

Plates can be renewed by phone

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

When it comes time to renew auto license plates, Michigan drivers will soon be able to let their fingers do the walking.

An innovation unveiled Tuesday by Michigan Secretary of State Candice S. Miller will enable motorists to renew their plates over the phone at any time of the day.

"The entire process will take about four minutes," Miller said Tuesday during a press conference at the Ameritech Complex in Southfield.

Telephone license plate renewal is expected to be operational within two weeks, she said, establishing Michigan as an undisputed leader in terms of technology working on behalf of motorists.

"Michigan is the first and only state in the nation to offer touch-tone telephone renewal of license plates using a system of electronic verification of insurance," Miller said.

Other states may already have license renewal by telephone, Miller acknowledged. But they do not require proof of insurance — as Michigan does — or they charge an additional fee, she said.

Michigan is able to renew auto licenses via the telephone — and verify insurance cover-

age — thanks to a program under which insurance companies electronically identify their policy holders for the Secretary of State's office, Miller explained.

To renew by telephone, motorists will need a valid Discover, MasterCard or Visa credit card. They will also need to follow easy instructions on the renewal brochure that will be sent out by the secretary of state's office.

Motorists will also need a PIN (personal identification number) assigned by the secretary of state's office — and automatically printed on the registration form.

The PIN is assigned as a license comes up for renewal and the secretary of state's office checks it against an electronic list of policy holders submitted to state officials by the insurance company, Miller explained.

The PIN, credit card number (complete with expiration date) can be punched into state computers with any touch tone telephone, Miller said.

Other insurance companies have indicated they will cooperate, Miller said, and she is optimistic all carriers will provide lists of policy holders as a matter of convenience.

In addition to offering more convenience for motorists, Miller said telephone license renewal will offer a benefit to her office

which typically handles 60,000 transactions daily.

Touch-tone license plate renewal is expected to cut down on the need number of over-the-counter contacts, she said, "and enable us to use our staff more effectively for other transactions."

Since she replaced Richard Austin as secretary of state in 1991, the office has been able to increase efficiency with fewer workers, Miller said. The number of workers in her office has dropped by about 200 people to fewer than 2,100, she said, "with no layoffs."

That efficiency has come because of innovations like FAX renewal of vehicle registration and telephone renewal of watercraft registration, Miller explained.

Furthermore, the electronic innovations are not finished, the secretary said. Early next year, the office expects to introduce on-line vehicle registration via inter-active computer.

Innovations do have limitations, Miller said in response to questions, and motorists should not expect the convenience of being able to renew their driver licenses electronically, "at least not anytime in the near future."

Michigan requires periodic testing for driver license renewal, Miller said. "And there's a need for the license photo to be current."

Here's way to renew plates

Although motorists will not be able to get new plates under the system unveiled by Secretary of State Candice S. Miller, they will be able to renew license plates via telephone.

Motorists need only follow the instructions included in the forms mailed to them each year when it comes time to renewal auto tags.

Here's an example:

1. Find the PIN (Personal Identification Number) on the lower left side of your renewal notice — you can not renew by phone without a PIN.
2. Make sure, before calling,
 - The name and address on the renewal notice are correct.
 - The license plate has not expired.
 - A valid Discover, MasterCard or Visa card is ready.
3. Call (517) 336-1156 using a touch-tone telephone.
4. Enter the nine-digit PIN followed by the # key.
5. Enter the number of the valid Discover, MasterCard or VISA card followed by the # key.
6. Enter the month and year the credit card expires, followed by the # key.

License plate tabs will be sent by mail within seven days.

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NBD supports high-risk cancer research

NBD Bank has made a \$500,000 commitment to the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute to support research aimed at identifying women at high risk for breast cancer.

The gift is part of the Institute's Cancer Care and Cure Campaign, a five-year, \$100 million initiative to fund new programs and facilities.

"This gift," said NBD President Thomas H. Jeffs II "is important to us because it helps

fight a disease that has touched the lives of many of our employees and their families. It also recognizes the importance of the Karmanos Cancer Institute to the health and development of our community."

The gift will support two breast cancer related programs. The NBD High Risk Research Clinic will combine the talents of laboratory researchers, physicians, genetic counselors and social workers to better identify

and care for people at high risk for the disease. The NBD Breast Cancer Prevention Research Project will support ongoing research, using a cell line created at the Institute to identify the earliest cellular changes which trigger the disease.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Nearly 6,500 Michigan women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 1997; 1,600 will die of the disease this year.

The Institute recommends annual screening mammography for women 40 and older. All women should receive annual clinical breast exams and practice monthly self-examinations.

The Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute is one of the nation's leading cancer research, treatment, education and outreach centers. It is affiliated with The Detroit Medical Center and Wayne State University.



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