

CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL VEHICLE ASSOCIATION, Inc.
OLD CARS AND NEW LAWS
PLUS WHAATSUUP HERE AND THERE

by Larry Becker

Did you know that all American car horns beep in the tone of F?

Why are manhole covers round? Manhole covers, the lids that cover sewers are always round. The round cover rests on a lip that is smaller than the cover so it can't drop through the opening. A square or rectangular cover, no matter how it is made, could fall through.

The average number of seconds eyes are off the road while texting at 55 mph, that is enough time to cover the length of a football field.

Gasoline taxes will increase in seven states on New Year's Day and more than a dozen states will examine adjustments in 2017. Pennsylvania has the highest gas tax at 50.4 cents per gallon, but the rate will rise by 7.9 cents per gallon. The other big increase is in Michigan where the rate is 30.5 cents per gallon, but will increase 7.3 cents per gallon. Nebraska's rate will increase 1.5 cents per gallon. Georgia, North Carolina, Indiana, and Florida will also increase taxes on gasoline. New York and West Virginia will have slight reductions in gas taxes based on automatic adjustments.

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.

ARKANSAS

State highway officials plan to put up new signs warning of steep hills in the Ozarks. Residents say they are seeing an increase of crashes involving big trucks.

CALIFORNIA

California may soon end the use of Botts Dots, the bump that warns you're drifting out of your lane. Many other states no longer use the device. They may be replaced with thermoplastic lane lines, a material that looks at a glance like paint, but is thick like cake icing, and is reflective and more durable than paint. In snow areas though, states use regular paint and reflective markers embedded in divots below the road surface where they won't get scraped away by snowplows. Later this year, CalTrans will begin removing Botts Dots, maybe as many as 20 million from state highways and freeways. The removal would be done as crews do regular road upkeep. The Botts Dots appears to be a bad fit as a lane marker in the emerging world of driverless cars that rely on cameras, radar and computers to read and understand lane lines.

A.B. 1785 says drivers may not use a handheld smart phone unless it is mounted in such a way as it can be activated voice command to the screen or a finger touch. Motorists are not permitted to hold a cellular phone or electronic wireless communications device while driving. Instead, it must be mounted within a 7-inch square in the lower corner of the windshield farthest removed from the driver or in a 5-inch square in the lower corner of the windshield nearest the driver. A permitted option is to mount the device to the dashboard where it won't obstruct a driver's view of the road and will not interfere with a deploying airbag.

In San Francisco's Embarcadero, AAA Bike Patrol pilot program now delivers roadside aid without a tow truck. Technicians on electric bicycles offer services **including jump-start** and flat-tire assistance.

Since Pot is now legal in California, the CHP is looking at several ways to test drivers of “impaired” driving while using Pot.

A state lawmaker wants to name a section of the 110 freeway in Los Angeles in honor of Vin Scully. The legendary Dodgers broadcaster retired last year after 67 seasons.

COLORADO

The Aspen School District has removed the seat belts from some of its buses due to safety concerns. District Transportation Director Gary Vava says lapbelts are more damaging in an accident than none at all.

GEORGIA

Projects to relieve traffic snarls will begin on stretches of the interstate highway in metro Atlanta and Savannah. Gov. Nathan Deal says the projects will cut traffic delays by a third to half.

A lawsuit says the company that handles parking enforcement for Atlanta knowingly cited drivers for non-existent violations. The suit alleges that PARKAtlanta and its parent company knew that their wireless technology had data flaws that could indicate someone hadn't paid for parking when, in fact they did.

The city of Valdosta is installing cameras along with new traffic lights at several busy intersections. But WALB-TV reports that city traffic manager, Larry Ogden says the cameras will be used to improve traffic flow, not to issue tickets.

ILLINOIS

Billionaire hedge fund manager Ken Griffin has donated \$12 million to pay for a separate bike & pedestrian paths along Lake Michigan in Chicago.

KENTUCKY

A welcome center and rest area along the Wendell Ford Western Kentucky Parkway was closed the second week of January.

LOUISIANA

Fifty-five new cameras began photographing and filming New Orleans speeders the second week of January. The cameras are being deployed in school zones.

MAINE

Legislation has been introduced to reduce motor-vehicle excise tax rates by 10% each year beginning with the 2018 registration year until the rates reach half of the current rates in 2022 and subsequent years. Under the law, an excise tax is levied for the privilege of operating a motor vehicle or camper trailer on public ways.

WGME TV of Augusta reports that the Maine Dept. of Transportation has more than 90 openings for snow plow truck drivers.

MARYLAND

The Maryland Dept. of Transportation has asked federal officials to use Interstate 95 to test autonomous vehicles. Federal highway officials are looking for “proving grounds” around the country for self-driving cars.

MASSACHUSETTS

State lawmakers passed a bill in the first week of January to encourage electric vehicle use. The bill would make it easier to charge electric vehicles.

The city of Boston's default speed limit is now 25 mph. It applies to any city street unless a different limit is posted.

MISSOURI

The first phase of a five-mile stretch of highway in Branson could be finished by Memorial Day. The Joplin Globe reports that the project aims to alleviate traffic congestion by creating a wider, continuous pedestrian walkway.

MONTANA

Officials are looking at how well they handled the huge crowds at Glacier National Park this year. The park had nearly 3 million visitors.

Montana's Yellowstone County is preparing to install a bronze plaque honoring women with ties to the region who served in World War 1. The Billings Gazette reports that 23 names will be on the plaque to be dedicated April 6th.

Legislation to provide for the issuance of a single rear-mounted license plate for motor vehicles that were originally equipped without a bracket, device or other means to display and secure a front license plate has been introduced.

NEVADA

A national advocacy group ranks the Las Vegas metro area, 21st worst in the nation for danger to pedestrians, and it puts Nevada 12th on the list for deadliest state for walkers.

The Nevada Dept. of Transportation closed a five-mile stretch of the Las Vegas Strip during the city's New Year's celebration.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

WMUR-TV reports that the redesigned driver's licenses will feature a more colorful background with a profile of the Old Man of the Mountains, an outline of the state and a purple lilac - the state official flower.

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey municipalities that chose to honor law enforcement by adding a streak of blue to the middle of their roads have been advised by federal officials to stop. Blue center lines violate the Manual on Uniform traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways.

NEW MEXICO

State officials say construction of a southern road to Spacepoint America could begin in late spring early summer. The Las Cruces Sun-news reports that improving the southern route would dramatically cut travel time from Las Cruces.

NEW YORK

The city of Rochester pulled the plug on its 6-year old red light camera program at the end of 2016. Mayor Lovely Warren said the \$50 fines "disproportionately affected the poorest of city residents."

A bill has been introduced in the state Senate to allow owners of historical vehicles that were not manufactured with a front license display area, to display only a single plate on the rear of the vehicle.

NORTH CAROLINA

State drivers who lost their driver's license because of problems at DMV have gotten them back. The Winston-Salem Journal reports that DMV officials had failed to update their records for things like paying a fine for a ticket.

NORTH DAKOTA

A legislative committee is endorsing a change from two to one license plate for North Dakota drivers.

OHIO

Transportation officials will reduce construction on the Ohio Turnpike this year according to the Akron Beacon Journal. The Turnpike Commission estimates 25% fewer lane miles under construction in 2017.

The use of traffic cameras by Ohio cities is once again before the state Supreme Court. Attorneys for Dayton urged the justices in early January to reject a state law requiring that a police officer be present when cameras are being used to generate red-light or speeding citations.

OKLAHOMA

Gov. Fallin says Oklahoma has received an extension to comply with a federal law to beef up driver's license security. But the Dept. of Homeland Security warns that failure to act during the 2017 legislative session may mean a denial of future extensions.

PENNSYLVANIA

Gov. Tom Wolf's administration and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission are rolling out an emergency notification system to let motorists stranded in accident backups get updates to their cell phones about aid and cleanup efforts.

RHODE ISLAND

Providence police are buying a tool that can get information from the data recorders in modern vehicles. The device will tell investigators the speed of a vehicle just before a crash, whether brakes or the accelerator were used, how many people were in the vehicle and whether they were wearing seatbelts.

SOUTH CAROLINA

State transportation officials warn that construction will cause traffic delays on Interstate 95 South in the Pee Dee region until spring. Many trucks will have to take an 11-mile stretch detour.

South Carolina transportation officials say three new bridges have opened in Richland County to replace three that were damaged by floods in October 2015.

A House Joint Resolution to create a mileage-based user fee study committee to determine the feasibility of implementing a program instead of the gas tax has been introduced. The resolution would require a study of a mile-based user fee and require the committee to submit a report to the General Assembly by December 31, 2018.

UTAH

A state lawmaker wants to make Utah's DUI threshold the strictest in the nation by lowering blood-alcohol content limit to 0.5 percent and is introducing a bill to do so. The BAC limit for most drivers is 0.08 in all states. But limits vary among states for commercial drivers who have had a past DUI conviction.

VIRGINIA

Motorists who tried to take an express lane on Interstate 495 ahead of a snow storm, found themselves with a \$30 toll. The inflated toll was partly due to a traffic buildup that was blamed on salt trucks.

VERMONT

Legislation has been introduced to provide motor vehicles registered as pleasurecars may display only a single license plate on the rear of the vehicle. Under Vermont law, "pleasure cars" are defined as most all power propelled vehicles, except for many work vehicles including farm tractors, vehicles running only upon stationary rails or tracks, motorized highway building equipment, road-making appliances, snowmobiles, tracked vehicles or electric or personal-assistive mobility devices.

WASHINGTON

The Seattle bike sharing will end in March, a year after the city spent \$1.4 million to buy it. Over 3,500 people signed up for the system, but the number dropped to about 1,800 in May.

WEST VIRGINIA

Drivers of electric vehicles or hybrid vehicles can now use a charging station at the lodge at Twin Falls Resort State Park in Mullens as of the third week of January. Two other West Virginia State Parks, Pipestem & Cacapon also have charging stations.

West Virginia has a new travel guide for 2017 with all crowd sourced content. The guide focuses on recreational experiences cited in social media, with stories, pictures, blog posts and Links to videos.

WHAATSUUP HERE AND THERE

Just trying to save a buck!!

Transit police in Teanck New Jersey say they arrested a new Jersey man who avoided paying tolls nearly 900 times and owes more than \$56,000 in unpaid tolls and fines. Police say Alesandel Rodriguez's car was missing front and rear license, and a temporary New York tag inside the vehicle had expired.

The first automobiles were sold by the manufacturer via a variety of channels that included mail order, department stores and traveling reps for the manufacturer. According to history, William Metzger was the first dealer, establishing a dealership in 1898.

The top new-car colors worldwide are: white – 37%, black 18% and silver gray at 11%.

Gasoline prices are increasing in the U.S. and according to Charisse Jones of USA Today, it will cost vehicle owners \$52 billion more to fill'er up.

Tesla Motors delivered 22,200 vehicles in the last quarter of 2016, leaving the electric automaker roughly 3,000 cars short of its projected year end goal, but sold 76, 230 Model S Luxury Sedans and gull winged Model X luxury crossover, the only two models it currently produces. Deliveries are expected to increase in 2017. Tesla is also adding employees to its new battery plant near Reno, Nevada.

On Jan 10th in 1912, the first successful boat airplane flight was made by Glen Curtiss at Hammondsport, N. Y.

It seems that every auto manufacturer is designing some type of electric or self-driving cars. Uber has begun testing the vehicles in several states, but not in California. Very few companies have actually posted retail prices on their vehicles.

Uber has announced that it will make urban traffic and mobility data generated from its millions of drivers and riders using the Uber app free to all. Then data, which shows anonymized travel times between points in cities, will be available on a public website called Uber Movement. The first cities to release the data will be Washington, D.C., Manila and Sydney.

On Jan 13th, the EPA moved to cement strict fuel economy requirements that force the auto industry to make new cars and trucks significantly more efficient, a decision that will be difficult for the incoming administration to undo.

Google is testing a new map system that will alert you to parking spaces. It is still being tested in various areas. It does not give the exact location of the spot, but in the general area and it does not say if it is free or not.

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