

CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL VEHICLE ASSOCIATION, INC

OLD CARS AND NEW LAWS PLUS WHATSUP HERE AND THERE



Larry Becker

Many car rental companies are offering toll-collection devices on their rentals. The devices keep track of the required tolls and bill the driver when they return the vehicle. The rental companies are charging a convenience fee for using the device. Most rental companies access the daily fee even on days that renters don't use a toll road. Renters are also assessed the cash price of the toll, which is often higher than the discount price paid by the account holder of the collection devices. There have been several class action suites against car rental companies in several states for the extra fees charged. In one settlement, Hertz, toll-collection partner American Traffic Solutions and its Plate Pass division agreed to establish an \$11 million fund to pay renters who claim toll fees and charges weren't adequately disclosed.

According to AAA, more than 200,000 U.S. commuters have chosen a motorcycle or scooter for their daily ride. (That's a good way to save on gas)

An article by Larry Copeland of USA Today newspaper states that the number of drivers who reported using their cellphones to access the

Internet while behind the wheel continues to rise, to a point where nearly one in four drivers are going online while driving , according to a national survey that has tracked the potentially deadly practice over the past five years. The percentage of drivers who said they do so has nearly doubled, from 13% in 2009 to 24% in 2013. Among drivers ages 18-29, that number rose from 29% to 40%.

New tour buses and buses that provide service between cities must be equipped with seat belts starting in late 2016 under a new federal rule issued on Nov. 20th. This new rule applies to new buses, not school buses or public transit buses. It does not require buses now in use to be fitted with seat belts.

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

Need a job? The state's 200th birthday is coming up in 2019, and the Bicentennial Commission is accepting applications for the position of executive director. The job begins Jan. 1. That gives you 5 years to plan the event.

ALASKA

Going to Alaska next year? The Alaska Dept. of Transportation said it's going to be a busy construction season next year in interior Alaska. Six sections of the Parks Highway between Fairbanks and Anchorage will see renovations.

ARIZONA

The Arizona dept. of public safety plans to crack down on drivers who are distracted while texting or otherwise using their cellphones despite a specific state law banning the practice. The Arizona daily Star reports

that enforcement will begin in January and be accompanied by an education program.

A two-mile stretch of Interstate 10 near Picacho Peak is the state's deadliest corridor for dust storms, according to state data analyzed by the Arizona Daily Star. More than 50 vehicles have crashed since 2000, resulting in at least eight deaths.

ARKANSAS

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Dept. has received initial approval to designate two sections of highway in western Arkansas as Interstate 49. Plans have been in the works for 30 years for a 1,700-mile corridor that would connect the Gulf of Mexico with Canada and run through western Arkansas.

CALIFORNIA

California motorist's vehicle license fee would more than double under a proposed November 2014 ballot measure to raise an estimated \$3 billion a year for the state's ailing road system. The constitutional amendment would phase in a surcharge to the fee charging motorists an extra 1% of the vehicle's value each year. The fee has been .65% since the late 1990s, with a temporary increase to 1.15% from May 2009 through June 2011. As an example, someone who buys a 2016 Honda Civic for \$16,000 this year will pay a \$52 license fee plus added city and county taxes in 2018. Under the new proposal, that fee would be \$130 plus additional fees in 2018.

Californians are driving more miles, but using less gas due to increased gas mileage in newer vehicles. California's 22 million drivers and 27.5 million cars and light trucks now rack up more than 300 billion vehicle-miles of travel each year. (Information from Dan Walters article in the Sacramento Bee on October 28, 2013).

On Oct. 30th, State Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson and advocates announced the filing of a proposed ballot measure that would impose new restrictions on auto sales. The proposal would bar dealers from selling or

leasing vehicles that have been targeted by safety recalls unless they have been repaired. The proposal also would tighten rules around car purchases, prohibiting dealers from changing markups on loans and from altering contracts after a sale has been made, and limit the New Motor Vehicle Board ability to overrule the Ca. DMV decisions disciplining dealers for consumer fraud.

CONNECTICUT

Motorists who are caught for a second or third time texting or talking on hand held cellphones are dodging tickets because police don't have the technology to easily ticket them and are using discretion in enforcing a new law, state police say. The Journal Inquirer reports that cars used by most state troopers and officers lack the technology allowing police to determine if a driver previously had been cited for a cellphone infraction.

WASHINGTON – D.C.

The City Council voted on Nov. 5th to allow undocumented immigrants to begin applying for driver's licenses next year, but their IDs would be stamped "not valid for official federal purposes," creating a two-tier system to comply with Homeland Security rules, the Washington Post reports. On Nov. 20th Mayor Vincent Gray signed a bill that would allow the DMV to issue licenses to people who can't prove their immigration status, starting May 1st unless Congress intervenes. Those licenses would also be stamped "not valid for official federal purposes".

DELAWARE

Officials say that a traffic-projection study submitted by a consulting firm in October is forcing them to rethink their approach to the long-planned U.S. 301 mainline project in New Castle County.

The city of Wilmington started installing 200 smart parking meters the second week of November. The single-space meters let drivers pay with coins, credit cards and smart cards by phone.

FLORIDA

An electric charging station will debut in early 2014 at the city hall in Melbourne as the city's second public charging location, the Florida Today reports. The superstation will fully charge a Chevy Volt in 30 minutes.

The Leon County Commission passed an ordinance requiring gas stations to use stickers with a phone number on pumps so customers with disabilities can call for help.

GEORGIA

The Dept. of Transportation will stop collecting 50-cent tolls on State Route 400 after the evening rush hour Nov 22nd. Gov. Deal announced more than a year ago, that he planned to end the tolls by December 2013.

HAWAII

The Honolulu police dept. will be setting up checkpoints for impaired driving during the upcoming holiday season, from Friday Nov. 30th through Dec. 31st.

ILLINOIS

Immigrants living in Illinois who entered the U.S. illegally may begin applying for an Illinois driver's license in December. Secretary of State Jesse White said a pilot program will begin at four state driver service facilities and roll out at 21 other locations in January.

IOWA

The Iowa State Police have purchased a GPS system that lets a trooper track a suspect vehicle instead of giving dangerous chase. Patrol spokesman Sgt. Scott Bright told the Des Moines Register that at present only one state police car is equipped with the StarChase system but that more could be coming.

KANSAS

A highway project linking Interstate 70 north of Lawrence with Kansas 10 east of Lawrence has begun, nearly two decades after a portion of the road was completed.

LOUISIANA

The city parish government voted on Nov. 19th on an ordinance that will allow towing of abandoned vehicles left rusting in yards and driveways. (You can expect to see a lot of flack on this proposal).

MICHIGAN

The University of Michigan has announced collaboration with government and business to make its hometown (Ann Arbor) the first American city with a shared fleet of networked, driverless vehicles by 2021. The school says its Mobile Transportation Center is pursuing the goal of having a driverless vehicle system within eight years. Researchers are conducting a street-level connected vehicle experiment that involves 3,000 residents in networked vehicles.

MISSISSIPPI

The city of Meridian is considering a proposal to issue parking decals that would allow drivers to park anywhere downtown without worrying about getting a ticket. (The proposal is not too clear).

NEBRASKA

Two men in Nebraska City have resumed their free shuttle service for patrons of bars. The service began in February but was ordered to halt in March. The Public Service Commission said tips and donations the men accepted for their Safe Ride Shuttle Service put their operation into a commercial category that required higher insurance coverage and special permits.

NORTH CAROLINA

A section of Blue Ridge Parkway closed last summer because of a 300-foot long crack, shut down the second week of November to allow work to resume on stabilizing a slope. The project is expected to be completed by late spring.

OHIO

The Dept. of Public Safety found that the 1,415 injury crashes last year in the state were attributed to drivers failing asleep, being tired or fainting., the Dayton Daily News reports. That was up 7% from 2011 and up 13% from 2010.

OKLAHOMA

Law enforcement officers will soon have the option to seize license plates from uninsured drivers and assign temporary insurance. A state law went into effect Nov. 1st. allowing the seizure, but agencies won't implement the change until January.

OREGON

Car thefts in Oregon are up 16% compared with this time last year according to a report released by state officials.

VIRGINIA

The state's DMV Connect program has processed more than 2,000 ID cards for prisoners preparing for release. Proper ID is necessary to open bank accounts, enter public building, and obtain housing.

WASHINGTON

Electric car drivers are increasingly plugging in and charging up at the state's network of public car-charging stations. Since May 2012, when the

first fast-charging station began operating in Washington as part of the West Coast Green Highway, drivers have used the state's 14 charging stations more than 10,000 times.

WEST VIRGINIA

Parkersburg City officials are working to make the city more bicycle friendly. Six bicycle trails are either complete or in the planning stages.

WISCONSIN

A proposal that would raise the speed limit on Wisconsin's interstates from 65 to 70 mph continues to race through the Legislature. The Assembly passed the bill in October. A Senate committee held hearings on the bill in October and the full Senate will vote on it in November.

WYOMING

On Nov. 4th, the roads to most destinations in Yellowstone National Park were closed to automobile travel as the park began preparing for the winter.

WHAT'S UP HERE AND THERE

In October, a driver of a Tesla Model S, near Seattle, hit debris on the road that pierced a shield and the battery pack, causing a minor fire. In November, a driver of a Tesla S on a freeway near Smyrna, Tennessee ran over a tow hitch, which hit the undercarriage of the car causing an electrical fire. The company has also been dealing with a battery shortage, but expects the problem to be resolved quickly. The problem is now being reviewed by the National Highway Safety Dept.

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