

# OLD CARS AND NEW LAWS

## PLUS WHAT'S UP HERE AND THERE



*By Larry Becker*

*Be aware! Many of the vehicles that were damaged by the storms in many states are being resold. The vehicles are considered salvage, but some scammers are buying them, cleaning them up and attempting to sell them as good vehicles. This also applies to vintage/classic vehicles.*

*If you are traveling this summer, remember many roads in various states were damaged by storms and there may be delays due to highway repairs in many states.*

*The National Highway Traffic Safety has issued a proposed rule to define motorcycle helmets and thereby regulate novelty helmets (commonly known as “skullcaps and beanies” that are sold and worn for highway use. The rule would also add a set of dimensional and compression requirements to the existing performance requirements for motorcycle helmets under Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.*

*Thieves now are stealing hybrid batteries in cars such as the Prius and other types of hybrids. They can remove the batteries in just a few minutes. Replacement batteries cost from \$1800 to \$2900 plus installation.*

*Why all the traffic? The Federal Highway Administration reports there were 262 billion miles driven on U.S. roads in March – the most during any March – with the greatest increase, 5.3%, out west.*

*Being on the hot seat!! An unidentified passenger in Marshfield, Wisconsin whose pants caught fire on a Public Transit bus on May 7<sup>th</sup>, is being treated for severe burns at a Madison hospital.*

*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**

*CWR Construction has started work on new restrooms at Pinnacle State Park that have been plagued by problems and contract woes, according to ArkansasOnline.*

## **CALIFORNIA**

*A veteran CHP officer testified in a civil trial that he was subjected to monthly admonishments from his superiors, to boost his “enforcement contacts” with motorists to at least 100 a month, and that the performance evaluations went on for years. His testimony in the court case has bolstered the introduction of performance reviews urging him to pull over more motorists. For years, the CHP has consistently denied that its officers are subject to a quota for the number of tickets they write each month. After the court case, CHP stated that there is no CPH policy requiring citation quotas.*

*Senate Bill 16, which would raise the gas tax by 10-12 cents and increase the car tax \$35 has passed each of the Senate committees where it was considered and is now awaiting a vote from the full Senate, likely in late summer. Motorists are urged to contact your state Senator and voice your opposition to the bill. (Information supplied by Bob Steams of the Association of California Car Clubs).*

*Your Tax Dollars At Work!! In early 2015, California Senate officials hired two part-time employees to provide late-night and early-morning rides for members when they are in Sacramento, a 24-hour service that follows high-profile drunken driving arrests in recent years. Senate members are given small plastic cards with the phone number for round-the-clock transportation – a service apparently to prevent drunken driving. This gives new meaning to the slogan “Don’t Drink and Drive.” The Sacramento Bee published an article about the use in the first week of June. Within 24 hours, every major newspaper and TV stations in California, aired the information. The Senate defended the use by saying it was a security service, not a taxi service. Elected officials offices were flooded by calls from very angry tax payers and hundreds of groups representing the taxpayers. Just three days after the information was made public, the Senate decided to end the program immediately! I wonder why??*

*On June 9<sup>th</sup>, California launched a \$2 million program that provides incentives to small-business owners and landlords to install electric vehicle charging stations for their employees, clients and tenants.*

*Lane-splitting (the practice of motorcyclists riding between two lanes of traffic is not legal or illegal in California, but new legislation has been introduced that would make it legal. In most other states, it is illegal.*

*A bill to require manufacturers of designated consumer products, including automotive products, to post ingredients on the product label has been approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee and will next be considered in a vote by all Assembly members.*

*Bill AB 40 would ban sidewalk tolls on California’s eight major bridges by cities, counties and transportation related agencies.*

*The state Supreme Court has ruled motorists who are issued a citation, but plan on appealing them, do not have to pay the fine first. Previously, motorists who wanted to appeal their citation had to pay the fine before their appeal could be heard.*

*DMV announced that it has started production on the Black & Yellow license plates. The state began producing the plate when the required 7500 pre-ordered plates was reached in June. The plates cost \$50 (plus other renewal fees) and can be ordered on-line or via mail. Preordered customers can expect the standard plate numbers to be complete within two to three weeks. Personalized plates – accounting for 55% of pre-order should be ready in August.*

*More cracked rods have been found on the S.F. / Oakland Bay Bridge. State transportation officials say tiny cracks found in two rods –which are 26 feet long and up to 4 inches in diameter-might also be present in many other rods, placing them at risk for sudden fracture. Independent engineers say that if the rods must be replaced, CALTRANS will face a difficult challenge because their bottom portions are inaccessible. The condition of the rods has been a topic of safety concerns since first reported in 2013. (Information from an article by Charles Piller of the Sacramento Bee).*

## **CONNECTICUT**

*Legislation to require new-car dealers to provide a written statement declaring it is illegal for manufacturers or dealers to void a warranty or deny coverage because aftermarket or recycled parts were installed or because someone other than the dealer performed services has been approved by the legislature and sent to the Governor for his signature.*

## **GEORGIA**

*More than 800 plug-in electric vehicle owners are being notified the state wrongly denied them a \$5,000 tax credit last year for owning a zero-emissions car or truck. A data entry error tripped up the state's database, The Journal-Constitution reports.*

## **HAWAII**

*Small business owners in the Kakako neighborhood say they are being extorted to pay for parking in front of their stores. The Kakako Land Co. claims it has the right to rent out parking because it is the legal owner of several streets.*

## **INDIANA**

*A new law aimed at slow drivers permits police to ticket motorists in the left lane if they hold up faster drivers behind them and don't move over.*

*The Indianapolis City-Council has voted to sue the city to stop it from implementing a \$32 million plan to rent electric cars.*

## **MARYLAND**

*Fee increases were announced the second week of June to help fund maintenance projects on Assateague Island National Seashore. As of July 15, entrance fees will be \$20. Front-country camping will now cost \$30 a night year-round, back country camping - \$10, horse camping - \$50 and group camping \$50 a night.*

## **MASSACHUSETTS**

*The state Dept. of Transportation is exploring a new bridge to Cape Cod, which would be funded by private investors.*

*A lottery is underway for state drivers who want a low number license plate. Applications must be postmarked by August 21<sup>st</sup>.*

## **MINNESOTA**

*Legislation that would have mandated payment of a "recoupment" surcharge of up to \$95 on fuel-efficient vehicles died when the legislature adjourned for the year. Legislation that would have required the Dept. of Transportation to implement a vehicle mileage user fee to tax drivers on actual miles driven also died. The bills may be reintroduced next year.*

## **MISSOURI**

*A bill to provide for a single license plate for motor vehicles died when the legislature adjourned for the year.*

*A bill to tax cars for miles traveled has died when the Legislature adjourned for the season.*

## **NEVADA**

*The Nevada Legislature has approved legislation to alter the requirement for vehicles eligible for registration as classic vehicles, old timers, street rods and classic rods, but Gov. Sandoval has vetoed the bill.*

*A bill that originally proposed to exempt all pre-'96 vehicles from emissions inspections has been amended to become only a study.*

## **NEW HAMPSHIRE**

*The state Supreme has ruled that a local group can continue feeding parking meters before officers can write tickets.*

## **NEW JERSEY**

*The Senate Transportation Committee has approved legislation to require the DMV Commission to issue exempt certificates for motor vehicles not required to be inspected.*

## **OHIO**

*The relocation of Interstate 75 may have snuffed out a Cincinnati suburb's annual Independence Day fireworks, the Cincinnati Enquirer reports. St. Bernard officials had planned to build on the site where fireworks have been launched and don't have any other vacant space for the display.*

## **OREGON**

*Oregon drivers may have to pay higher license fees under a proposal that would help launch a major information technology project for the DMV. The increased fess would include some skills tests and fees for obtaining various licenses and permits required to drive in Oregon.*

## **PENNSYLVANIA**

*A new traffic pattern has taken effect on Route 286-Golden Mile Highway in Monroeville. The configuration will continue through mid-September.*

## **RHODE ISLAND**

*The Governor wants to issue a highway toll on 18-wheelers and other big commercial trucks traveling through the state.*

*A campaign to promote traffic safety is urging people to wave to each other. The Newport Daily News reports the centerpiece of the campaign is a short video, called Newport Waves.*

## **SOUTH CAROLINA**

*Chambers of Commerce in the state were unhappy that the legislature adjourned for the year without any solutions for the state's crumbling roads. They all state that the roads are the biggest concern by businesses in the state.*

## **SOUTH DAKOTA**

*Bad weather has hampered work on a \$24 million reconstruction of the road considered the gateway to the Black Hills and Mount Rushmore National Memorial.*

## **TENNESSEE**

*In an effort to reduce texting while driving, there are signs along the state highways saying "get your head out of your apps!"*

## **TEXAS**

*On June 18<sup>th</sup>, the Supreme Court ruled that messages displayed on license plates are a form of government speech and Texas is free to reject a proposed design that features the Confederate flag.*

*Legislation that would have imposed a vehicle miles traveled (VMT) tax on motor vehicles, died when the legislature adjourned for the year.*

*A bill to eliminate Ethanol in gasoline died when the legislature adjourned for the year.*

## **UTAH**

*Visitors are going to pay \$5 more for entrance into Bryce Canyon National Park and Zion National Park under a fee structure starting July 1<sup>st</sup>. Maintenance and improvement costs prompted the fee increase, which means people will spend a dollar for entrance to Cedar Breaks National Monument.*

## **VIRGINIA**

*Virginia is considering a ban on issuing specialty license plates that contain images of the confederate flag.*

## **VERMONT**

*Self-driving cars will soon be cruising along more than 70 miles of state highways that include some of the country's most congested roads as part of an automated vehicle testing initiative. The research will be overseen by the Tech Transportation Institute.*

## **WASHINGTON**

*Gov. Inslee has signed a measure that creates a new alert for highway signs and traffic advisories when older adults who may be suffering from Alzheimer's or dementia go missing. It will be aimed at locating adults age 60 and older.*

*Washington State Ferries officials have recommended a 2.5% increase for vehicles and a 1% fare increase for passengers.*

## WISCONSIN

*A state lawmaker plans to introduce a bill that would make first-offence drunken driving a criminal offense. Wisconsin is the only U. S. state in which the first offense is merely a municipal ordinance violation.*

## WHAT'S UP HERE AND THERE

*The first gasoline station was constructed in 1905 at 4125 Theresa Ave. in St. Louis, Mo. The second station was constructed in 1907 in Seattle, Washington. Reighards Gas Station in Altoona, Penn. claims that it dates from 1909 and is the oldest existing station in the U.S. Motorists knew them as filling stations, not gas stations.*

*An article by CARSMD.com states that replacing the oxygen sensor is the most common “check engine” vehicle repair and it has a negative effect on fuel economy up to 40%.*

*A new APP available in California caters to youngsters who need a lift when Mom and Dad are too busy to drive. It applies to kids between 8 and 16. Parents pay a monthly fee for the service. There are several companies, including an experimental one backed by Mercedes-Benz. The companies all required the service to be booked one day in advance.*

*Larry Becker*

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