

A New Minnesota Flag

Designed by Amelia Hyde Center and sewn by the Fjelde Sisters Minnesota's first official flag was made to be displayed on the stage of the state pavilion at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

The Flag (figure a.) was white on one side with a rendition of the state seal surrounded by a wreath of Lady's-slipper's, the state flower. and a red ribbon with the State Motto *L' Etoile du Nord* (Star of the North), and the dates 1819 - the year Fort Snelling was established and 1893 - the year the official flag was adopted. The ribbon extended below the seal. Above the seal was the year 1858, the year Minnesota became a state. Around the seal was 19 stars forming a large star. Minnesota was the 19th state after the original 13 to join the Union. Below the red ribbon was written "Minnesota". The reverse side of the flag was entirely blue.



Figure a.

Due to the complexity and expense of the design the flag was changed In 1957 to the current flag (figure b). The flag combines the blue and white sides of the original flag into one design. A blue field with a white disk containing the 19 stars around the seal from the previous white side of the state flag. The red ribbon no longer extends below the seal and the name of the state is now in capitol letters in red below the seal on the white disk.



Figure b.

Both sides are the same except that the reverse is backwards. For example **MINNESOTA** on the front appears as **ATOSENNIM** on the reverse.

In 2001 the North American Vexillological Association conducted a poll asking its members and the public their opinions of flag designs in the U.S. and Canada. Vexillology is the study of flags. Minnesota finished 67th out of 72 flags surveyed. The survey judged flags based on 5 principles of good flag design; Keep It Simple, Use Meaningful Symbolism, Use 2-3 Basic Colors, No Lettering or Seals, Be Distinctive or Be Related.

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The proposed design (figure c) I came up with starts with the current state flag and would remove the state seal and surrounding decorations, dates, ribbon, state flower and the name of the state. The most distinct feature of the current flag, the white disk that is left over from the original flag would remain. The stars forming a larger star would be increased from 19 to 32, Minnesota was the 32nd state to join the Union, and the arrangement changed to form a circle around the white disk. In place of the seal in the middle I would put a gold and blue compass that extends over the edges of the white disk. The circle of stars would become points of the compass with the North Star being slightly larger than the rest representing Minnesota, the North Star State.

On the background would be placed a green stripe in the bottom 3rd of the flag. The stripe would represent a simplified rendition of a tree lined lakeshore with the blue sky reflected in the lake below. The name of the state comes from "minisota", a Native American name which means "sky-tinted water." This scene is depicted in both the state licence plate (figure d) and in the new Minnesota state quarter design (figure e). Minnesota is also known as the land of 10,000 lakes.

The last feature of my new design would be the swallowtail cut along the fly of the flag. Ohio is the only other state flag that is not rectangular (figure g). In the case of Minnesota the design feature would resemble the distinct shape of the Eastern border of the state. No other state in the country could do this, unless you consider Colorado or Wyoming. The shape of the state is another commonly used symbol of the state as seen in the license plate and the state quarter (figures d & e) or the Welcome to Minnesota signs (figure f).

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Figure c.

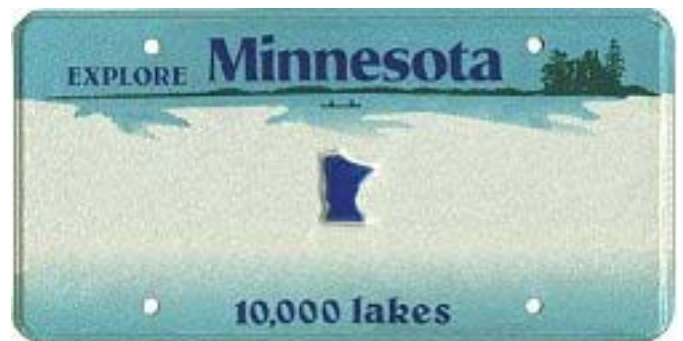


Figure d.



Figure e.



Figure f.



Figure g.