

CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL VEHICLE ASSOCIATION, Inc.

OLD CARS AND NEW LAWS PLUS WHAAT SUP HERE AND THERE

By Larry Becker



Several states have legalized the use of medical marijuana, but there are problems on the definition of what pot-impaired-driving is. In Ohio and Nevada, where the use of medical marijuana is legal, the limit for driving is two nanograms per milliliter of blood. In Washington State, the limit is five nanograms. A dozen other states, including Illinois, Iowa and Arizona, have a zero tolerance policy for driving under the influence of marijuana and various other controlled substances. California has no impaired level for anything but alcohol. There is a big debate in Colorado over what should be used as proof of impairment. Several states are watching for the outcome of the Colorado debate. (Information from article by Brady Dennis and T.W. Farnam of the Washington Post.)

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has analyzed real world crash data to determine if LED stop lamps and centering high mounted stop lamps are more beneficial than incandescent lamps at preventing rear impact collisions. The data was inconclusive when considering other factors, such as vehicle redesign and a change to the rear light configuration. The NHTSA will continue to review future crash data in case it provides more guidance on whether there is a measurable difference.

July 12th has been designated as Car Collector Appreciation Day.

Google's Driverless Cars are facing some problems with regulators. They say that software and electric sensors could fail and the vehicle would have to anticipate and react like a human. States may have to decide how to license machines rather than people. Insurance companies have to reassess how to assign fault after an accident. Safety standards would have to be rewritten to focus on electronics along with the mechanics. Google Inc. sees self-driving cars being available to consumers in three to five years. Regulators and the insurance industry aren't so sure that it can happen that quickly. (Information courtesy of article by the Car-Pro, Jerry Reynolds).

According to a recent study by the American Society of Civil Engineers, a group who assess roads, bridges and levees nationwide, California's are not the ones who drive the most. California's ranks

only 40th in average miles driven annually per person. The typical Californian drove 8,647 miles last year. Wyoming residents did the most driving, 16,498 miles and Alaskans the least with 6,719. (Information courtesy of article by Tony Bizjak of the Sacramento Bee Newspaper).

Legislation has been introduced in New York and Massachusetts to require the issuance of a single license plate for motor vehicles. The bills, which are favored by state hobbyists, require that the single registration plate be attached on the rear of applicable motor vehicle.

Not all of the following state bills are laws at this time. They have recently been introduced and are currently under consideration by the respective legislatures.

ALABAMA

On March 15th, the state began allowing hundreds of illegal immigrants to take drivers license tests under a new Obama administration rule. While the state has battled the U.S. Justice Dept. and private groups over Alabama's strict crackdown on illegal immigrants, the state will honor certification granted under an Obama program called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

ALASKA

Military veterans in Alaska who have retired or have been honorably discharged can now add veteran's status to their state driver's license or state ID cards.

ARIZONA

Lawmakers want to create a special license plate benefitting public school educators. The so-called "extraordinary educators" special plate would raise money for educators who oversee activities, projects or lessons for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

The Hualapai Tribe has awarded a \$25 million contract to a Prescott company to straighten and finish paving the road that leads to the Grand Canyon Skywalk.

On March 3rd, the Arizona Dept. of Transportation said that road repair work has started on the Hell Canyon Bridge on State Route 89, and that motorists should be prepared for delays.

A state wide campaign has been launched to raise awareness about Arizona's "Move Over" law, hoping that it'll prevent deadly roadside crashes. Arizona law requires all drivers to move over one lane when traveling past any vehicle with flashing lights that's pulled to the side of the roadway.

ARKANSAS

Police are starting periods of strict enforcement for drunken drivers, especially the younger one, starting March 8th through the 17th and again April 12th through the 21st. These time periods coincide with proms and graduation ceremonies.

CALIFORNIA

Something to cheer up all California drivers! The state Board of Equalization will add a 3.5 cent excise tax increase on gasoline starting July 1st. The excise tax on gasoline in California will be 39.5 cents per gallon. The new tax eliminates the general fund portion of the sales and use tax on motor fuel, but raised the excise tax. The Board left the excise tax rate on diesel fuel unchanged at 10 cents per gallon for the July 1 to June 30th, 2014 period.

A new field poll shows that Californians in record numbers want to grant driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants, not charging them extra for college, and offering a path to citizenship, according to the Sacramento Bee newspaper of 2/22/13.

Two new mile long tunnels are undergoing final safety tests, poised to divert motorists away from an ocean cliff hanging highway dubbed Devil's Slide, south of San Francisco, to a smooth Alpine like passageway. The \$439 million federally funded tunnels features massive exhaust fans, carbon monoxide sensors and two 1,000 foot long bridges. The project took 7 years to complete. The old road will become a state park. This was the first tunnel constructed in decades in California according to the Federal Highway Administration. They were opened to traffic in late March.

On March 5th, a coalition of local governments declared that California's local roads are "in crisis" and need \$82 billion to be restored. Cities and counties say that while \$2.5 billion is being spent annually on road upkeep, they need another \$1.9 billion to keep that from deteriorating further and \$82 billion over the next 10 years "to bring the system up-to-date".

The California State Association of Counties & League of California Cities voted Amador County as having the worst roads of any county in California and say the roads are badly in need of repairs. Orange County was voted as having the best roads of any county in California.

After several delays, all electronic toll collecting on the Golden Gate Bridge began on March 27th. Drivers will pay tolls using an existing transponder system as well as a new system that scans license plates at the toll plaza.

One former California police officer has a provocative idea to stop drivers from talking or texting on a hand held device. Confiscate the phone! When a driver is pulled over for using the hand held device, the police officer says "Phone, please. You get it back when you pay the fine." The concept probably would require a new law as privacy advocates would oppose it. Police can confiscate phones as evidence now, if needed, but that's not necessary for cell phone violations.

Proposed AB 1002 by Assemblyman Richard Bloom would raise the vehicle registration and renewal fee by \$6. Revenue would be used to encourage the use of bicycles, public transportation and pedestrian walkways. (it would also give the legislators more money to spend).

Drivers parking near AT&T Park in San Francisco had to start feeding the meters in the evening hours as of March 18th. Meters close to the ballpark at Third and King streets will remain in operation until 10 p.m., from Mondays through Saturday. The meters will also cost more on S.F. Giants game days. The meters will cost 25 cents per hour between 6-10 p.m. on non-event days, but will increase up to \$7 per hour on event days. (It is called, "sticking it to the public" days).

CONNECTICUT

Legislation to disallow the use of year-of-manufactured license plates after July 1, 2013 has been introduced. Under the bill, the owner of an antique, rare, or special interest motor vehicle who was authorized before July 2013, to display a year of manufactured plate could continue to display the plate until the registration period expires. However, upon renewal of registration, the owner would be required to display a current registration plate. The bill would totally outlaw use of all year of manufactured plates after June 30, 2013.

D. C. WASHINGTON

A new mayoral order changes the city's license plates from Washington D. C. to District of Columbia, the Washington Post reports.

According to the Washington Post, the newly detailed Sustainable D.C. plan contains, among other things, a plan to reduce traffic. No details are available at this time.

The D.C. Taxicab Commission says it is illegal for the popular taxi and sedan service Uber, to charge an automatic 20% tip on rides booked through its app or website. But Uber says it does not believe the automatic tip is illegal, the Washington Post reports.

A record number of tickets, 91,550 were given out in fiscal 2012 by red-light cameras, an increase of almost 14,000 over the previous year, the Washington Post reported from data AAA obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request. The city took in almost \$13 million.

GEORGIA

The Eugene Talmadge Memorial Bridge could soon have a new name. Among suggestions are: Savannah Bridge, or the Savannah River Bridge. It is not known how road signs will show the name change.

FLORIDA

A bill to repeal the requirement that all gasoline offered for sale in the state contain a percent of ethanol is being considered in the Florida house. Currently the Florida Renewable Fuels Standard requires that all gasoline sold or offered for sale by a terminal supplier, importer, blender or wholesaler in Florida contain 9%-10% ethanol, or other alternative fuel, by volume. The bill is supported by SEMA.

HAWAII

Legislation has been introduced to reduce the annual registration fee and state vehicle weight tax for antique motor vehicles. Under the SEMA sponsored bill, the registration fee would be reduced from \$45 to \$25 per year, and the weight tax would be reduced from 1.75 cents per pound to 1 cent per pound.

The state will receive a \$17 million federal grant to fix roads and highways damaged by heavy rains on Kauai and Maui in February and March of last year.

IDAHO

A proposal in the House of Representatives for an official highway memorial program to honor those killed by drunk drivers has been rejected.

The state Senate has backed a plan aimed at allowing big trucks on more miles of Idaho roads, pushed by the Forest Group to lower shipping costs for timber companies and boost the economy. It has been sent to the House for discussion. Since 2003, Idaho has allowed 129,000 pound trucks on select southern routes.

ILLINOIS

The Tollway plans to spend \$922 million on capitol improvement projects this year, twice the amount it spent in 2012. Projects include the start of a \$2.2 billion rebuilding and widening of part of Interstate 90.

The Illinois House of Representatives has reintroduced legislation allowing the state to provide information to gas stations encouraging the stations to offer E15 as an option for customers. The bill also allows state agencies to provide information to gas stations on any financial assistance that may be available to subsidize the cost of providing E15- blended fuel to consumers.

INDIANA

The House has approved and sent to the Senate, a bill that would set a 30 mph speed limit for Mo-Ped users on state roadways.

A natural gas refueling station powered by cow manure has opened. Investors in the AMP American's station that opened March 4th along Interstate 65 near Fair Oaks say the station completes a transportation corridor, along with a station along Interstate 65 in Southern Indiana. The stations will fuel 42 milk delivery trucks owned by Fair Oaks Farms, a cooperative of 10 farms housing about 35,000 cows.

KANSAS

Shawnee County residents will be able to get in line to renew vehicle tags and titles from home. Shawnee County treasurer Larry Mah told the Topeka Capital-Journal that the online and mobile queue allows customers to choose a license renewal location, then issues a ticket number and asks the customer to enter a cellphone number, so the system can send a text when the number is 20 minutes out.

KENTUCKY

The Crittenden County school district has been awarded \$80,000 in federal funds to reduce diesel emission from its fleet of school buses.

March 17th was the kick-off date for Adopt-a-Highway Spring Clean Week. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet said almost 750 groups participated in the 25 year old program. Those groups clean some 5,100 miles of roadside each year.

LOUISIANA

Suspension of bridge tolls at the Crescent City Connection meant layoffs for 31 temporary workers hired pending the outcome of a contested November referendum. The Dept. of Transportation & Development ceased taking tolls March 6th after a judge nullified the results of the Nov. 6th election where voters extended the bridge tolls for 20 years. A new election is set for May 4th.

MARYLAND

Legislation has been introduced to require the state DMV to provide, for one year, a specially designed vintage reproduction registration plate to qualifying vehicle owners. Under the bill, to be eligible to receive a vintage reproduction registration plate, the vehicle must be a passenger car, small truck, historic, multipurpose or street-rod vehicle. The vintage reproduction plate would be designed to resemble the 1910 Maryland registration plate which has black lettering on a yellow background. The bill requires Maryland DVA to set initial registration and renewal fees. The bill will be considered by the entire House of Delegates and is supported by SEMA.

MASSACHUSETTS

Some of the residents of Truro are not happy with the new resident beach parking sticker that bears a grinning shark especially in light of a shark attack off the coast last summer. The sticker was approved by the beach commission, the Cape Cod Times reports. Kelly Clark, recreation director said it gives the impression the town isn't taking sharks seriously.

MONTANA

Legislation supported by SEMA to allow the owners of a motor-vehicle trailer, semitrailer, or pole trailer manufactured in the year 1948, 1949 or 1950 to display a single original Montana license plate that is affixed to the rear of the vehicle has been approved by the Montana Senate and House and sent to the Governor for his signature. Under the bill, the original Montana license plate must be legible and bear the year that matches the year in which the vehicle was manufactured.

NEBRASKA

The city of Lincoln has doubled the parking meter fees. The Lincoln Star Journal reports coin rates are six minutes for a dime, 15 minutes for a quarter and a dollar for an hour. Not everyone is happy with the new rates.

NEVADA

On Feb. 25th, state Senator Gustavson introduced a bill that would allow the state Dept. of Transportation to increase the maximum speed limit in Nevada to 85 mph where the agency determines that speed is safe. The bill is co-sponsored by 16 of the 21 state Senators.

A bill to repeal the state law requiring the wearing of helmets by motorcyclists while riding their bikes was defeated by the legislature. The bill has been introduced several times over the past few years and has been defeated each time.

Tourists hoping to take photos at the Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas sign have a safer time doing so. Clark county officials have asked county staffers to start work on a plan to add crosswalks, signal lights, new parking spaces and better exit and entrances to Las Vegas Blvd. The projected cost for the improvements is about \$800,000.

A bill has been introduced in the state Senate that would increase the motor fuel tax by 2 cents, to 19.65 cents a gallon, beginning Jan. 1, 2014. The bill also calls for annual 2 cent a gallon increases until 2023.

NEW JERSEY

Work on the Route 35 corridor along the shore through Ocean County will begin this summer and wrap up in the summer of 2015 using federal highway funds. The \$215 million rebuilding was fast-tracked after damages from Superstorm Sandy.

Motorists are complaining that the clearing of trees from the mediam of a 16-mile stretch of the Garden State Parkway is stripping the Parkway of the features that distinguish it from the Turnpike.

NEW MEXICO

The city council approved a federal plan by the U.S. Dept. of State to build a new port of entry nearby the city of Sundland Park.

NEW YORK

A first of its kind survey estimates that more than 2.3 million cyclists and pedestrians are using 14 of the state's most popular trails each year. The Hudson valley Rail Trail in Ulster County was the most popular, with more than 600,000 annual visitors. (Now, you know why you could not find a parking space).

NORTH CAROLINA

Some North Carolina cities want the DMV to block registration for those who don't pay parking tickets. Raleigh hopes to collect about \$350,000 annually in unpaid parking tickets if state lawmakers authorize the practice, according to The News & Observer of Raleigh.

A plan to issue specially marked driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants granted "deferred status" by the Obama administration is stirring controversy and protests. North Carolina was one of ten states, along with Arizona, Iowa, Michigan and Nebraska, that initially said they would not issue licenses to young undocumented immigrants who are part of the Obama administration's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. Announced last June, the program could allow up to 1.7 million illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children to receive a two-year deferment on any deportation charges. Michigan and Iowa have relented in recent weeks and said that they would issue the licenses. Arizona and Nebraska still do not grant licenses to the immigrants. North Carolina's Dept. of Transportation, announced last month (Feb.) that 15,000 Deferred Action applicants could be issued licenses distinguished by a bright pink strip and the words "No LAWFULL STATUS".

OHIO

The Ohio Highway Dept. has started work to expand the only two-lane section left on Interstate 7 between Cleveland and Columbus.

OKLAHOMA

More than a dozen compressed natural gas-fueled pickups were delivered to transportation officials as part of Gov. Fallin's plan to supplement the state's fleet with clean burning, low-cost compressed natural gas vehicles.

OREGON

Legislation to repeal the requirement that retail, non retail dealers or wholesale dealers of gasoline sell only blended with a specified percentage of ethanol has been introduced in Oregon. Currently the state requires that gasoline sold or offered for sale contain 10% ethanol by volume.

A skateboarder in Salem is facing charges of driving under the influence after a collision with a van. The Statesman Journal reports that Jacob Becker (no relation to me) was knocked 20 feet and suffered a skull fracture. Becker was cited for driving under the influence of intoxicants.

PENNSYLVANIA

Legislation has been introduced in Pennsylvania to exempt from emission inspections those vehicles registered in fifth-class counties with a population of less than 116,500 residents. The bill would only impact vehicle owners in Lycoming County, as all other similarly populated counties are already exempt.

Three bridges will be closed for months while being renovated. The \$23.6 million work on the Ambridge-Aliquippa Bridge in Beaver County is expected to take until Thanksgiving. Pittsburg expects the \$2.9 million replacement of the South Highland Avenue Bridge will be completed by mid-September and the \$3 million repair of the Levi Bird Duff Bridge to be done in September.

SOUTH CAROLINA

The DMV is allowing drivers with certain types of suspended licenses to go into the DMV and apply for a new chance. Suspensions would be lifted or shortened for drivers who met the conditions of their punishment, pay all fines and make sure insurance is filed.

Beaufort County is going ahead with plans to build a \$45 million interchange at the entrance to Hilton Head Island, even though the Town Council voted against the U.S. 278 interchange, saying it would destroy views.

A judge in Columbus threw out breath test results from a DUI case because the police officer told the suspect to blow hard into the Datamaster breath analyzer machine. Defense attorney Joe McCulloch said scientists testified that blowing hard can affect test results.

SOUTH DAKOTA

A House Committee has killed an effort to enact a statewide ban on texting while driving, the Argus Leader reports. Supporters included law enforcement and a driver who killed a motorcyclist while texting and driving.

The Mitchell City Council is drafting a bill to ban texting while driving in city limits.

TEXAS

Legislation to require the issuance of a single motor vehicle license plate for attachment at the rear of the vehicle, has been introduced in the Texas House of Representatives. The bill would apply to passenger cars and light trucks. The bill would save money, conserve resources and bring Texas in line with other states that have moved to a single plate requirement. (Several states have bills pending that call for issuing only one vehicle license plate.)

Legislation to impose a vehicle miles traveled (VMT) tax on state motorists has been introduced in Texas. Under the bill, the amount of the VMT tax would vary by vehicle type. Vehicles weighing 10,000 lbs or less would be taxed at 1.25 cents per miles and electric vehicles at .75 cents per mile. The tax would be offset by a motor fuels tax credit, which would be determined by using the vehicle's VMT and fuel economy data, such as fuel economy goes up, the credit decreases to ensure vehicles paying less in fuel taxes get a smaller credit and pay more in VMT. The actual VMT would be measured using an annual odometer inspection.

Legislation has been introduced to add an additional fee of \$50 to the vehicle registration and renewal fees. The extra \$50 would be deposited in the Texas Mobility Fund. The measure would take effect Sept. 1, 2013, if the constitutional amendment proposed by the Legislature to allow the imposition of an additional motor vehicle registration is approved by the voters.

VIRGINIA

Legislation containing a SEMA drafted amendment to totally exempt from the license tax all vehicles and parts cars stored on private property for the purpose of restoration or repair has been approved by the state Legislature and sent to the Gov. for his signature. Governor Bob McDonnell has signed the legislation.

WASHINGTON

A state lawmaker apologized for saying bicyclists contribute to climate change with their heavy breathing. Rep. Ed Orcutt apologized for writing in an e-mail that "the act of riding a bicycle results in greater emissions of carbon dioxide from the rider." He was responding to a bike store owner who was upset about a proposed fee on bicycle purchases. (If that is true, will bicycle riders need to get a smog check?)

WEST VIRGINIA

SEMA sponsored legislation has been introduced to exempt motor vehicles, including automobiles, motorcycles, airplanes, trucks and tractors, older than 25 years from personal property tax. Under the bill, these automobiles, motorcycles, and trucks would need to display valid current antique licenses and could not be used for daily transportation.

WYOMING

Legislation awaiting Gov. Mead's signature would let drivers use their smart phones to prove they are insured if they are pulled over or involved in a crash. Currently, state law requires drivers to show a written form of proof of insurance, the Wyoming Tribute reports.

Work has started on construction of a bridge over the Snake River. When the bridge is completed, it will connect the west bank of the Snake River to Jackson by a non-motorized pathway.

WHAATSUUP HERE AND THERE

Are you Happy?? According to the 2012 Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, Lincoln Nebraska is the happiest place in the USA. The capitol city topped 188 other metropolitan areas to finish first in the index.

The Statute of Liberty closed to visitors since Superstorm Sandy hit in late October, will reopen by Independence Day, the National Park Service announced in March.

The great Platte River Road Archway near Kearey, has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The archway spans Interstate 80. Its historical exhibit covering the Oregon, Mormon and California trails and honors the nation's highway systems and railroads. In 2002, bondholders refinanced its original \$60 million debt, reducing it to \$22 million to be repaid by 2013.

According to an article in the Kansas City Star newspaper, the EPA is doing a very poor job on keeping the public informed on car mileage claims. The EPA will not release specifics about the problems involving auto mileage estimates from Kia and Hyundai. The EPA also would not comment when asked about how well the annual fuel economy standards are overseen by the government these days. Environment groups had to exert pressure on the EPA for many months to even do its job and check into complaints about lower than expected mileage for certain vehicles.

Traffic offenders in De Soto Count, Mississippi have worked off \$3,750 in fines in a three month period by picking up litter and performing landscaping duties. The Commercial Appeal in Memphis reports that Justice Court Judge Ken Adams offered people who "absolutely cannot pay their traffic fines", the option of working in Old Town. Each violator collects four bags of trash at a time. Justice Network, a probation company, supervises the work program and is paid \$35 a month by the offenders. (Sounds like a good program)!

About 8% of workers in the U.S. have commutes of an hour or more, and nearly 600,000 full time workers endure "megacommuters" of at least an hour and a half and 50 miles, according to new U.S.

Census data on commuting. The nation's average daily one-way commute is 25.5 minutes, and 4.3 % of the nation's workers work from home. On an average, it took longer to get to work in 2011 than it did in 2000. The average travel time for workers who commute to work by public transit is higher than that of workers who use other modes. Using public transit is a necessity for some workers, but other simply choose the longer travel time over sitting in traffic. (Information from article by Larry Copeland of USA Today).

Eight power plants in several Michigan cities are burning millions of old tires each year to make electricity, promoting pollution concerns, the Detroit Free Press has reported. Dept. of Environmental Quality data suggests that over 20 years, 31 million discarded tires have been reduced to 2 million and more than 200 known illegal tire dumps have been cut to 55.

Telsa Motor Company, which is having a dispute with the New York Times over an article that was unfavorable to their automobiles, has lost a lawsuit against the BBC over a program that criticized its Roadster vehicle. BBC TV host Jerry Clarkson claimed that the car would only run for 55miles between charges, far less than advertised. Tesla had sued in 2011, but lost the case, but appealed the decision loosing the case again.

A recent survey shows that school bus cameras give passing drivers a bad mark. More and more school districts are adding cameras to their buses to nab motorists who disregard the swing out stop sign or stop arm. Video cameras take photos of the violators who then receive a ticket in the mail. In Georgia, the fines range from \$300 to \$1,000. The amount of the fines range from state to state.

Larry Becker

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