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Serving armed forces members now eligible for veterans' plates

Edmonton... The Alberta government is expanding eligibility requirements for veterans' licence plates to include currently serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

"As a retired serviceman, I know this gesture will be appreciated by the men and women in the forces," said His Honour, Col. (Ret'd) the Honourable Donald Ethell, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta. "The plates are instantly recognizable to Albertans. When they see it, they think of the people who put themselves in the service of our country."

The Royal Canadian Legion's Alberta-Northwest Territories Command determines eligibility for the plates. Current members of the armed forces with at least three years of service will be able to apply for veterans' plates beginning August 16. They can receive the plate at no extra cost when renewing their vehicle registration.

"When initially established, the veterans' plate program honoured the men and women throughout history who completed their service to Alberta and Canada," said Premier Ed Stelmach. "Expanding it recognizes those who are currently making sacrifices, putting their lives on the line to protect our rights and freedoms."

"It is truly an honour for me to be part of this occasion," said Service Alberta Minister Heather Klimchuk. "These men and women are our mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, friends and neighbours. It is only right that we recognize them for their dedication to our country and way of life."

Nearly 18,000 veterans' plates have been issued since the program began in February 2005. Previously, the plates were only available to retired members who had been honourably discharged, as well as members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or other Canadian police departments who served under NATO or the United Nations.

"This is a wonderful recognition of the sacrifice and value of both former and current members of the forces," said Darrel Jones, president of the Royal Canadian Legion's Alberta-N.W.T. Command. "Alberta veterans and current service members have a proud history of serving their country, and it's heartwarming to know Albertans appreciate that contribution."

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