

# **OLD CARS AND NEW LAWS**

## **PLUS WHAT'S UP HERE AND THERE**



*Larry Becker*

*The Insurance Institute for highway Safety released the following information on red-light running: in 2012, 683 people were killed in crashes, and 133,000 people were injured. As of June, 2015, 447 communities have red-light camera programs.*

*California no longer has the honor of having the highest gasoline tax in the U.S., but has dropped to #4. Pennsylvania has the nation's highest at 61.6 cents per gallon, followed by #2, New York at 45.99 cents per gallon, #3, Hawaii at 45.10 cents per gallon and California at 42.35 cents per gallon. The federal government is considering raising the federal taxes on gasoline to help with roads and bridges that need repair.*

*Heavy Traffic? It was estimated that 41.9 million Americans drove more than 50 miles over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend.*

*Lobbyists are pressuring Congress to allow the trucking industry to use larger & longer trucks that haul more cargo. The industry wants to pre-empt the laws of 39 states, forcing them to allow double long trailers that are 33 feet long rather the current maximum of 28 feet. The new combination would be 84 feet long-like trains on our highways.*

*According to the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company & Rubber Manufactures Association, two-thirds of Americans do not check the pressure on their spare tire.*

*In an auto safety test, two expert hackers hired by Wired magazine, were able to hack into computers in a car, take control of the transmission and brakes, radios and horns. The average modern car can have up to 100 onboard computers, known as electronic control units which control various parts of the car. These ECCs are all interconnected and communicate with each other, but some communicate with outside networks, making the system vulnerable to a remote attack. A few of these systems are; Bluletooth, radio data systems, cellular and WIFI, adaptive cruise control, collision prevention, and lane-keep assist, just to name a few. Auto makers are scrambling to find fixes for these problems.*

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

## **ALABAMA**

**The rate of deaths of motor vehicle occupants in the state is 13.7 (per100,000 population), while the national average is 7, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The state Dept. of Public Health attributes the higher rate to a large segment of the population living in rural areas where hospitals are few and far between.**

## **CALIFORNIA**

**DMV states that half of the driver's licenses California has issued in 2015 have gone to residents living in the country illegally, reflecting the success of a new law extending licenses regardless of residency status. Of the 759,000 total licenses the DMV has issued this year, 379,000 or 52% have gone to undocumented immigrants.**

**The Waldo Tunnel, sometimes referred to as the Rainbow Tunnel in San Francisco, has been renamed the Robin Williams Tunnel in honor of Robin Williams.**

**The latest models of Google's driverless cars are cruising the streets near the internet company's Silicon Valley headquarters as an ambitious project to transform the way people get around into its next phase. The cars had previously been confined to a private area on a former Air Force base for testing.**

**The Reasons Foundation's 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Highway Report states that California is home to one of the worst highway systems in the nation, especially in the San Francisco Bay & Los Angeles Areas. The report ranks California second to last in both the condition of urban interstates and in maintenance, even though California has some of the highest gasoline taxes in the nation at 42 cents a gallon. According to a report released last fall by the legislative Analyst's Office, cap and trade regulations will probably lead to an additional 13 to 20 cents-a-gallon increase by 2020. 100% of the sales tax on diesel fuel is currently diverted to public transit projects. If we spent this money on our road infrastructure instead, we would have an additional \$620 million each year for repairs. Nearly \$1 billion is collected annually from vehicle weight fee programs, but this money goes into the general fund. (Information from article by Jay Obernolte of the Los Angeles Times on July 17, 2015).**

**A bill in the Assembly that would legalize lane-splitting has been withdrawn by the author for additional study. The study involves the transportation dept., Highway Patrol and motorcycle groups.**

**Legislation allowing carpool services like Uber and Lyft to use carpool lanes has been delayed until next year for additional study by a committee.**

**A Los Angeles assemblyman, Mike Gatto, is pushing a "Yellow Alert" bill that would authorize the California Highway Patrol to post an alert on freeway message boards with the description of a car involved in a hit-and-run, if the driver left a seriously injured person behind. CHP has opposed the bill saying that another alert could dilute the impact of the AMBER Alert system- a system that gives drivers information about child abduction.**

**Gatto has amended his bill to give the CHP latitude in choosing when to post a Yellow Alert. If the bill pass , California would have four freeway alert notices.**

## **GEORGIA**

**Lawyers for the Ku Klux Klan argue that the group should be able to adopt and clean a 1-mile portion of a road, the Journal-Constitution reports. In 2012, transportation officials rejected the white supremacy group's request, and the KKK sued.**

## **HAWAII**

**Kauai police have issued 539 tickets to people using cellphones while driving, an offense that can come with a \$300 fine for first-time offenders.**

**A \$3.5 million project that would have removed Albizia trees along Kuhio Highway has been delayed until further notice.**

## **INDIANA**

**An amendment to a state law bans the use of cellphones for all drivers under age 21. Many young people were not aware of the law until they were cited for cellphone use while driving.**

## **KANSAS**

**State transportation officials are awaiting the results of testing along a 5-mile stretch of U.S. 69. The Joplin Globe reported that about half a mile of U.S. 69 is over an abandoned mine.**

## **MISSISSIPPI**

**The city of Corinth expects to spend \$4 million on streets and bridge improvements for a primary corridor to the Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center.**

*In Natchez, crews have installed the last of concrete barriers in preparation for converting the south Mississippi River Bridge to -two way traffic. Crews have replaced pins and links on the westbound bridge, which was built in 1940.*

## **MISSOURI**

*Northwest Missouri has seen a rise in fatal wrecks, and authorities are alarmed because most of the victims were not wearing seat belts. A Missouri State Highway trooper for the area reports a 54% increase in vehicle fatalities for the year compared to the previous year.*

## **NEVADA**

*Under a new law, drivers who ignore roadblocks set up because of flooding could be liable for the expense of the emergency response to get them out of trouble or the cost of having their vehicle removed.*

*The price of driver's licenses was increased by \$1 as of July 1<sup>st</sup>.*

*Gov. Sandoval has announced his intent to establish a Nevada Electric Highway that would enable electric cars on U.S. 95 from Las Vegas to Reno and back. Fast recharging stations would be installed at Fallon, Hawthorne, Tonopah, Beatty and Indian Springs with a range of about 100 miles between each station. The electric fuel from each site would be available to electric car motorists at no cost, funded through government grants and a shared investment program by electric utility NV Energy.*

## **NEW HAMPSHIRE**

*More than 200 police officers may have taken a faulty exam to re-certify them to administer DWI breath tests, but the state considers the officers certified. At least 101 DWI cases may be affected, and defense lawyers say they might be thrown out or bargained down to lesser offenses.*

## **NEW MEXICO**

*Construction on an improved road to Spaceport America, Near Las Cruces, has been delayed. County staff commissioners said surveying work for the proposed construction did not align.*

*The state DMV is having trouble delivering driver's licenses and ID cards. The agency says the delays are due to the implementation of a new computer system.*

## **NEW YORK**

*The Empire's State capital city panned to go live with its' first red-light cameras in the last two weeks of July, becoming the latest in the state to add the controversial devices.*

*A proposed cap on Uber and other for-hire vehicles in New York City has been put on ice after the \$40 billion start-up agreed to "not flood the streets" until questions about the impact on its growth on traffic can be determined.*

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

*Raleigh city leaders have a new plan to combat noise and traffic jams in the downtown area. Drivers will now be prevented from turning left on downtown streets on weekends.*

## **NORTH DAKOTA**

*The city of Mandan is considering extending the time-limit to park trailers or boats on the street in the summer. Police Chief Dennis Bullinger has asked to change a city ordinance in order to extend trailer parking from 12 to 72 hours.*

*The planned expansion to four lanes of U.S. Highway 83 bypass, near Minot, will include intersection improvements and flood protection measures. The state could begin construction as early as 2017 and complete it in about two years according to the Minot Daily News.*

## **OHIO**

*A state appeals judge has ruled that grammar is important. A lady who received a citation for parking her Ford pickup on a village street in West Jefferson for more than 24 hours, but appealed it because she pointed out that the ordinance prohibited “any motor vehicle, camper,” among other items. Village officials argued that the comma between vehicle and camper was a typo, but the judge dismissed the ticket and told the city to amend the law. (Not too clear where the coma was).*

*Less than a month after a tanker truck caught fire destroying a bridge on Interstate 70 east over a I-270 ramp, the roadway reopened on July 21<sup>st</sup>. The contractor, Shelly & Sands, received a \$240,000 bonus for completing the project early, much to be used for overtime.*

## **SOUTH DAKOTA**

*A four-mile stretch of road will be renamed Veterans Parkway despite pleas from local historians to keep it named Powder House Road.*

## **UTAH**

*Transportation officials say thousands of motorists have been cited since a tougher seat belt law went into effect. The Utah Highway Patrol estimates more than 6,000 drivers have been caught not wearing seatbelts since the law was enacted in May.*

## **WISCONSIN**

*Tavern patrons who take a safe-ride home instead of driving home drunk would get a free, one-time overnight parking pass under a proposal by Green Bay Alderman Mark Steurer.*

## **WASHINGTON**

*A school district in Pierce County has issued an average of 30 citations a month since it mounted cameras on school buses last winter to catch drivers illegally passing buses. The News Tribune reports that the*

*violations costing \$394 each, have resulted in more than \$48,000 in additional revenue for the Bethel School District.*

## **WEST VIRGINIA**

*The city of Charleston wants to make visitors more welcome, so they have put up a sign greeting drivers on Interstate 64.*

## **WYOMING**

*If you are traveling in Laramie, the middle lanes on some streets were recently marked with two partial triangles stacked over a bicycle symbol. The symbol is called a shared-lane marking, where bicyclists and motorists occupy the same lane. Violations for not sharing the lane with bicyclists can be expensive.*

# **WHAT SUUP HERE AND THERE**

*Traditional automakers like Mercedes and Toyota already make vehicles equipped with systems that keep cars within their lanes, apply the brakes or park themselves. Their plan is to gradually automate more functions of driving until, perhaps by 2025, some cars will be fully capable of driving themselves. But Google, Alibaba, Baidu and other tech companies are aggressively working on their own self-driving, vehicles, and could leapfrog the car industry in bringing them to market. Google, for instance, promises to deliver a self-driving car in five years. Tesla says they may have a self-driving vehicle available for sales very soon. Tesla says it's adding a new "Ludicrous Mode" to high-performance versions of its Model S electric car. The upgrade will add \$10,000 more to the cost for new buyers of the Model S. Present Model S owners may purchase the upgrade for only \$3,000.*

*Tesla CEO Elon Musk said that self-driving versions of his electric cars could come to market in about three years. He said the first version of the "autopilot", which assists with steering, is due to the first customers about August or September.*

*Jerry Powers of Clio, Michigan, has been working six years to restore his 1935 Packard Eight Club sedan, one of only 4,004 Packard Eight luxury models manufactured in 1936.*

*Need a buddy? Gas Buddy uses the GPS location of your smart phone to find the prices for local gas stations, based on crowd-funding information. The app lists more than 1 billion gas prices reported in more than 550 metro areas throughout the U.S. and Canada. Gas Buddy estimates that it had 50 million downloads in the third week of July*

*Researchers at Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory say that electric taxicabs would greatly help reduce greenhouse gases as much as 63% to 83%.*

*Hertz car rentals had a new policy as of July 15<sup>th</sup>. If you rent a car and drive it less than 75 miles, Hertz will automatically bill you \$13.99 for fuel unless you show a receipt proving you filled the tank. Most other car rental companies have changed their policies concerning fuel. They vary by company.*

*Google states that their self-driving cars have been involved in only 14 minor accidents over 1.8 million miles of testing.*

*Chrysler has been fined \$105 million by the National Traffic Safety Administration for shortcomings in reporting defects and inadequate recall procedures. In addition, Fiat, Chrysler will also be require to buy back some vehicles, offer incentives for owners to participate in recall repairs, and be subject to independent monitoring to ensure its safety programs continues to meet minimum standards.*

*Houston Texas is North America's fastest growing destination city according to MasterCard's 2015 Global Destination Cities Index.*

*UBER and other ride sharing companies are fighting with cities and states over rules concerning them. Most states and cities have enacted laws that regulate them, requiring them to carry proper liability insurance and be licensed to operate. Many ride-sharing companies*

*say their drivers are independent contractors, not employees.  
California courts have ruled against this claim.*



*Larry Becker*

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