STATE OF NEBRASKA

Dave Heineman
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES
Beverly Neth
Director

PRESS RELEASE
May 22, 2009, 11:45 a.m. CT

Lincoln, NE – Beverly Neth, Director of the Department of Motor Vehicles today provided additional information regarding the 2011 Nebraska License Plate Voting survey and the results.

Director Neth announced that an external website link had compromised the vote. All votes from the website were tracked and removed from consideration. The result is that plate #1, the Meadowlark and Goldenrod design, is the rightful winner.

In the end, 93,758 votes were logged for the 2011 license plate survey.

The following recaps the totals for each of the four designs included in the survey;

- The Meadowlark and Goldenrod design received the most votes, with 32,727;
- The Black-White-and-Red design featuring Nebraska.gov received 28,302 votes;
- The plate featuring the State Capitol received 26,107 votes; and
- The Good Life design received 6,622 votes.

Attached are Neth's prepared remarks clarifying the facts of the online voting process as well as those of Brent Hoffman, General Manager of Nebraska Interactive.

# # #

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STATE OF NEBRASKA

Dave Heineman
Governor

Beverly Neth, Director
Department of Motor Vehicles
Statement issued May 22, 2009

DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES
Beverly Neth
Director

Thank you for being here today. As you know, over the last week there has been growing discussion about the possible influence of a third party website on the voting of our next license plate. I now have new evidence that shows it is clear that the site's malicious intent was realized. I regret this situation, particularly the conflicting information I received and that was passed along. However, I am taking responsibility for this situation and I am here today to make this right. I have disqualified the votes that came through the offending site and declaring plate #1 the winner.

I know this raises other questions, so I would like to walk through the timeline with you and then ask Brent Hoffman from Nebraska Interactive to explain the technical aspects of the voting.

On Thursday, May 7, I was advised that an external website had linked to our license plate voting survey. The site's stated intent was to "ruin the poll" by urging individuals to vote for plate #2, which in their words was the most boring plate. Upon learning of the site, I contacted Nebraska Interactive who hosts the DMV website. I asked them if there was a way to track the number of votes coming from the website, and if we could determine for which plates these visitors were voting. Subsequent to that call, I was informed by the Nebraska Interactive staff that votes were being referred from the site, but that those votes were being cast across the board. Nebraska Interactive assured me that they were monitoring the situation.

At the beginning of the voting, Nebraska Interactive provided me with a link to the overall voting for each plate. I checked the link 3 times over the two weeks of voting. At those times, the total numbers seemed to support the claim of Nebraska Interactive that votes were being cast across the board.

As you know, we announced the plate design winner on Tuesday. By Wednesday, there were questions being asked by the media about the monitoring related to the external website. By yesterday afternoon, I believed there to be sufficient enough questions to warrant the review of raw data from the vote. I requested this information from Nebraska Interactive late yesterday afternoon and upon reviewing that data, it was clear to me that voting for plate #2 spiked on May 7, and to a lesser degree, on May 8 the day of and the day after the site established its link. The information raised significant concerns regarding the integrity of the voting.

At this point, Nebraska Interactive clarified with me that they could in fact pinpoint and track votes that were referred from external links.

Referred votes cast from the site are as follows: Plate #1 received 1,131 votes, plate #2 received 12,510 votes, plate #3 received 796, and plate #4 368. This is clear evidence

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that in fact voting was compromised by the mischievous intention of the third party site. Removing those votes from all plate tallies, results in the following totals: plate #1 received 32,727 total votes, plate #2 received 28,302 total votes, plate #3 received 26,107 total votes and plate #4 received 6622 total votes.

With this information now verified, I have disqualified all votes referred from the site and declared plate #1 the rightful winner with 32,727 total votes.

At this point, I'd like to now ask Brent to speak to the technical aspects of the voting.

To begin, I want to offer my apology to Beverly Neth, Governor Heineman, and Nebraskans across the state for Nebraska.gov's role in this situation.

Beverly just explained that the voting process to choose the state's new license plate design was impacted by the efforts of a third party to influence the results. This conclusion is based on a detailed technical analysis that Nebraska.gov conducted.

Specifically, we reviewed the different datasets in our network environment, including the extensive logs that track user activity on Nebraska.gov's different web pages. One of these logs is called the Web server log and it captures important several data elements, including the last site a user visited before being directed to Nebraska.gov. This allows us to track external web sites that posted links to the license plate voting system. We can also drill down further to see this referral traffic on a day-by-day basis to determine if there are trends or noticeable changes in the number of visits to the site.

Nebraska.gov monitored total votes received and provided the DMV with the ability to access real-time aggregate vote tallies. We did not monitor day-by-day voting results, which would have provided the necessary visibility that a third party had influenced the vote results during the peak days when unusually high traffic was being referred to the license plate voting site. The reason we did not track the daily voting tallies is that, originally, before the site was launched, DMV and Nebraska.gov had agreed to count every vote received – regardless of how they reached the Nebraska.gov voting site.

In hindsight, Nebraska.gov should have started reviewing the log files and day-to-day vote tallies as soon as we learned that a third party was trying to influence the vote – and we should have shared that information with Beverly Neth and others at the state. While doing this still may not have changed the outcome, it would have eliminated the conflicting information we first provided to Beverly Neth and Governor Heineman's Office that the votes from this third party appeared to be spread evenly across all four license plate options. To the best of our knowledge, we believed that statement was accurate at the time. After the more detailed technical analysis I just described, we realized that Nebraska.gov had unintentionally given inaccurate information that has since brought additional attention to this issue. We made a mistake, and we apologize for it.

Overall votes vs CollegeHumor.com

	Total overall votes cast for each plate	Total votes from CollegeHumor.com	Total votes after removing College Humor
Plate 1	33858	1,131	32,727
Plate 2	40812	12,510	28,302
Plate 3	26903	796	26,107
Plate 4	6990	368	6,622
Total	108,563	14,805	93,758

Collegehumor Daily Breakdown

Date	Plate 1	Plate 2	Plate 3	Plate 4	No votes
05/04/09	277	335	235	68	1
05/05/09	178	182	176	43	2
05/06/09	58	80	50	16	3
05/07/09	347	8267	154	146	17
05/08/09	138	2546	77	58	6
05/09/09	33	398	9	12	0
05/10/09	4	160	3	7	1
05/11/09	19	136	17	3	0
05/12/09	19	120	19	4	1
05/13/09	7	72	16	6	0
05/14/09	13	58	20	3	0
05/15/09	22	54	9	0	0
05/16/09	10	47	7	1	0
05/17/09	6	55	4	1	0
Totals	1131	12510	796	368	

*** We took all the IP's referred from collegehumor.com
and matched them with the IP addresses in the database

Daily vote summaries for each plate

	Plate 1	Plate 2	Plate 3	Plate 4	Referred but no vote
5/4/2009	9766	9478	8147	2073	228
5/5/2009	8809	7697	7470	1815	310
5/6/2009	3805	3208	3113	865	192
5/7/2009	2350	10148	1670	558	117
5/8/2009	1465	3861	1032	314	72
5/9/2009	628	824	403	116	41
5/10/2009	578	543	394	127	30
5/11/2009	1185	1154	968	221	56
5/12/2009	948	797	664	172	43
5/13/2009	682	584	472	127	29
5/14/2009	890	640	716	139	34
5/15/2009	798	543	575	130	36
5/16/2009	828	677	572	160	22
5/17/2009	1126	658	707	173	39
Totals	33,858	40,812	26,903	6,990	1,249

Overall voting on 1,2,3 & 4   108,563

REFERNCE

Plate 1

Plate 2

Plate 3

Plate 4