

County clerk may be issuing license plates, renewals

By Alexa Zoellner Union staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, September 16, 2015 8:41 am

JEFFERSON — The Jefferson County Clerk's Office soon could be providing annual license plate renewals, as well as the electronic processing of titles and metal license plates.

Currently, a temporary license plate for new vehicles is provided by County Clerk Barbara Frank's office on a manual basis for a service fee of \$5.

"We're looking at adding annual plate renewals — the stickers — and the processing of titles and metal license plates," Frank said. "We've been meaning to get into this. Several other county clerks provide this service and to me, it's one of those things where we could be more out there as a service in a friendly manner."

In order to provide the service, Frank will contract with an approved vendor — DealerTrack or CVR —and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The vendor in turn will contact the Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to process the application.

"We're still in the process of choosing a vendor, but we probably will go with CVR," Frank said. "Their fees are less and so we'd get to retain more of the fees. It's not a huge difference, but it is enough. More money will stay within Jefferson County and the services, from what we could tell, were identical between the two vendors."

Because the DMV does not work directly with agents, a third-party is required, resulting in a vendor fee. No matter the vendor, the cost for metal plates will be \$19.50 and renewal stickers, \$10. Both fees are the maximum charge allowed.

"Everyone else charges the maximum plate fee," Frank said. "That's just customary. It helps to cover our staff costs."

If the county contracts with DealerTrack, \$8.80 of each metal plate fee will go to DealerTrack and \$10.70 will go to Jefferson County. For the renewal stickers, \$5 will go to DealerTrack and \$5 will go to Jefferson County.

If the county contracts with CVR, \$8 of the metal plate fee will go to CVR and \$11.50 will go to Jefferson County. For the renewal stickers, \$4.50 will go to CVR and \$5.50 will go to Jefferson County.

Currently, there are 10 agencies in Jefferson County that do yearly plate renewal stickers and two nondealer facilities that do metal plates.

“We were looking at just doing stickers for the renewals, but then we thought we might as well try doing the titles and the plates,” Frank said. “If it turns out to be too cumbersome, then we’ll just make it the stickers. That’s how we thought we’d transition it — so we’d get the training now instead of adding it later.”

The training and equipment is provided at no cost, Frank said. In addition to training, the vendor is required to provide an initial inventory of metal plates and renewal stickers, installation of required software and ongoing follow-up and ongoing support.

“I’ve been working on paperwork and I’m waiting for it to be reviewed,” Frank said. “Once I get it sent to the DMV, it’ll probably be about eight weeks maximum before we can start training.”

The request to process titles, metal plates and renewals was approved by the county Finance Committee on Monday and will next go before the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors for final approval.