

White Sox waste big lead; Cubs lose

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State examines clipping creative license on auto plates

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If a car on the road has a license plate with a black, red and yellow design featuring a fireman's boot and ladder and an emblem honoring the Manhattan Fire Department's centennial, what state is the plate from?

If you guessed New York, try again.

This particular plate, created for backers of a downstate fire department, is but one of more than 300 different-looking license plates bearing that familiar Land of Lincoln slogan.

For the record, last year, there were 187 different categories of Illinois license plates, including those for the Armed Forces reserves, Congressional Medal of Honor winners, ham radio operators, congressmen and U.S. sena-

Pondering a new plate

Secretary of State George Ryan has convened a 20-member panel to consider revamping Illinois' license plates.

The issues:

- Should there be one uniform plate for Illinois' 8.9 million vehicles, instead of 187 different plate categories?
- Should plates be redesigned and new plates issued for the first time since 1984?
- Should front-end license plates continue to be required?

Source: Secretary of State George Ryan

tors and state lawmakers.

On top of that were another 122 designs, like the Manhattan Fire Department plates, issued temporarily for special events last year for an extra fee of \$10 to \$15 a

plate. And right now, stalled in the Illinois Senate is a bill calling for yet another new plate, this one bearing the likeness of Elvis Presley.

The situation has gotten to the

point that Secretary of State George Ryan has put together a 20-member task force to decide whether Illinois has too many kinds of plates, among other issues. The task force is chaired by

Special license plates now available include:

Armed Forces reserves	State lawmakers
Congressional Medal of Honor	Retired state lawmakers
Ham radio operators	Municipal uses
Congressmen and U.S. senators	Trucks
State Supreme Court justices	Trailers/recreational vehicles
	Special event plates

Daily Herald Graphic

former state Rep. Manny Hoffman, a Homewood Republican and current chief of the Cook County Republicans.

"The state has no real consistent policies on license plates," Ryan said Friday. "Somebody gets a whim in the General Assembly and says let's have plates for retired coroners or for the widows of slain police officers, and we need to do it. It never ends."

Besides the never-ending proliferation of plates, another catalyst for Ryan's task force is the deteriorating condition of many of the 8.9 million registered plates now in use. Most of them were issued in the early to middle 1980s, with a predicted life span of only four or five years.

State budgetary constraints have prevented new plates from

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Crocom store fire