

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



By Larry Becker

The SEMA Action Network has designed a quick reference guide of the specialty license plates available state by state. It includes a map that illustrates the number of license plates required. Those looking to purchase or apply for a specialty plate are advised to check with their local DMV for guidance and paperwork. The link is: www.semaSAN.com/LicensePlates

The 6th annual Collector Car Appreciation Day is July 19th, 2015.

In early December, a 1955 Samba VW Micro bus sold for \$235,000 in Germany. It was one of only 11 Samba buses manufactured in 1955. Samba had 23 windows and nine seats. It was the most luxurious version of the series sold at that time.

U.S. speed limits are rising, especially in wide-open western states reflecting the most-harried lifestyles of a fast-paced nation. But many state officials are scratching their heads over a perilous trend they say will lead to more ghastly-fatalities. Each year, excessive speed contributes on one-third of highway deaths nationally. (Information from an article by John Glionna of the Los Angles Times)

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. New vehicle and traffic laws take effect in several states on January 1st. More information as soon as information is available.

ALABAMA

The city of Eufaula has filed a federal lawsuit to try to stop U.S. 431 through the historic district from being widened to four lanes.

ALASKA

The U.S. Forestry Service is considering raising the fee to enter the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center from \$3 to \$5 for people 16 and older. Season passes would rise from \$10 to \$15.

ARIZONA

In December, the city of Scottsdale, installed digital speed limit signs that allows them to change limits as needed.

The Dept. of Transportation has closed the road leading to the Grand Canyon's North Rim. State Route 67 will reopen in mid-May.

The public comment period on proposed fee increases at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area ends on Jan. 31st. Single vehicle entrance fees are \$15 but could double by March 2017. Camping and boating fees could also go up.

The DMV increased the wait time from one day to seven days for people who fail the written or road tests for a driver's license to retake either test. The passing rate for the written test is 50%, while the passing rate for road tests is 75%.

ARKANSAS

The state Highway Dept. has announced improvements on U.S. 278 following Monticello's First Methodist Church's request that something be done about a S-shaped stretch.

CALIFORNIA

A state appellate court has ruled that the state air quality agency has the legal right to regulate the emissions equipment on heavy trucks. The ruling also requires the ARB to order the recall and repair of engines with low-performing on-board diagnostic systems (OBD) under certain conditions.

Starting Jan. 1, gas and diesel fuel will be subject to California's cap-and-trade market, a two year-old regulatory mechanism that puts a price on carbons spewed into the atmosphere.

San Francisco Bay Area Transportation officials are proposing leaving parts of the old Bay Bridge to cut costs on demolition. Officials are considering reusing a half-dozen of the old piers near the Port of Oakland as a park and transportation depot.

The number of people making appointments to apply for a driver's license Nov. 12-30 (379,000) more than doubled from the same period a year ago (176,000). The DMV attributes the increase, at least partly, to the state's decision to start issuing licenses in January to immigrants in the county illegally.

Long-standing doubts about more than 2,000 anchor rods and bolts on the new San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge were dismissed as unfounded in a technical report on Dec. 19th. The report by the Ca. Dept. of Transportation and its consultants followed more than a year of study and testing of steel fasteners that hold up the suspension span. The research was ordered after 32 large anchor rods that secured essential seismic equipment on the eastern pier snapped under tension in March 2013, forcing a multi million-dollar retrofit. A recent 60-page report by Yen Chung, a retired metallurgist and engineer, cast doubt on Caltrans tests and conclusions and proposed replacing most of the rods and bolts. His report is endorsed by several other experts. The approved Caltrans report did not address most of Chung's technical criticisms. The company that built the bridge also built much of the Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Farm which also had serious weld cracks, but the wind farm owners forced the prime contractor to pay for the repairs, but California officials paid the contractors extra to overcome delays and problems.

On Dec. 23rd, The San Jose Mercury News reported that the Golden Gate Bridge Board approved a design for a long-debated, \$76million suicide barrier.

COLORADO

Wildlife traffic zones are being eliminated from some Colorado highways after a Dept. of Transportation study showed road signs and increased penalties did not consistently reduce wildlife crashes.

D.C. – WASHINGTON

As a cost-cutting measure, Metro plans to suspend work on the Priority Corridor Network, which is intended to make service on Metrobus faster along a 24-mile high volume traffic corridor, the Washington Post reports. It is not known how this will affect tourism this spring and summer.

Federal officials say they can't make decision on a developer's request to shut down nearly a mile of Interstate 395 for more than a year until the city Dept. of Transportation completes a comprehensive study of the potential traffic impact, the Washington Post reports.

DELWARE

On Dec. 19, in Newark, crews closed the ramp from northbound Interstate 95 to northbound Delaware 896/South College Avenue for several weeks. The closure is expected to last until mid-January, pending weather according to the Dept. of Transportation. A contractor has been repairing the two bridges carrying Delaware 896 over I-95, The News Journal reports.

GEORGIA

Optional toll lanes on a 16-mile stretch of freeway in metro Atlanta have hit a record price: \$10. The toll's cost is set on a sliding scale depending on the level of congestion on Interstate 85 northeast of Atlanta.

HAWAII

Honolulu has officially opened the first stretch of a planned network of protected bike lanes in the city's effort to create a bicycle friendly town.

IDAHO

Plans to build a 19-mile biking and walking trail between Pullman and Colfax have run into more obstacles.

INDIANA

The city of Bloomington's push to become more bicycle-friendly has earned it a rare gold rating from the League of American Bicyclists. Since 2011, the city has increased its total mileage of off-street bikeways and off-street paths by 73%. Motorists should be aware of the increased bicycle traffic when traveling in the area.

IOWA

Worsening traffic on Iowa's Interstate highways is prompting state transportation engineers to develop plans to spend more than \$1 billion to widen key stretches of roads from four to six lanes, the Des Moines Register reports.

LOUISIANA

State highway designers have settled on a preferred route for an emergency detour of Louisiana Highway 70 around the Bayou Corne area sinkhole in Assumption Parish and have sought the public's input on the plan.

MINNESOTA

A new law that takes effect Jan. 1 increases the number of hours teens must spend practicing driving before they can get their driver's license, the St. Cloud Times reports

The city of St. Cloud is looking to add more street lights in high-traffic neighborhoods is considering increasing the street light utility fund by 50 cents per month, the St. Cloud Times reports.

NEBRASKA

State business leaders are planning to push for a highway expansion project between Norfolk and Fremont. The group, "4 lanes 4 Nebraska" will focus on expanding part of U.S. Highway 275 from two lanes to four.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The New Hampshire Dept. of Transportation has held meetings to address public safety concerns about a historic bridge over Baker River near Wentworth and the possibility of re-establishing a pedestrian crossing there.

NORTH DAKOTA

Dunn County officials are exploring whether it's feasible to pave the gravel streets in the county seat of Manning. The estimated price tag is 48.1 million.

Buleigh County officials have hired a firm to design a roundabout in an effort to ease traffic congestion.

OHIO

The Ohio Supreme Court upheld municipality's use of traffic cameras again on Dec. 18th. Residents in some areas had voted to stop using the cameras.

TENNESSEE

The national Park Service will begin restoration in 2015 on a popular trail in Great Smokey Mountains National Park in response to numerous accidents. The 5-mile Alum Cave Trail will be closed Mondays from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Thursdays from May 4th to Nov. 19th for repairs.

TEXAS

Nueces County (Corpus Christi area) has pledged at least \$12 million toward a new Harbor Bridge that could cost as much as \$1billion.

UTAH

Residents who own or are considering purchasing electric vehicles can take advantage of a new state website focusing on electric cars, utahdriveselectric.org. It offers an

interactive map of charging stations, facts about the cars and a buyer's guide.

VIRGINIA

Nine new express toll lanes and 20 converted HOV lanes on Interstate 95 opened Dec. 29th, earlier than expected.

WEST VIRGINIA

A judge has overturned an ordinance that restricted heavy truck traffic in Morgantown's downtown business district.

A widening of Interstate 64 (Hunting area) to six lanes will be completed next spring.

WISCONSIN

David Hinds, who spearheaded the campaign for the "In God We Trust" license plate, said the plate is now available to the public and will benefit the state's veteran home. Hinds started fundraising for the plate in July, 2011. Gov. Walker signed a bill authorizing the plate in April.

WHAT'S UP HERE AND THERE

Motorists at the nation's busiest border crossing were accustomed to waiting hours, but now, thanks to a \$741 million construction project, they may not wait too long. Waits to enter San Diego from Tijuana, Mexico during the morning rush have dropped to less than 45 minutes from two hours since vehicle lanes were added in September. It can be less than 10 minutes during lulls, compared to a few months

ago when waits topped four hours on busy weekends. Reviews of the upgraded crossings are overwhelmingly positive. Delays have dropped between 50 percent and 75%, depending on the day and hour, according to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The crossing handles about 50,000 motorists and 25,000 pedestrians daily, more people than the two top U.S. airports for international arrivals combined – New York’s John F. Kennedy and Miami. About one of every three who cross at San Ysidro is a U.S. citizen, one is a legal resident, and the remainders are from other countries, mostly Mexico, according to the Custom and Border Protection Agency.

Many car rental firms have electronic devices that allow drivers to pass through toll entrances and the rental companies are billed. Most people do not know that rental companies add on a daily fee for use of the device and are billed by a separate company for toll fees. The daily fee is charged if the driver does not travel on toll roads or bridges. When renting a vehicle, you should tell the rental company that you do not want the electronic device and that you will pay any toll fees yourself.

Are you the guilty one?? Horse owners in Rock Springs, Wyo. have posted a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of whoever might be cutting hair off of the tails of their animals.

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