

OLD CARS AND NEW LAWS

PLUS WHATS UP HERE AND THERE



By Larry Becker

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.

Tesla Motors has announced plans to build a huge plant to make electric batteries, so big that Tesla CEO Elon Musk called it the “gigafactory.” Tesla is looking at sites in several states for the location of the factory.

Do you know why they are called pick-ups? Ford, who made the first pick-up trucks, shipped them to dealers in crates that new owners had to assemble using the crates as the beds of the truck. The new owners had to go to the dealers to get them, thus they had to ‘pick-up” the trucks. (Thanks to Pat & Chuck Church of Car Coddlers of Ohio for the information.)

A report by USA Today say the range of electric vehicles can be greatly reduced by up to 57 percent, depending on the temperature outside according to AAA. The AAA Automotive Research Center in Southern California found that the average range of an electric car dropped 57

percent in very cold weather – 20 degrees Fahrenheit – and 33 percent in extreme heat at temperatures of 95 degrees or more.

The severe winter storms have damaged roads and streets in many states and cities and will cost millions to repair. NBC reports that the city of Toledo has over 30,000 potholes to repair. Many states say they have spent nearly all of their total budget on sanding the roads

ALABAMA

City crews in Tuscaloosa are installing more red light cameras at busy intersections, and the city engineer said more of them could be up and running within a month.

ARIZONA

A 3.5 mile stretch of a popular street in northern Arizona highway is scheduled to be closed from late May to early July for repaving and repairs. The switchback portion of 89A in the north end of Oak Creek Canyon between Sedona and Flagstaff will be closed from Memorial Day to July 4th.

ARKANSAS

Construction of a portion of the planned Bella Vista Bypass near Little Rock is the first project to be funded under a sales tax approved by voters in 2012.

CALIFORNIA

A California appeals court says it is legal for drivers to read a map on their handheld cellphone while behind the wheel. In their explanation the judges say that the law prohibiting people from talking on their cellphones without a hands-free device doesn't apply to looking at maps on cellphones.

More problems for the new sections of the San Francisco/Oakland Bay Bridge! The CHP has opened an administrative investigation into the handling of welding problems that affected some sections of the bridge.

Visitors to Yosemite National Park will no longer be able to leave their cars on the roadside while stopping at the Tuolumne River to explore nearby meadows and admire surrounding mountain peaks, under a plan released March 13th. The plan will create parking space off-road and put cars out of view where it is safe for visitors and protects nature. About 550 cars crowd both sides of the road along the river, officials say.

Sen. Bill Monning has introduced a bill (SB 994) that will let consumers see what data their cars emit and decide with whom they want to share the information. Computers have evolved beyond a simple conveyance of steel and rubber into sophisticated data transmitters, capturing driver statistics that can include where and how fast a person drives, the number of passengers in a car and the road tunes a driver is playing and other information. Currently car manufacturers are the near –exclusive keepers of much of the data cars create. Backers of Sen. Monning’s bill, u say that information to point cars in need of repairs toward affiliated dealers. In some states the data can be used to set auto insurance rates. At present, manufacturers do not have to notify the vehicle owner if they release it.

CALTRANS plans to begin a lengthy project this spring to raise the vertical clearance of nine Interstate 80 overcrossings in Placer County. Eight vehicle bridges and one railroad trestle between Loomis and Colfax will be affected by the work, which will continue through fall 2015, involving freeway closures and detours. The purpose of the projects is to meet current standards for interstate commerce and national security.

COLORADO

State lawmakers are keeping their special license plates after all. A proposal to eliminate the plates over concern lawmakers don’t get some traffic tickets, has failed to advance.

D.C. WASHINGTON

The National Park Service is working to reopen the Washington Monument in May after a lengthy closure to repair damage from an earthquake in 2011. No specific date has been set yet.

Mayor Gray is demanding that the Secret Service change protocol for visiting dignitaries to alleviate traffic gridlock downtown because of street closures, the Washington Post reports.

DELAWARE

The state Dept. of Transportation has budgeted 46.3 million for road patching this fiscal year, but only has \$2.2 million left. Crews have already filled about 4,400 potholes.

A new DMV call center has opened at an EZ Pass service center. The 85 DMV workers will serve about 1,000 people a month.

FLORIDA

After 5 years, construction along Interstate 595 is finally nearing completion with reversible express lanes set to open the end of March. Major repairs to collapsed drainage pipes under Palm Bay Road near Melbourne will shut down a section of that busy road for about 2 ½ months , the Florida Today newspaper reports The intersection handles an average of 70,000 vehicles per weekday.

ILLINOIS

All Dept. of Transportation crews will fill potholes on arterial streets on Mondays and Fridays for the next several weeks. City crews have filled about 240,000 potholes so far.

In the third week of March, construction began on an elevated path meant to help bikers and walkers safely navigate a heavily used area near Chicago's Navy Pier. The 15-foot wide elevated path will be part of the city's 18-mile Lakefront Trail.

MICHIGAN

Restructuring consultants in Detroit have recommended that the city increase parking fines for the first time since 2001 and crack down harder on people who don't pay to boost revenue. CEO Gary Brown said the changes would bring in an additional \$6 million a year.

MISSISSIPPI

Highway patrol officers called on lawmakers to spend millions of dollars to train more troopers and buy new cars and safety equipment, including bullet-proof vests.

NEVADA

A proposal to build a 15-mile bypass around Boulder City was put on hold after researchers found naturally occurring asbestos in the area.

State police and transportation officials have launched a drive to tell Nevada motorists to pay attention to red lights and stop signs. The Nevada Highway Patrol and Dept. of Transportation said 371 people died and more than 3,000 were seriously injured in crashes at intersections from 2008 to 2012.

The Nevada DMV has launched the Dash Pass system. The system allows DMV patrons to use their phones or the Internet to place themselves in a virtual line, and then come to the office when their turn approaches.

City crews in Reno are lowering the new parking meters as they are too tall for short people. In March, the city installed new "smart meters" that accept both credit cards and coins at an expense of \$391,000

NORTH CAROLINA

Qualified military veterans may now carry the designation of veteran on their driver's license and ID cards. Veterans requested the designation to help them obtain military discounts.

The state has launched its Litter Free NC campaign to end litter on roads, and save cleanup costs. Among the efforts, Motorists can call the Highway Patrol at “star H-P” on their cellphones to report littering or trucks with unsecured loads.

OHIO

From March 20th 2013 through Feb. 28, 2014, 273 citations were issued for texting or using a cellphone while driving in violation of a new state law, according to data from the state Highway Patrol. Of those, 43 were issued to drivers under 18.

NBC news reports that Toledo has over 30,000 potholes caused by winter storms.

SOUTH CAROLINA

A bill on Gov. Haley’s desk would allow drivers to use their Smartphone in a traffic stop to prove they have insurance.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Toll FREE ??? The Minnehaha County Commissioners approved \$650,000 to replace a 1930-era bridge that serves only three vehicles a month, the Argus Leader reports.

WEST VIRGINIA

The West Virginia Dept. of Highways plans to replace the decks of four bridges on U.S. 50 and two others near Clarksburg. The \$5.8 million project is scheduled to begin May 1st.



WHAATSUUPHERE AND THERE

Post-Sticker Shock!! If you are driving a recently purchased midsize sedan such as a Toyota Camry or Ford Fusion and drive 15,000 miles per year, it will cost you \$750 a month on an average or \$9,160 a year, on gas, maintenance, tires, full-coverage insurance, license and registration costs, depreciation and finance charges according to an annual report by AAA on driving cost in 2013. The survey was based on buying a new car and driving it for 5 years and 75,000. Costs for SUVs are higher. If you have a vehicle that costs more than a Camry or Fusion, your yearly costs will also be more.

Ferry service between Maine and Nova Scotia is expected to begin May 1st. The service will be between Portland, Maine and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. The Great Smokey Mountain National Park needs volunteers to assist visitors near the Oconaluftee Visitor Center in North Carolina from April through mid-November.

Still lots of flack about the more than 1 million GM cars with a deadly ignition switch defect and that GM knew of the problem and did nothing about the problem. GM is now offering the vehicle owners free loaner cars while theirs are repaired and \$500 towards the purchase of a new GM vehicle.

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