



License Plate Bingo

Keep your eyes peeled for more Maryland plates this summer

by Sandra Olivetti Martin

Just in time for the long, irritable driving hours to your summer vacation, license plate bingo gets more interesting. School’s end brought a new standard license plate to Maryland.

Maryland War of 1812 plates, issued on Flag Day, June 14, are still rare enough that they should be worth double points on highway bingo. But they won’t be rare for long, as the new commemorative plate is standard issue and will gradually replace Maryland’s old black-and-white plate with the Maryland crest created in the 1980s for Maryland’s 350th anniversary.



The new standard plate joins two special plates — the Chesapeake Bay plate and the red and orange agricultural Ag Tag — plus 800 or so organizational plates, including a newly issued one celebrating Annapolis.

All are made by prison inmates through Maryland State Correctional Enterprises.

“The War of 1812, the Chesapeake and the writing of the poem that became our national anthem is one of Maryland’s most important national heritage stories,” War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission executive director Bill Pencek told Bay Weekly.

Until June of 2015, The War of 1812 will be Maryland’s standard-issue plate for cars, trucks, disability-vehicles, motorcycles, and multipurpose vehicles.

True, it takes a history buff to get excited by the War of 1812 plate. Many were, according to Pencek, with “a very eager bunch of rangers from Fort McHenry and many in the community of folks excited all over the state about the upcoming bicentennial.”

If the War of 1812 doesn't meet your standard of fun, the brand new Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Visitors Bureau's plate should, because its message — fun — is what summer's all about.

"I thought it would be a great way to extend our brand of Annapolis being fun, as people drive through other states," says Bureau executive director Connie Del Signore.



Like other organizational plates, this one is sold through its sponsoring organization (bcormeny@visitannapolis.org) for a one-time charge of \$25 on top of the standard plate fee.

Bay and Agriculture plates cost \$10 annually, the additional cost funding the Chesapeake Bay Trust and the Agricultural Education Foundation respectively.

Newly issued plates don't cause older ones to be recalled, so there are plenty of Maryland plates out there, including the first design of the Chesapeake Bay plates, to fill your bingo card.