

DuPage is heading toward county vehicle stickers

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One of the more popular acts the city of Naperville undertook many years ago was to get rid of its vehicle license fee.

The stickers that came with this tax were, in two words, a huge nuisance.

Each year, residents who own motor vehicles - and in Naperville who doesn't - had to not only buy a new sticker and affix it to the windshield, but spend an inordinate amount of time trying to get the old one off.

It wasn't unusual, as we recall, to see vehicles with a collection of these from previous years, sometimes half torn off where the owner had become frustrated trying to remove it.

Fortunately, the city doesn't seem inclined to go that route again anytime soon.

Unfortunately, DuPage County, faced with the desire to raise more revenue instead of imposing what would admittedly be fairly draconian reductions in county services, is looking at imposing a vehicle license tax in the form of a sticker on county residents.

The other revenue-raising option the county is considering is a quarter-cent sales tax, but it would need voter approval in a referendum to do that.

The advantage, at least to the county board, is that it can ram the vehicle license fee down the throats of the populace without asking first.

The vehicle license fee would not be cheap either.

The proposal is a \$50 sticker fee per vehicle that would raise some \$25 million annually, on the assumption that about 60 percent of residents would comply with the fee.

Since most families out here have at least two cars, the law-abiding amongst us will have to pony up another hundred bucks a year to county government.

This won't be an even-handed tax either.

It will only apply to those who have cars, and it seems that in its calculations the county is more or less willing to write off the 40 percent of residents it calculates who are going to try to avoid paying the fee.

To be sure, very few, if any, taxes, fines and fees ever raise anything like a hundred percent of the amount levied, but calculating revenue on the proposition that only 60 percent of those taxed will pay up is essentially admitting that this will be a very unfair tax.

We realize that the county is in a budget crunch, and we realize the board has had a hard time coming to a conclusion on what taxes it wants to raise, but settling on one that is not only a nuisance to the license buyer, but hard to collect as well, seems to us to be on the wrong road.