

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 28, 2009

Contact: Don Canton or Brandi Pelham
(701) 328-2200

NEW LICENSE PLATE HONORS FALLEN SERVICE MEMBERS

BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. John Hoeven and the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) today were joined by legislators and the families of service members who have fallen in the line of duty to unveil the state’s new “Gold Star” family license plates. The plates, which were created in the last legislative session, are available to families who have lost a member in a military conflict.

At the ceremony to announce the new plates, Bernadette Monroe (mother) and Jordan Monroe (grandfather) received plates in honor of Private First Class Anthony Monroe; Adeline Reis accepted plates to commemorate her son, Staff Sergeant Ken Hendrickson; and Paul Goodiron accepted plates to honor his son, Corporal Nathan Goodiron.

“This plate symbolizes the sacrifice my son made for freedom and it’s a way to ensure he and others are not forgotten,” said Bernadette Monroe.

“These beautiful plates are a thoughtful and highly visible way for North Dakotans to honor the sacrifice these soldiers and their families have made for our nation,” Hoeven said. “In a larger sense, however, they are also a reminder to the rest of us that the price of freedom is truly high. We are grateful to all of our brave soldiers who are willing to risk their lives and, sometimes, make the ultimate sacrifice.”

The new plate is enhanced with a gold star emblem, the letters G.S. with the words courage and honor encircling the star. The release of this new plate coincides with national Gold Star Mother’s Day, which is observed on the fourth Sunday of September each year. It is a day for people to recognize and honor those who have lost a son or daughter while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

Today we are here to recognize our brave men and women in uniform and all of our veterans, the dedicated members of our communities and those who work night and day to protect us from harm and preserve the freedom of this great state and our nation.

-MORE-

The concept of the Gold Star dates back to World War I when a grieving mother began wearing a gold star to honor her son after he was killed in combat.

“The Gold Star Plate symbolizes and honors our fallen soldiers. The new plate is a way for North Dakota to pay tribute and always remember the sacrifice the families and soldiers have made for our country,” NDDOT Director Francis Ziegler said.

House Bill 1414, which authorized the plates, was sponsored by Reps. Lisa Meier, Mark Dosch, Bette Grande, and Michael Nathe in the North Dakota House of Representatives. Sens. Dick Dever and Stan Lyson sponsored the bill for the Senate.

The new Gold Star Family license plate is available to the family relatives of a member of the United States armed forces who died while serving on active duty during a time of military conflict. Family members eligible for the plate include the following: surviving spouse, parent, including stepmother, stepfather, parent through adoption, and foster parent, grandparents, child, including stepchild and child through adoption, and sibling, including half-brother and half-sister.

To determine eligibility and start the license plate application process, family members should contact Gene Kouba of the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Office in Bismarck office at 701-328-5465 or visit their website at www.nd.gov/veterans.

-###-