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"People being people waited until the last minute," says Olsen, adding that long lineups down the street were common at the end of February. Everything at that time was done manually and typewritten, adding to the length of time involved.

"It was a really, really different time," Olsen says.

While computers have increased the product base and efficiencies of the office, Olsen says there are still the "heartaches, headaches and all the rest that go with computers."

If computers, debit or credit card systems go down, the office is limited in what it can do. The office now has the authority to collect outstanding fines for provincial offences from different police services and monies owed to the 407 ETR before issuing renewals. If a customer comes in without their valid renewal notice, licences cannot be issued without checking for those outstanding fines.

Olsen says there have not been too many interruptions in service due to computers being down, but one instance stands out. In 2002, during a public service employees' strike, the computer system was shut down. Olsen said the staff at the office had more than 15,000 entries to input along with the regular work once the computers came back up.

"It was extremely hard on the staff," Olsen says.

He employs eight people at the office, including his wife

Mary, who has been there for the 30 years that he has. Olsen says his staff, which includes a 25-year employee and another who has been with the office 19 years, is excellent.

He believes it takes a certain kind of person to stay in the business as long as he has.

"You have to have a reasonable temperament and personality to do it," says Olsen, pointing out with a laugh that he's survived 30 years.

For the most part customers who come into the office are excellent, he says, but there is the very, very small minority who "have a chip on their shoulder".

Some customers become frustrated if they have spent time collecting paperwork only to find there's an error, and some are upset at having to pay fines.

"We have to follow the rules," Olsen says.

At the end of the day, you try not to let those people affect you too much, he says, while also trying to understand that for them the situation is often upsetting.

Overall, Olsen enjoys his work, calling it "a living" and not the "licence to print cash" that some people might think.

"I enjoy working with people and I enjoy working in the service industry," Olsen says. "If someone comes in with a problem and you can help them, it gives you a certain sense of accomplishment."

Olsen also enjoys some of the conversation initiated by the collection of Ontario licence plates that hangs on the wall in the office. The plates belong to Orly Glass who inherited them from former Belleville alderman Don Foster. They were already on display when Glass inherited them and he has allowed Olsen to continue showing off the collection.

The current display features Ontario licence plates from 1908 to 1980. The display was larger at the Maze Mall location, featuring plates from every Canadian province and U.S. state, some of which were sample plates.

"We get a lot of questions and comments," Olsen says, and some of the plates have interesting stories attached to them. The 1908 plate is leather and a customer has told Olsen that, according to an old registration book, the plate belonged to a Mr. Sprague from Prince Edward Cty. Another story Olsen has heard about the leather plates is that they were changed because beavers would gnaw at them when they became salty.

"I don't know if it's true," Olsen says.

Other interesting plates include one from 1952, which is a sticker on a piece of glass. During the Korean War there was a metal shortage and trucks were issued stickers for the windshield instead of plates, Olsen says.

Olsen will turn 60 later this month but he has no plans to retire, he says. He intends to "keep on trucking."