

DISCLAIMER

Electronic versions of the exhibits in these minutes may not be complete.

This information is supplied as an informational service only and should not be relied upon as an official record.

Original exhibits are on file at the Legislative Counsel Bureau Research Library in Carson City.

Contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or library@lcb.state.nv.us.



Home
News
Main Categories
Top News

Nation
States

Washington/Politics
World

Election 2002
Editorial/Opinion
Health & Science

Census
Offbeat

More News
Columnists
Lotteries
City Guides

Government Guide
Talk Today

Money
Sports
Life
Tech
Weather

Search Go
Site ☒ Web ☐
By LYCOS

ARCHIVES
SEARCH FOR
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
CLICK HERE

NEW E-MAIL
GET NEWS
IN YOUR INBOX
Click here to get the
Daily Briefing in your
inbox
Me: F
You: M
FIND NOW
kiss.com

Nation

Get in the know when you're on the go!



E-MAIL THIS PRINT THIS SAVE THIS MOST POPULAR SUBSCRIBE

11/17/2002 - Updated 10:08 PM ET

Police target illegal auto licenses

By Patrick McMahon, USA TODAY

Call it fraud, tax evasion or just a profitable misunderstanding. Thousands of motorists across America are illegally licensing their cars, trucks and motor homes out of state.

States and local governments, losing hundreds of million of dollars in revenue, are cracking down on these scofflaws with neighborhood patrols, parking lot checkpoints, midnight investigations and criminal prosecutions.

Registering a vehicle

Most states require new residents to get their cars licensed within 30 to 60 days (sooner if their plates are expiring.) Many states have exceptions or permits for military personnel, college students, temporary workers and seasonal visitors.

State	Deadline
Alabama	Within 30 days
Alaska	Within 10 days
Arizona	Immediately
Arkansas	Within 30 days
California	Within 20 days
Colorado	Within 30 days
Connecticut	Within 60 days
Delaware	Within 60 days
D.C.	Within 30 days
Florida	Within 10 days
Georgia	Within 30 days
Hawaii	Within 30 days
Idaho	Within 90 days
Illinois	Within 30 days
Indiana	Within 60 days
Iowa	Within 30 days
Kansas	Within 90 days

But perhaps the most potent weapon: tips from nosy neighbors.

"Over the years, we've found that one of the most effective ways to accomplish our goal is to enlist the people who DO pay," says David Shaw, spokesman for the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles. It has a toll-free line to report violators: 1-800-I-PAY-TAX.

Virginia's Arlington County Treasurer Frank O'Leary nicknamed his office's enforcement program FINK: "Friends in the Neighborhood Know."

O'Leary has several assistants who scour parking lots and underground garages to look for the windshield sticker that shows the owner paid county personal property tax on the car. He estimates 8,000 vehicles are without stickers. And that costs the county \$2 million to \$3 million a year.

"Some of it is sheer ignorance," he says, "but a lot of people just don't want to pay."

In Arizona, an 800-phone line has received

Access your
work
computer

You'd like the
flexibility to work
home.

You do work
more than one
location.

You travel for
business and
remote PC access

You want to transfer
files between
computers

Discover
Instant
Remote

A
1D
C
aE

Go
ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION
DATE: 2/11/03 ROOM: 3143 EXHIBIT
SUBMITTED BY: Gary Lewis, DMV

State	Deadline
Kentucky	Within 30 days
Louisiana	Within 30 days
Maine	Within 30 days
Maryland	Within 60 days
Massachusetts	Within 30 days
Michigan	Immediately
Minnesota	Within 30 days
Mississippi	Within 60 days
Missouri	Within 30 days
Montana	Within 20 days
Nebraska	Within 30 days
Nevada	Within 30 days
New Hampshire	Within 60 days
New Jersey	Within 60 days
New Mexico	Within 180 days
New York	Within 30 days
North Carolina	Within 30 days
State	Deadline
North Dakota	Within 150 days
Ohio	Within 30 days
Oklahoma	Within 30 days
Oregon	Within 30 days
Pennsylvania	Within 20 days
Rhode Island	Within 30 days
South Carolina	Within 45 days
South Dakota	Within 90 days
Tennessee	Within 30 days
Texas	Within 30 days
Utah	Within 60 days
Vermont	Within 180 days
Virginia	Within 30 days
Washington	Within 30 days
West Virginia	Within 30 days
Wisconsin	Within 2 days
Wyoming	Within 10 days

Sources: AAA Digest of Motor Laws; state DMV offices

more than 4,200 calls since Oct. 1.

"It's something that the residents of Arizona feel passionately about," says Arizona Department of Motor Vehicles spokeswoman Cydney DeModica. "We have some people who have programmed our tip line into their cell phones."

In most states, new residents are required to register their cars and get new plates usually within 30 days. Excuses run beyond lack of time. Some new residents think their old tags are good until they expire. Some try to register where they have a vacation house rather than where they live most of the year. Others still consider themselves legal residents elsewhere.

But for most, it's the money. Its often cheaper to get a license for a car, pay sales tax or buy insurance in a nearby state. In Minnesota, police check out cars with Wisconsin plates. In Massachusetts, it's tags from New Hampshire. In Arizona, it's Midwestern states.

Massachusetts Inspector General Greg Sullivan estimates "in excess of a hundred million dollars a year" in lost state and local revenue, mostly from cars registered in New Hampshire. A major criminal investigation is underway.

Penalties are frequently modest. "People are willing to take a chance when it's a few hundred dollars," says Betty Johnson, an administrator at the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles. In Omaha, out-of-state plates were recently the target of a police "sting operation" outside apartment complexes at rush hour.

The price of registering an expensive car or motor home has led many buyers to Oregon, where plates cost \$15 a year with no luxury or sales tax. In Reno, "our biggest problem is Oregon," Washoe County prosecutor Kristin Erickson says. "People get a post office box in Oregon and come back to Nevada with Oregon plates."

Since Nevada has a large number of high-end vehicles, she says, "this is a big-time money loser, and it's not being done by people who can't afford it." California says its violators most frequently have Oregon, Nevada or Utah plates.

In Arkansas, a state judge was convicted in July of failing to pay a \$3,500 use tax and was fined \$10,000 after he registered his motor home at an address in Oregon.

Last year, Oregon launched a campaign to stop non-residents from getting tags. One poster shows the state's evergreen-tree license plate and says, "If You're Not From Oregon, You Just Don't Get It."

In El Paso County, Texas, bordering both Mexico and New Mexico, officials launched V-RAP, the Vehicle Registration Abuse Program. Texans are tempted to register in New Mexico because it has lower sales taxes and registration fees and no annual inspection.

In the same way, Mexicans relocating to Texas are reluctant to give up their old license plates. That way, a person saves by not paying higher insurance, emissions fees, sales taxes and new drivers license fees. It's also easier to travel into Mexico with Mexico plates than with Texas tags, state officials say.

"If you go to sleep every night in El Paso and wake up in El Paso, you are an El Paso resident," enforcement director Daniel Marquez says. "This is a big problem here, and all along the Mexican border. Every other car you see on the road has either a Mexico or New Mexico plate."

Meanwhile, Christopher Lively prowls his northwest Washington, D.C., neighborhood of Glover Park several nights a week with a laptop computer. His target: cars with out-of-state plates hogging valuable parking spaces.

"It's not just parking, it's revenue for the city," he says. "It's people hoping to pay lower, out-of-state insurance premiums and end up raising my bills. It's people who don't want to get their cars inspected. It's people avoiding jury duty. And sometimes, it's people trying to avoid paying D.C. income taxes."

Lively, 39, is a property manager and elected neighborhood commissioner who has pressed for city action to stop the license plate scofflaws. He even became a reserve police officer to help.

Lively and three neighbors have accompanied police officers three nights a week since 1999. Police spot the suspected vehicles, and the volunteers run the plate numbers through the computer. The officer must issue the citation. The district launched a citywide enforcement program this summer.

Some people disapprove of Lively's efforts. "They ask me, 'Why aren't you out fighting crooks,' " he says. But most residents "smile, applaud me and say thanks for doing a good job."

[Front Page](#) [News](#) [Money](#) [Sports](#) [Life](#) [Tech](#) [Weather](#) [Marketplace](#)
[USA TODAY Travel](#) [USA TODAY Job Center](#)
[Terms of service](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [How to advertise](#) [About us](#)
© Copyright 2003 USA TODAY, a division of [Gannett Co., Inc.](#)