

CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL VEHICLE ASSOCIATION, INC.

OLD CARS AND NEW LAWS PLUS WHAT'S UP HERE AND THERE



by Larry Becker

In the first week of July, Daimler Motor Company tested a self-driving truck in Germany. Daimler says the truck driver of the future will operate the truck via his tablet. The driver will still need to start the vehicle and enter the flow of traffic. Once the future truck reaches 50 mph, a prompt in the system asks the driver to activate what is called the Highway Pilot, which effectively takes over control of the vehicle.

Many states are upgrading their rest stops. They are not the old rest stops. They're not real rest stops at all, in the sense of a traditional interstate highway rest stop, where one can find a restroom and maybe, vending machines. They are now called travel plazas or service plazas only along toll roads and include shops, restaurants, Wi Fi and even roadside produce stands. Many of the plaza upgrades are usually done in public-private partnership with vendors who lease the plazas. The federal government has prohibited the commercialization of the right-of-way, including rest stops and recreation areas, along the Interstate System since 1956, according to the Federal Highway Administration. A year later, 2102 miles of toll roads in 15 states were added and were exempted from those restrictions. In 1982, the restriction was modified to allow vending machines in recreation areas located on the interstate right-of-way.

Something we all knew! More than two-thirds of U.S. roadways are in need of repair and the poor conditions of the nation's transportation network results in billions in extra costs, according to a White House report.

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

ALABAMA

The city of Opelika has issued more than 7,500 tickets since installing cameras at four intersections last year.

ALASKA

State transportation officials said radar-activated speed limit signs have been installed along highway safety corridors in the state. According to officials, the signs are not used for enforcement and they do not take photos.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas highway officials have said that they want to pave the state's last gravel highway. Highway spokesman Randy Orr said there is about 8 miles of gravel road from Crawford County into Washington County. He said the road, Arkansas 220, is the only unpaved state highway.

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco's iconic Golden Gate Bridge moved a step closer to getting a suicide barrier after bridge officials, on June 26th, approved a \$76 million funding package for a net system that would prevent people from jumping to their deaths.

CONNECTICUT

State transportation officials are disputing a White House report that said Connecticut's public works are in dire condition. State Transportation spokesman Kevin Nursick said the agency is paving 264 miles of roads this year at a cost of \$71.5 million.

D.C. WASHINGTON

The Dept. of Transportation will issue \$100 tickets to cars illegally parked on streetcar tracks. The enforcement clears the way for testing of the streetcar system for the remainder of the summer. Streetcar service will begin by the end of summer.

DELAWARE

Weekend tolls on state Rt.1 will increase from \$2to \$3 effective August 1st for passenger vehicles. The new toll revenue will be used to pay for paving and other transportation projects.

HAWAII

Changes in state law for use of hand held cellphones while driving took effect on July 1st. The fine has increased to \$297.

ILLINOIS

The Dept. of Transportation said red street signs with the Illinois State University logo in the city of Normal must come down from Main Street. They violate Federal Highway Administration rules requiring green back grounds.

A bill that would have provided single license plates for antique vehicles has died when the legislature adjourned for the year.

KANSAS

The Kansas Turnpike Authority is considering building a scenic outlook along Interstate 35 to allow travelers to stop and appreciate the Flint Hills. Construction is scheduled to begin in spring of 2015.

A mile long walking and biking trail in Pittsburg, Kansas is among 20 other projects that will share \$11.5 in federal transportation funding.

KENTUCKY

Gov. Beshear has postponed \$185 million worth of construction projects due to a shortfall in the federal Highway Trust Fund.

LOUISIANA

Effective August 1st in Monroe, school bus drivers are prohibited from picking up or dropping off students in locations where they would have to cross traffic lanes.

MARYLAND

On June 1st, a tax hike of less than half a penny a gallon took effect. The next scheduled gas tax increase will be in January, when it is set to rise 3.5 cents.

MICHIGAN

The Mackinac Bridge Authority delayed its next planned toll increase until 2016, following improved financial projections and maintenance aimed at extending the life of the 56-year-old bridge connecting the state's upper and lower peninsulas. The toll is \$4 a trip for passenger vehicles.

NEBRASKA

Veterans now have the option to display their status on Nebraska driver's licenses and state ID cards. This could make it easier for veterans to show that they qualify for special offers and discounts.

Installing a credit card reading system for parking meters in Lincoln could cost the city about \$1 million.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

As of July 1st, 2015, it will be illegal to use a handheld cellphone while driving in the state.

The state Dept. of Transportation ended collections as of July 17 on Exit 12 on the Everett Turnpike. Toll equipment at Exit 12 and signs eventually will be removed. The elimination of the toll booths was included in the gas tax bill passed by the legislature this year.

Drivers are being encouraged to seek alternate routes as work begins to replace a bridge between New Hampshire and Vermont. The state Dept. of Transportation said construction associated with the replacement of Route 4 over the Connecticut River has begun and will continue until October.

The New Hampshire Dept. of Motor Vehicles isn't issuing new vanity license plates while it reviews the wording of proposed new rules governing what the plates can say. But on July 14th, the state DMV said it hopes to start processing more than 2,000 vanity plate applications in the next sixty days. They were put on hold after a court ruling. A interim rule effective July 14th prohibits language that relates to sex, violence, drugs, gangs or bigotry.

Work has started on a nearly \$9 million dollar bridge reconstruction project near Lebanon. The span crosses the Mascoma River at the intersection of Routes 4 and 4A.

NEW JERSEY

The Turnpike Authority approved a \$36.2 million dollar project to begin in late summer to add a third lane to the Garden State Parkway in Atlantic County.

The city of Hoboken has modified a policy that immediately gave illegally parked vehicles the boot. Now, motorists will get tickets notifying them to move the vehicle within 72 hours. After that, the vehicles could be booted or towed.

PENNSYLVANIA

Speed limits on more than 100 miles of two interstates maintained by Pennsylvania's highway dept. will to 70 mph for the first time. Sections include 88 miles of Interstate 80 in northern Pennsylvania's Clearfield and Clinton counties, and 21 miles of Interstate 380, in Lacawanna and Monroe counties.

MINNESOTA

Getting caught speeding through a road construction work zone is going to cost you more. As of August 1st, the offense comes with a \$330 fine, plus the normal traffic ticket surcharges.

NORTH CAROLINA

The swing bridge in Sunset Beach that motorists once used to cross to reach Sunset Blvd from the North Carolina mainland is now sitting in a park as part of a museum that's open to the public.

NORTH DAKOTA

The Legislature's Budget Section approved a new design for license plates unveiled by the state Transportation Dept. The new plate has a blue sky, a butte and a bison. It has two wheat sheaves instead of one and the state's tourism slogan, "Discover the Spirit," has been replaced by "Legendary."

RHODE ISLAND

Legislation to authorize the state DMV to issue replica year of manufacture plates for antique vehicles has been signed into law by Gov. Lincoln Chaffe. In Rhode Island, an antique motor car is any motor vehicle which is more than 25 years old.

SOUTH CAROLINA

A bill which would have increased vehicle registration fees died when the legislature adjourned for 2014.

The Highway Patrol is seeing a significant increase in deaths of people riding mopeds – 18 in the first six months, compared to 7 in the first half of 2013.

TEXAS

Officials plan to eliminate dozens of specialty license plates, such as ones for the Texas Motor Speedway and Dr Pepper, because they've failed to generate enough interest.

VERMONT

On June 1st, Vermont became the seventh state in the USA to ban smoking in cars carrying children and the sixth to outlaw smoking in hotel rooms.

WASHINGTON

State highway officials have temporarily closed the 60-year-old State Route 241 bridge that provides a prime connection to Mabton. Engineers fear “a catastrophic failure” if weight restrictions aren't followed.

WEST VIRGINIA

Fairmont Officials have closed the Fourth Street Bridge following a state inspection that found deficiencies. City Manager Jay Rogers told the City Council that temporary barricades and barrels have been put in place to block access to the bridge. Concrete barriers and a fence were installed on July 11th.

A bridge has been renamed in honor of a soldier who was killed in the Vietnam war. The former Becky's Creek Bridge near Huntsville is now known as U.S. Army Sgt. Cecil W. Kittle Memorial Bridge.

WYOMING

Dept. of Transportation crews have begun changing traffic limit signs on June 1st from 75 mph to 80 mph on sections of Interstates 25, 80 and 90. The highway limits are increased in areas where WYDOT has deemed it safe.

WHAATSUUP HERE AND THERE

Sport-utility vehicles have overtaken sedans in the U.S. market share according to Bloomberg News. SUVs, including crossovers, account for 36.5 percent of U.S. new vehicle registrations this year through May, compared with 34.5 percent for sedans states HIS Automotive, a research group.

OLDER DRIVERS! In 1982 there 10 million drivers age 70 or older, 15 million in 1992, 20 million in 2002 and 23 million in 2012 according to the Federal Highway Administration and insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

New Mexico forest officials have decided to limit visiting hours at the Catwalk National Recreation Areas during the summer monsoon season. The reason is afternoon thunder storms and heavy rain could contribute to flooding along Highway 174. As of July 1st, the area will be open from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily.

SMARTS! An attempted carjacking in Seattle failed when the three carjackers found that they were in a vehicle with a manual transmission and none of them knew how to drive a stick shift.

The most "plugged in" car cities are, Honolulu- 1.7%, Seattle – 1.8%, Atlanta – 2.2% and San Francisco-3.3%.

Some large companies and some government agencies have advised their employees not to use on-line ride sharing services while traveling on official business as they feel that the services are not fully regulated and do not protect users to the same extents as commercially regulated business and do not carry adequate liability insurance. California is just one of the states considering strict rules regulating so called “on-line” rideshare companies. Most of the companies operate under city and county ordinances.

Portland Oregon’s TriMet’s test of an all electric bus fizzled when the bus was taken out of service because the plug-in-vehicle wouldn’t take a charge.

GET A ROOM! Panama Beach Florida is cracking down on people who illegally camp on the beach overnight. Police recently cited 11 people for violating the ban on overnight camping.

Good News! The town of Jackson, Wyoming, has decided to end the ban on people sleeping in cars. They must have realized that we old timers need to take a short nap during the day.

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