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Specialty plates promote life-saving organ and blood donations

AUSTIN – More than 87,000 Americans – including 5,800 people in Texas – are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant.

To raise public awareness about this critical need, April has been designated “National Donate Life Month.” The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) offers two specialty license plates that spread the message about life-saving donations: “Be an Organ Donor” and “Be a Blood Donor” license plates.

“The medical community tells us that every day 115 people are added to the nation’s organ transplant waiting list, and every three seconds someone needs blood,” said Mike Behrens, TxDOT executive director. “By purchasing an organ donor or blood donor plate, Texans can help support the life-giving gifts of organ, blood and tissue donation.”

The “Be an Organ Donor” specialty plate design features a green ribbon on a blue background and the phrase “Give Life” centered under the ribbon. The words “Be an Organ Donor” are printed on the bottom of the plate. The “Be a Blood Donor” specialty plate design features a cartoon character graphic of a drop of blood colored like the Texas flag and dressed in boots and a cowboy hat. The words “Be a Blood Donor” are printed on the bottom of the plate.

Both the “Be an Organ Donor” and “Be a Blood Donor” license plates are available for passenger cars and light trucks for a \$30 annual fee, plus \$40 if personalized, in addition to regular registration fees. When purchasing the “Be an Organ Donor” plate, \$22 of the \$30 fee is credited to the general revenue fund. For the “Be a Blood Donor” plate, \$22 of the \$30 fee is deposited to the credit of the blood donor account.

Applications for the “Be an Organ Donor” and “Be a Blood Donor” plates are available at county tax offices, on TxDOT’s Web site (www.dot.state.tx.us), or by calling the TxDOT Help Desk at (512) 465-7611 or TxDOT’s Fax-On-Demand forms line at (888) 232-7033. Customers requesting orders for specialty license plates through the fax service should enter the code 0999 to receive the form for the license plate they are ordering.

TxDOT started its specialty license plate program in 1965. Today, there are more than 100 different plate designs, many of them benefiting a particular group, organization, college or university. Since 1994, more than \$10 million have been raised for sponsoring organizations and scholarship funds.

