

Georgia Unveils Feline Friend License Plate

The latest addition to the state's animal-themed plates features a tuxedo cat.

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A portrait of Hope, a former shelter cat, was selected to appear on a new Georgia license plate. Photo credit Randalyn Bieniek. The face of a black-and-white tuxedo cat named Hope is about to become famous in Georgia now that the state unveiled its new cat-theme license plate benefiting the spay/neuter program. A painting of Hope, a former shelter cat, was voted by Georgia residents as the winner of a cat artwork contest sponsored by the Georgia Department of Agriculture to fund the Dog and Cat Sterilization Program.

Hope's portrait was painted by Duluth, Ga., artist Randalyn "Randy" Bieniek.

The Dog and Cat Sterilization Program provides spay/neuter subsidies to Georgians statewide and performs educational outreach on the procedure. Proceeds from the sale of the new feline license plates, \$25 each, go directly to the program.

The Feline Friend license plate joins the program's two other animal-theme designs, the Buddy plate featuring a dog and the Animal Friend plate featuring a dog and cat. Since November 2003, nearly \$2.9 million has been raised to fund subsidies and education.

To date, 1,004 veterinarians participate in the spay/neuter program. Agriculture Commissioner Tommy Irvin said that by adding the new Feline Friend license plate to the collection, the goal is to appeal to cat lovers throughout Georgia to help with an important program.

"We hope that everyone goes out and buys this tag for their vehicle," he said.