



For immediate release
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Governor Richardson Announces New Mexico Will Keep Both Yellow & New Centennial License Plates

Nearly 9,000 New Mexicans Respond to Survey

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson today announced the results of an online poll that show a majority of New Mexicans would like an option to pick either the yellow license plate or the new Centennial plate for their vehicles.

“The people have spoken. They have not only welcomed the new Centennial license plate, but have a very nostalgic attachment to the classic yellow plate,” said Governor Richardson.

“Therefore, I am directing the Motor Vehicle Division to issue both the old yellow and the new turquoise as New Mexico’s standard official license plates.”



“The new turquoise plate that commemorates our historic Centennial is distinctively New Mexican. We have designed something truly unique that will travel across the country and beyond, and promote our state,” said Governor Richardson.

About 77-percent of the 8,846 people who cast a vote during the month-long on-line voting, said they want to keep license plates – giving drivers a choice between the yellow plate and the new turquoise plate. About 23-percent wanted the new turquoise plate to be the only standard official license plate.

“New Mexicans love red and green, but they also love yellow and turquoise,” said Taxation & Revenue Secretary Rick Homans. “The good news is that New Mexico will have two of the most distinctive and colorful plates in the country.”

Also, most of the poll participants wanted to see the so called balloon license plate be discontinued and we plan on doing that this coming January, said Secretary Homans.

Governor Richardson unveiled the Centennial plate in August to commemorate 100 years of New Mexico’s statehood. The new plate incorporates a “retro” design based on license plates of the past. Against a turquoise background, a nod to our state gemstone, it follows law and custom by including the red and yellow colors that the Spanish brought with them to the New World, and the proud symbol on our state flag – the Zia.

Governor Richardson said because many New Mexicans have a nostalgic attachment to the classic yellow plate that has existed in various forms since 1980, he wanted public input about whether to keep that plate. The month-long online poll ended today.

The Centennial plate will replace what has become known as the balloon plate, which was first introduced in 1999. After commemoration activities end in 2012, the phrase, “Centennial 1912-2012” will be replaced and the turquoise plate will continue to serve as one of two official state plates. The Centennial plate will be available to the public in January.



Three state agencies -- the Taxation and Revenue Department, Department of Cultural Affairs and the Department of Tourism – spearheaded the design of the new Centennial Plate, which was approved by the New Mexico Centennial Task Force and New Mexico Centennial Steering Committee. David Rohr, creative director for the Department of Cultural Affairs, designed the plate.