "free market rules."

Until recently, Nebraskans received new license plates every three years; it was changed to every six years for budget reasons. The cost of the new license plates came from the state's general fund but changed when the legislature established a fee to cover the cost of new license plate production. Those fees are collected when you register your vehicles and receive your new license plates.

[The Platte Institute did a report last summer on the outlandishly high motor vehicle tax in Nebraska.](#) According to the report, to register a 2007 Honda Odyssey Minivan in Nebraska and the surrounding

- [Alliance Times-Herald](#)
- [Arapahoe Public Mirror](#)
- [Arlington Citizen](#)
- [Arthur Enterprise](#)
- [Ashland Gazette](#)
- [Aurora News-Register](#)
- [Beatrice Daily Sun](#)
- [Bellevue Leader](#)
- [Blair Enterprise](#)
- [Burwell Tribune](#)
- [Cambridge Clarion](#)
- [Cedar County News](#)
- [Chadron News](#)
- [Columbus Telegram](#)
- [Cozad Tri-City Tribune](#)
- [Curtis Hi-Line Enterprise](#)
- [Custer County Chief](#)
- [Doniphan Herald](#)
- [Elgin Review](#)
- [Elkhorn Douglas County Post Gazette](#)
- [Elm Creek Beacon-Observer](#)
- [Fairbury Journal-News](#)
- [Fremont Tribune](#)
- [Friend Sentinel](#)
- [Gering Courier](#)
- [Gibbon Reporter](#)
- [Gothenburg Times](#)
- [Grand Island Independent](#)
- [Grant Tribune-Sentinel](#)
- [Gretna Breeze](#)
- [Hastings Tribune](#)

states cost the following:

Missouri - \$55  
 South Dakota - \$61  
 Iowa - \$360  
 Colorado - \$456  
 Nebraska - \$563  
 Wyoming - \$616

According to the Nebraska Legislative website, motor vehicle taxes and fees in its current form began in 1998. Sadly for Nebraska citizens, the taxes and fees have grown at a much faster rate than both inflation and the Nebraska economy. Click on the link below to see the graphic which shows this very alarming trend:

[Nebraska Motor Vehicle Taxes and Fees](#)

It's clear to see that we are overly burdened with the motor vehicle taxes and fees in the Cornhusker state. To add insult to injury, we are now presented with four ordinary looking designs and are told that the fee for the new license plates in 2011 has yet to be determined. The current fee is set at \$3.25 per plate, so if there is no increase in the fee, you will be paying an additional \$6.50 for those new plates (two plates per car).

According to the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles, there are more than 2.1 million vehicles registered in Nebraska. Nebraskans therefore will be spending more than \$13.5 million on these new license plates. These proposed license plates, objects of scorn as they are, were selected in an environment which limited design options and "free market rules."

Why new license plates every six years? The next time you are driving home from work or around town running errands, take a moment to behold your bug-splattered, battle tested, long held object of affection. Removing your old plate will be like losing an old friend. And the forced break up is made even more painful knowing you and your fellow Nebraskans are paying \$14 million for "Ugly Betty" license plates.

- [Hemingford Ledger](#)
- [Hickman Voice News](#)
- [Hyannis Grant County News](#)
- [Imperial Republican](#)
- [Kearney Hub](#)
- [Lexington Clipper-Herald](#)
- [McCook Gazette](#)
- [Nebraska City News-Press](#)
- [Norfolk Daily News](#)
- [North Platte Bulletin](#)
- [North Platte Telegraph](#)
- [Omaha Catholic Voice](#)
- [Omaha Daily Record](#)
- [Ord Quiz](#)
- [Oshkosh Garden County News](#)
- [Osmond Republican](#)
- [Pawnee Republican](#)
- [Plainview News](#)
- [Plattsmouth Journal](#)
- [Ravenna News](#)
- [Scottsbluff Star-Herald](#)
- [Seward County Independent](#)
- [Sidney Sun-Telegraph](#)
- [South Sioux City Dakota County Star](#)
- [Superior Express](#)
- [Sutton Clay County News](#)
- [Syracuse Journal-](#)

[Democrat](#)

- [Wahoo Newspaper](#)
- [Wauneta Breeze](#)
- [Waverly News](#)
- [West Point News](#)
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