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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Oregon's "Share the Road" License Plates Debut Jan. 2**

*Goal for new plates is to create more safety awareness; proceeds will support cycling-related causes throughout the state*

PORTLAND, Ore. – December 19, 2007 – Oregon's newest vehicle license plate option, a "Share the Road" version aimed at raising awareness of cyclists and pedestrians and increasing traffic safety, will be available to vehicle owners beginning January 2.

The plates were created as a result of the passage of Oregon Senate Bill 789-A, sponsored by Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene. Proceeds from the sale of the plates will be distributed to cycling-related causes by the Cycle Oregon Fund and the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA).

The Department of Motor Vehicles will assess a one-time \$10 fee for plates that are registered for two years (\$20 for four years). Share the Road plates will be issued only from DMV headquarters – the plates will not be available at DMV field offices, but will be mailed directly to those who order them. An image of the new plate is included below and will appear online at [www.oregondmv.com](http://www.oregondmv.com) as of December 19.

"If your vehicle registration is up for renewal soon, just write 'I want the Share The Road plate' on the notice and send it in with an additional \$10 above your regular renewal fee," said Debbie Mercer, a vehicle programs implementation manager for DMV. "If you're between renewals, you can order the plate anytime after January 2 online or through a DMV office, for a \$15 replacement plate fee plus the additional \$10."

Approximately \$8.25 of each plate fee will go to cycling-related causes. Initial fees to create the plate totaled more than \$20,000, and were paid by Cycle Oregon, the BTA and the Oregon Trucking Associations. If more than 1,000 plates are issued in the first year, \$10,000 of that amount is refunded. In addition, at least 500 plates per year must be issued in order to keep the Share the Road plate available.

Oregon is the 12<sup>th</sup> U.S. state to offer a version of a Share the Road plate. The initial idea to create the Oregon plate came from a constituent of Sen. Prozanski, who then initiated the legislation.

“After the death of my friend, riding partner and cycling activist Jane Higdon in a bicycle-vehicle collision, I spoke with her husband, Tom Jefferson, and we decided we wanted to make an improvement in traffic safety,” said Prozanski. “We wanted something positive to come of this tragedy. After finding out how these plates have been championed in other states, we thought it made sense to create one in Oregon.”

Prozanski, Jefferson and other supporters of SB 789-A stressed that their efforts were intended to create a positive change in awareness and traffic safety.

“This is not about placing blame on anyone, but about getting out an educational message: Everyone has a right to use the roads and should be respectful of all other users,” Prozanski said. “We see these license plates as a sort of moving public service announcement.”

Scott Bricker, executive director of the BTA, said that his organization embraces the plates and the mission behind them. “Traffic-bicycle safety is the top concern of cyclists throughout Oregon,” he said. “We’ve heard this in several surveys, and that concern is focused on cycling near cars. So sharing the road is a vital message, and we think people who both ride and drive will buy these plates as a way to raise awareness. We encourage everyone to buy one and spread the message that Oregonians share the road.”

Jerry Norquist, ride director for Cycle Oregon, sees synergy between the goals of Cycle Oregon and the new plates. “Our event’s mission is to show people our great state from the seat of a bike,” he said. “A crucial part of achieving that is providing safe roads for our riders. Of course that means fostering a positive relationship between motor vehicles and bicycles. These plates are an important step in what we see as a long-term process. And our eventual goal is to be the first state with a public policy that requires ‘Share the Road’ to be included on every license plate issued.”

