

# Motor Vehicle News & Views

A publication of the Hillsborough County Tax Collector's Office Volume 8, Issue 2

2st Quarter 2009

## State Motto Plates a Big Seller

by: Odette Brencsons

In October 2008, the State of Florida began issuing a new license plate with the State Motto—In God We Trust. “There is no additional fee” said Yvette Hunger, Inventory Supervisor for the Hillsborough County Tax Collectors office. The first month we sold 1,305 of these plates in lieu of the County and Sunshine State plate. Durelle Freid, Branch Manager of the Plant City office said “it was a challenge to keep her office stocked because the plate is hugely popular with the people of



our county.”

Dealerships can now offer a variety of three non specialty license plates when your customer needs to purchase a new plate. Your customer can

choose from the “In God We Trust”, “Sunshine State” and “Hillsborough” license plate with no additional fees such as a Specialty License Plate fees. It is important to clearly mark each application to ensure your customer receives the correct plate type.

## Insurance Affidavits

by: Mary Jo Hill

We all know how much paperwork is involved in titling and registering a vehicle. One of the most common discrepancies we come across is the insurance affidavit not being fully completed. When completing an insurance affidavit the five-digit company code must be listed in order to accurately identify the correct insurance company. How important is the five-digit code? If the code is not listed and the incorrect company is chosen it can create problems for the customer such as a driver' license suspension. There are several insurance cards, binders and declaration pages that do not list the code. If that happens contact the insurance provider to obtain the company code. The company code is mandatory to successfully obtain a license plate for your customer.

## Inside this issue:

Paperless Titles	2
Records Request	2
Stingray Chevrolet	3
Title Fraud	4
Plate Update	5
BFO	6
Placing Stops	8

## *More Titles Go Paperless*

by: Marty Rodriguez

### **Another Step in the Electronic Title Process...**

The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles has taken another step in the electronic title process. In the past when a title was electronic and the lien was satisfied, the vehicle owner was sent a letter by the Department advising them on how to obtain the paper title. In most cases, the owner of the vehicle would also receive a letter from the lien holder with the same information. In an effort to make the most use of resources, the Department will no longer send these letters. The Department is partnering with financial institutions to increase public awareness of the benefits of an electronic title and requesting them to include information on how to obtain a paper title with their lien release letters.

### **Why Electronic Titles**

In most cases, when a customer is informed of the benefits of keeping the title

electronic; they elect to do so. Of course we have the few that still like to have the paper title stored in their safe deposit box and that's fine too. The marvelous thing about the electronic title is it is a good way to keep the document secure. So many times customers lose their titles and then wonder what will happen if someone finds it. Other times they go to sell their vehicle and they realize the title is not where they thought they placed it. They don't have to worry about this when they have an electronic title. Electronically maintaining the title eliminates the risk of losing it and having to pay title fees to obtain a duplicate. They can simply visit DHSMV at <http://www.flhsmv.gov/html/emt.htm> and request a title be mailed to them or they can visit one of our offices and we will print the title. No more searching and no more wondering for that title again.

## *Motor Vehicle / Vessel Records Request*

by: Kathy Duty

The Hillsborough County Tax Collector's Office would like to introduce you to a form that is used to order records from Tallahassee. The form number is HSMV 85054 and it has been recently revised. This form can be your best friend when you are trying to correct an error that was made on a previous title transaction. Errors such as the incorrect odometer reading or the date the odometer was read can be traced back to its exact origin. Once you receive these copies and they show proof that an error was made, they can be submitted along with the appropriate affidavits and the title so that the error can be corrected. With this form, records can be requested for motor vehicles, vessels and mobile homes. The cost for a current registration is .50 per record and \$1.00 per page for a specific title record.

A complete title history may be obtained for an initial fee of \$15.00. Once research has been completed the total will be recalculated to include an additional fee of \$1.00 per page. Certified copies are \$3.00 per record.

Please remember the fees must accompany the form in order to avoid a delay in processing your request.



Hillsborough County Tax Collector welcomes Stingray Chevrolet. With the start of this New Year, Plant City acquired a new car dealership called Stingray Chevrolet. They are located at 2002 North Frontage Road. The parent company, Classic Auto Group is out of Texas. Their main store, Classic Chevrolet is the largest retail Chevrolet store in the United States and it is located in Grapevine, Texas.

Tom Durant, partner in Stingray Chevrolet, was searching for a new business opportunity. He saw the previous dealership closing their doors. Tom saw that the building was less than five years old and the location of the dealership was more than perfect. The dealership is located right on the I-4 corridor of central Florida. Because of the bad economy, he was able to purchase this dealership at a discounted price. Tom's partner, Steve Hurley, moved back to Florida from Texas to oversee the dealership. Steve was raised in Lakeland, Florida so it was more of a homecoming to him and his family. Steve believes in a relaxed home town atmosphere. He trains his salespeople to treat the customer as if they were their mother. The salespeople also handle the deal from start to finish without any going back and forth to the sales manager. He trains and trusts his salespeople to do a good job. They believe in treating people right and doing the right thing. This conviction starts at the very top and works its way throughout the organization. Word of mouth via customers

travels a long way. The dealership doesn't want first time customers; they want to create lifetime relationships. They take a lot of pride in their honest advertising. When they advertise a price, they do not advertise just one stock number, they also include the number of vehicles available at that price. According to Steve, you will never hear them say, "That one was sold!"

Steve feels that they have a responsibility to support the community and firmly believes in giving back through charitable donations.

Some of the organizations that they have donated to are the United Food Bank and the Boys and Girls clubs. They also donated a big screen TV and held a raffle at the Strawberry Festival. The dealership made \$6,000.00 from the raffle and donated the proceeds to Unity in the Community. The dealership has also donated to the local little league, area high school teams and local golf tournaments. Steve feels that as a business, since they have the privilege to work in the community, they should give back to the community as well. He feels that the more vehicles they sell, the more local people they are able to employ. They help out the community and the community helps them. It's a win-win situation.





## Title Fraud

by Valery McCoy

Vehicle fraud and title cloning is becoming a very huge business. It is getting harder and harder to defend against it. Most of us are aware of the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTS), which was designed to protect consumers against title fraud. Participating states are able to exchange and retrieve titling information electronically through this system. Some of the brand information that may be obtained includes: salvage, junked, flood and theft history. Some of the organizations participating are state titling agencies, automobile recyclers, junk yards and insurance companies. Currently 27 states participate and ten others are working towards participating.

Over a million vehicles are stolen each year, which cost consumers and insurance companies more than 8 billion dollars a year. Some of the methods that criminals use are:

- Brand washing—where vehicle titles are taken from one state to another and new titles are issued free of all brand.
- Cloning—occurs when a car thief finds a car that is an almost exact match to a stolen vehicle, and lifts or copies the legitimate VIN and places it onto the stolen vehicle. They may obtain the VIN from junked vehicles, vehicles being transported, in storage, parked or on car lots, etc. Often high-end vehicles are a target.

Our most opportune time to detect what may be an attempt at title fraud on out of state titles is during the VIN inspection process. Here are a few things to observe:

- View the VIN plate to ensure the number matches that of the title.
- Make sure the VIN plate rivets does not appear to have been tampered with and that they match authentic rivets. (You may see examples of these in the NICB Manual).
- Check NMVTIS for vehicle history. If any suspect information is returned review DMV TL-59 to determine the procedure to follow.
- If you feel uncomfortable with the appearance of a VIN or the rivets you may request that a confidential VIN inspection be performed.
- Deciphering the VIN can sometimes help to identify potential fraudulent VINs. National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) produces a manual containing a breakdown of the VINs by the manufacturer and year of the vehicles.
- The various VIN positions can be determined by utilizing the NICB Manual to ensure each position contains the correct letter or number. Some of the information identified by the various positions is the origin, make, model, year, and body type of a particular vehicle.

To purchase a NICB manual visit [www.nicb.org](http://www.nicb.org).

## Save the Headache – Get the Plate Information First by: Ann Murray



A customer purchases a vehicle from your dealership and tells you he needs a plate. You give him the paperwork for his signature and he sees the price of the license plate and asks you “why so much?” When you explain to him the cost of the plate includes a \$100.00 initial registration fee because he does not have a plate to transfer, he tells you “but I used to have a car and a plate”.

You can offer your customer two options to resolve this dilemma.

The first and easiest option would be to ask your customer if he can provide the license plate number. If

he does not have the number, he has the option of calling our office at (813) 635-5200 and providing his name and driver license number to look up his record to see if he has a plate listed under his name that is unassigned to a vehicle. If a plate number is found, she will give him this information for him to provide to you. If a plate is assigned to a vehicle that is still in his name, he must describe the vehicle to the representative. You will need to have the customer complete a disposal affidavit and, since the customer states he does not have the plate, he will need to complete a replacement form HSMV83146. You will be able to process the transfer and replacement for him, obtain the new license plate and pay the renewal fee, and exempt the \$100.00 initial registration fee.

The second option would be to go ahead and charge the

customer the total fees and refer him to a Tax Collector's Office to research his license plate information. At that time, he will need to ask for a duplicate registration for his former plate which is \$3.00, a disposal affidavit for the former vehicle, a copy of the new registration showing the total fees paid including the \$100.00 initial registration fee, and an Application for Refund form HSMV83363. The representative will assist him in completing this form and he will need to mail it along with the registration copies to the Dept. of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles whose address is shown at the top of the form. Upon review of the application, the Department will issue a refund directly to the customer for the \$100 initial registration fee.

**A one day seminar on preparing Paperwork for Title and Registration will be held on:**

**September 18th - November 20th**

**To sign up online [click here](#), or contact our Training Department at 813-635-5238 or via email at [training@hillstax.org](mailto:training@hillstax.org)**

## *From the desk of Gary Konopka, Region VI, BFO*

In late March of 2009, we were in the midst of renewal activities for some 1800 independent, salvage, and wholesale motor vehicle dealers, and vehicle auction licenses and I thank the dealers involved for their cooperation. We have noted that many dealers waited until the last minute to complete the eight hours of continuing education which is required once every two years.

While reviewing the submitted dealer license renewals, we also noted many dealers had undergone corporate officer changes and failed to notify us. Any time a dealer, who is incorporated, makes a change to its corporation via [www.sunbiz.org](http://www.sunbiz.org), that change must also be communicated to the Region HQs. The

dealer must submit a modification application to their assigned Compliance Officer.

We are still receiving reports that a few of our dealers have been issuing traditional pre-printed temporary tags and not reporting the issuance to DMV HQs through their ETR vendor. The only time a dealer can issue a traditional pre-printed temporary tag is when there is a system failure and all such issuances must be reported within one business day to DMV HQs through the dealer's ETR vendor. As a reminder, all temporary tags must be displayed in the rear license plate bracket of the vehicle – they can no longer be put in the back window.

## *The Power of Our Word*

There is great power in the words that we utter. It has been said that words are so powerful that when repeated with emotion, they will bring us that which we are affirming. The following story demonstrates what can happen when we use words in a discouraging manner, and what can happen when we "turn a deaf ear" to those words which could dash our dreams or goals.

### **Two Frogs**

A group of frogs were traveling through the woods when two of them fell into a deep pit. All the other frogs gathered around the pit. When they saw how deep the pit was, they told the two frogs that they were as good as dead.

The two frogs ignored the comments and, with all their might, they tried to jump up out of the pit. The other frogs kept telling them to stop jumping because they were as good as dead. Finally, one of the frogs took heed to

what the other frogs were saying and gave up. He fell down and died.

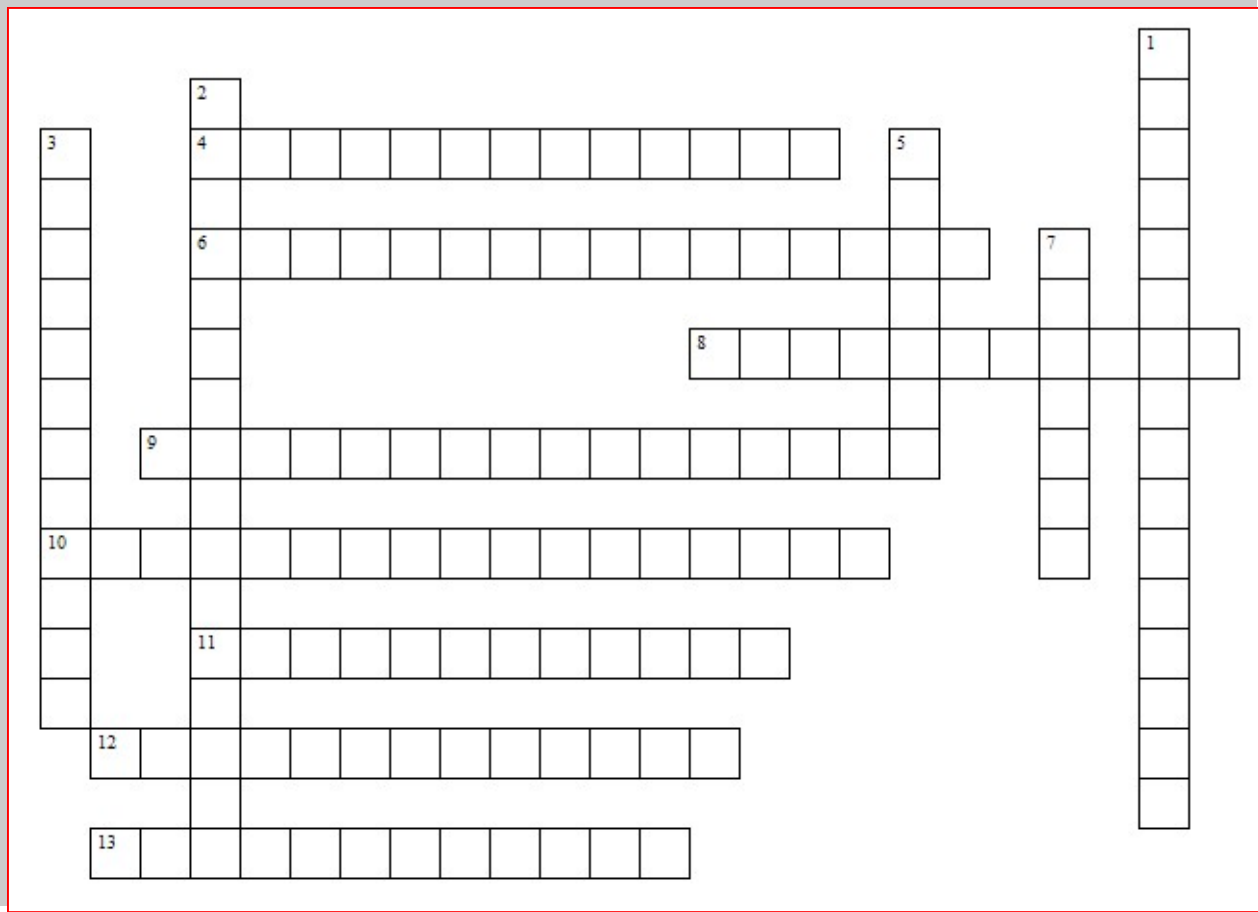
The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die. He jumped even harder and finally made it out.

When he got out, the other frogs said, "Did you not hear us?" The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought they were encouraging him the entire time.

Our words can bring hope to others and to our self at times when we need hope; they can bring encouragement when our courage is lacking; they can bring comfort when we are experiencing difficult situations.

Courtesy of Mary Rau-Foster,  
[mary@workplaceissues.com](mailto:mary@workplaceissues.com)  
 fostering great communication  
 and cooperation in the workplace

# Specialty Plates



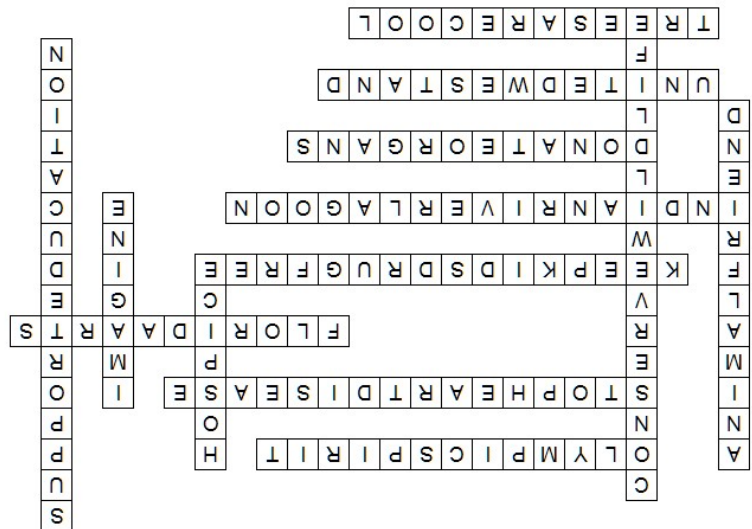
**ACROSS**

- 4 Go for the gold.
- 6 I provide funds for cardiovascular education.
- 8 The bikini top plate.
- 9 I display a swing set.
- 10 I display a snook.
- 11 I help with transplant funding.
- 12 I help to enhance airport security throughout the state of Florida.
- 13 Shade.

**DOWN**

- 1 I aid children with learning.
- 2 I contribute to the health & well being of the Florida Black Bear.
- 3 I provide funds for spay & neuter programs.
- 5 Every day is a gift.
- 7 A vision of John Lennon appears on me.

**Answer Key** ➡



## *Protect Your Investment*

by: Tamara Raimundi

The dealer transaction does not end after the sale of the car. There are times when a customer owes money to a dealer for registration fees. FL Statute 320.02 (16) and (16)a provides for the department to withhold the registration or renewal of a motor vehicle in this situation. A registration stop is placed by DHSMV when the customer fails to pay the dealer and will prevent any registration activity until the stop is cleared.

The procedure regarding registration stops is outlined in [RS-50](#) of the DMV Procedure Manual:

**TO PLACE A STOP:** The request for stop placement must be in writing, on dealership letterhead and signed by an authorized agent of the dealership. Notification must include the VIN, license plate number, the name and driver license number of the customer, the amount owed and proof that the title and registration fees were separated on or from the invoice. The dealership must maintain signed evidence that the owner or co-owner acknowledged

the dealer's authority to submit the list to the department if he or she failed to pay and must note the amount for which the owner or co-owner would be responsible for the vehicle registration. In a situation where the dealer being owed the money is now out of business, the customer must contact the DHSMV Regional office and they will assist the customer and remove the stop when applicable. The Notification must be mailed to:

DHSMV

ATTN: Assistant Chief,  
Registration Program  
2900 Apalachee  
Parkway, MS-68, Room  
A334

Tallahassee, FL 32399

**TO REMOVE A STOP:** The request to remove a stop must be submitted to the Tax Collector's Office or license plate agency. Notification to remove the stop must be in writing on the dealership's letterhead and signed by an authorized agent of the dealership. The request

must include the VIN, license plate number, the name and driver license of the customer and the amount paid to the dealer. Documentation must be submitted to the department.

### CUSTOMER DISPUTES

**A STOP:** The customer may submit a completed form HSMV 82078, Notification of Dispute of Registration Fees Paid to a Dealer for a Motor Vehicle, to dispute a registration stop for unpaid fees along with documented proof that the fees have been paid to the dealer for the disputed amount. This form is located on the department's website at:

<http://www.flhsmv.gov/dmv/forms/BTR/82078.pdf>

The completed form must be mailed to the address listed above. The completed form will be reviewed by the department and if found to be in order, the stop will be removed.