



OLD CARS AND NEW LAWS

PLUS WHAATSUUP HERE AND THERE

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.

ARIZONA

A driver in Mesa was stopped by the Highway Patrol in the HOV lane of a freeway with a mannequin in the passenger seat, but it did not count as a passenger.

Gov. Ducey has signed a bill that outlaws the holding of a phone or other communication device while behind the wheel of a vehicle.

CALIFORNIA

There is debate in the Legislature about increasing the penalty for phone use or texting while behind the wheel. One proposal is to add a point to their driver's licenses, which could raise their insurance costs. Too many points would also cause license suspension. A recent survey showed that one in 10 deadly crashes was the result of phone use or texting while driving.

Many people and some businesses make appointments at the DMV, sell their appointment times to someone else for money. A new bill in the legislature would make that a crime with a fine up to \$2500. There are still long wait times for service at most DMV offices, but the DMV says they are working hard to solve the problem.

The CHP will have additional officers on patrol in May looking for drivers and passengers not wearing seat belts. At 96.2 %, California has one of the highest seat belt use rates in the nation, but that number is down from 96.5 % in 2016. In California, the fine for a seat belt violation is \$162, but the fine for failing to secure a child in an authorized seat is \$490.

DMV made the headlines again. The DMV has acknowledged that about 150,000 customers have failed to receive licenses they paid for as far back as September. DMV now say customers should receive them soon. DMV says the error was much larger than originally thought.

COLORADO

The State Supreme Court has ruled that police require probable cause before deploying dogs trained to detect marijuana. This applies to searching vehicles also.

FLORIDA

The state will build three new major highways through mostly rural areas under a bill signed by GOV. DeSantis despite objections raised by environmentalists.

GEORGIA

State transportation have held a series of public meetings on new toll lanes on the perimeter that encircle the city of Atlanta.

HAWAII

A \$340 million facility for car rental companies has opened at the Kahului Airport. It is the largest single public works project on Maui.

IOWA

An unmarked street curb in Des Moines has cost city taxpayers nearly \$1.7 million after cyclists involved in bike crashes there sued the city.

MAINE

The Town Council of Elizabeth has decided to charge for parking at Fort Williams Park, home to the Portland Head Light, the oldest and most photographed lighthouse in the state.

MASSACHUSETTS

A survey finds many commuters in the state are fed up with traffic congestion and transit delays so they are thinking about changing jobs or even moving out of the region.

MARYLAND

State residents are at risk of having their driver's licenses or ID cards cancelled in June if they don't soon satisfy document requirements that are part of the federal mandated Real ID process.

MINNESOTA

The state House has taken up a \$7.2 billion transportation-funding package that includes Gov. Walz's proposal to raise the state gasoline tax by 20 cents a gallon to pay for road and bridge improvements.

MISSISSIPPI

The Tupelo Auto Museum's stock was auctioned-off the last week of April for over \$8.6 million, with a 1948 Tucker bringing \$1.8 million.

MONTANA

Highway crews have been working for than a month to clear snow from the Beartooth Highway south of Red Lodge and hope to have it open for Memorial Day weekend.

NEBRASKA

In Grand Island, a technologically van is helping the city determine how to keep its streets in good shape and save taxpayers money in the process. The street assessment van is going up and down more than 300 miles of city streets and is equipped with high-resolution cameras, \$2,000 ground penetrating radar, global positioning systems and onboard computers. The survey information helps determine which sections of pavement to overlay.

A judge is considering his verdict in a lawsuit that says six convenience stores along I-80 posted misleading gas prices. It accuses North-Platte based Wilkinson Development of advertising low priced gas but then selling gas at those prices only at a limited number of pumps.

NEW JERSEY

Gov. Murphy has signed a bill that could allow for the proliferation of electric scooters and bikes.

NEVADA

The state is joining a handful of other states in offering gender-neutral driver's licenses and ID cards to state residents.

The Boring Co, backed by billionaire Elon Musk, has been granted a nearly \$49 million contract to build a transit system of self-driving vehicles under the Las Vegas Convention Center.

NORTH CAROLINA

Long awaited passenger-only service between two popular Outer Banks destinations, Hatteras and Ocracoke Village, began on May 20th.

NORTH DAKOTA

Officials have begun relocating the Pioneer Village Museum, which was evicted from the State Fair Grounds, to a new site in nearby Burlington.

PENNSYLVANIA

The state is ending the practice of suspending drivers licenses of those convicted of non-highway offenses including drug use.

RHOSE ISLAND

An effort is underway to replace the state's distinctive "wave" license plates and more than double the cost of the new plate. The State Senate has approved a measure that would change the price of a license plate from \$6, set 20 years ago, to \$15.

VERMONT

A new U.S. Border crossing has opened at Derby Line and hopes to ease congestion.

VIRGINIA

A state panel has unanimously approved a request from Arlington County to rename a highway that currently honors Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

WASHINGTON

The 79-room annex at Mount Rainier National Park's Paradise Inn reopened May 17th after a 19-month, \$25 renovation.

WEST VIERGINIA

Major repairs are planned for the state's oldest bridge. The Division of Highways plans to rehabilitate the Elm Grove Stone Arch Bridge in a \$5.million project that begins early next year.

A bridge near Parkersburg has been renamed for long time state lawmaker Frank Deen, who died in October.

WHAATSUP HERE AND THERE

The issuing of parking tickets declined nationwide over the past two years. Experts say the decline is due to more drivers using the parking app on their cell phones to reload their parking meter. Many cities relied on parking fines as part of their income and are looking for ways to replace the loss. Large cities, such as New York, L.A., Chicago, San Francisco and other large cities report losses of up to \$100,000 in revenue.

Washington D.C. is testing a new program that would allow citizens to write parking tickets using mobile aps. The tickets would be those who obstruct bike lanes, cross walks or bus lanes or fire hydrants. Only 10 volunteers will be selected from parts of the city and will be trained in pedestrian and bike safety, city traffic laws and regulations. It is a one year test program and the results will be studied at the end of the program.

Ford has announced that it is cutting 7,000 of its worldwide salaried employees as it looks to trim global operations. The company plans to make the cuts by the end of August, including voluntary buyouts. The cuts include 500 salaried workers in the U.S. who will leave involuntarily the last of May and 800 more in the U.S. by August.

Five Fiat models, including newer offerings such as the X500 sub-compact SUV and the 124 Spider convertible, are few and far between. After hitting a high point in 2014, Fiat's U.S. vehicle sales plummeted 66% in the next four years.

Chevrolet has announced that it is rolling out a new "Buckle to Drive" feature this summer in its 2020 Traverse, Malibu and Colorado designed to not allow the driver to shift out of park for up to 20 seconds if the driver's seatbelt is not buckled. The buckle to drive is available only when the vehicle has the Teen Driver system. The system cannot be turned off unless a PIN number is entered, hopefully by parents.

According to U.S.A. Today, Tesla, faced with a slumping stock price and questions about demand for its vehicles has lowered the base price of its two most expensive models. The company cut \$3,000 from the price of the Model S Sedan and \$2,000 from the Model X SUV. The Model S now starts at \$71,250 while the X starts at \$71,959. Several analysts have questioned whether the company can sell enough cars to cover its expenses without dipping into cash reserves. Tesla's stock price is down 38% so far this year. There are several conflicting stories about Tesla so it is difficult to determine what is actually happening.

A few automakers still produce drop-top (convertible) cars even though their sales have declined deeply. In 2014, 124,492 were produced, but by March of 2019, that number has declined to 21,547. Fewer than 1 in 1,000 vehicles in the U.S. now come with a foldable top, maybe even less.(Information from USA TODAY article)

Ford is teaming up Rivian to make electric vehicles. Ford has invested a half billion dollars in the project. Rivian recently rolled out a new electric pickup truck and a SUV that will go on sale late next year.

According to a study by Insurance Company Netquote, the average ride-share vehicle has about 219 times as many germs as the average taxi, which is cleaned regularly. It is nearly three times germier than the average toothbrush holder and more than 35,000 times grimmer than the average toilet seat.

A group of institutional investors is investing \$1.15 billion into GM Cruise LLC, the autonomous vehicle unit of GM. In January, GM applied for a waiver for 250 modified Chevy Bolt electric vehicles to be used for on demand ride-share companies based in San Francisco. GM said the vehicles will be self-driving and does not require mirror's, turn signals and dashboard warning lights as they are not controlled by a human driver. There is much opposition to the plan from various safety groups. The Feds have not committed on the request.

Connecticut's Lemon Law Program, is being credited with providing consumers more than \$2.6 million in refunds or returns last year for problematic new vehicles.

Most people do not know who Augustus Post was. He was the first person to drive a car in New York City, established the city's first parking garage and received its first speeding ticket. He was going 5 mph in Central Park. He also supported the "Good Roads" movement that led to the opening of the Lincoln Highway from New York to San Francisco in 1913. He also helped to establish several auto tours and races and was the president of AAA in its first years of existence. He also was involved with flying airplanes and was the 13th man in the U.S. to successfully fly an airplane. He also advocated for the creation of airmail service. He died in 1952 at the age of 78.

A web article by Yean Motors list some of the "worst cars ever made." Not everyone will agree with the cars on the list, but here are some. Yugo, Desoto Airflow, Delorean DMC 12, Crosley, Saturn ION, 58 Edsel Cosair, 82 Cadillac Cimarron, AMC Pacer, MGA Twin Cam, Chevy Corvair, Chrysler PT Cruiser Convertible, AMC Gremlin, Chevy Chevette, Chrysler Imperial 2-door hardtop, Mustang 2, Pontiac Aztek, Ford Pinto, Toyota Celica, VW Scion, original Smart Car for two, Renault Dauphine and the Lincoln Blackwood Pickup. In total there were 50 vehicles listed, but no explanation as to why they were classified as the "worst cars" built. Many people have had these cars and thought they

were great. I had a 78 Pinto, drove it 80,000 miles with no problems, gave it to my daughter, who drove it another 50,000 miles with only a few minor problems.

All of the comforts of home! Mercedes is developing heated seatbelts for their vehicles. Most now come with heated seats, heated armrests, heated steering wheels and other heated parts of the vehicle. They say if the driver is comfortable, they are safer drivers.

BMW will start building Electric Scooters to sell in Europe.

Ford is teaming-up with Aginity Robics to build a self-driving vehicle that can be used to deliver packages or food products using robots. Maybe even Pizza someday.

AAA estimate that 37 million drivers were on the road over Memorial Day weekend.

Larry Becker

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