

## MORNINGLINE

Do you think the state should auction off vanity license plates?

**Yes: (312) 408-3641**

**No: (312) 408-3642**

Phone lines open until 5:30 p.m. today. (A charge for a local call to downtown Chicago applies.) Results in tomorrow's Sun-Times.

# Need Vanity Plates? UBID, Quinn Says

By Michael Gillis

Sun-Times Springfield Bureau

SPRINGFIELD—Illinois has untapped reserves of vanity, State Treasurer Pat Quinn said Wednesday.

Quinn, the Democrat running for secretary of state, proposed to tap that store and sell the most prized auto license plates—those with four or fewer numbers or three or fewer letters—to the highest bidders.

People will pay more for those plates, he said, although he doesn't understand why.

"They're willing to pay . . . quite a bit of money for this particular status symbol," he said. "I think Illinois can earn money for the taxpayers [with competitive bidding]."

It was the second straight day that Quinn called for making vanity fair, or at least more fair.

On Tuesday, he accused Republican incumbent George Ryan of awarding such plates to political insiders, but he mistakenly interpreted a computer term on a printout of plate holders to mean "very important person."

Ryan, who is running for reelection, criticized Quinn's plan because wealthy people would win the prestige plates, which now cost \$48 and \$75. Although many public officials have the low-digit plates, a Ryan spokesman said they were awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

Under Quinn's proposal, the highest bidder would keep a plate for up to five years. Current holders would have to bid to retain the plates, Quinn said.

He said a Delaware man recently paid \$185,000 at an estate auction for a vintage one-digit license plate in that state. But Delaware allows holders of such plates to keep them for life and pass them