

OLD CARS AND NEW LAWS

PLUS WHAT'S UP HERE AND THERE



By Larry Becker

A survey by NerdWallet looked at the highest and lowest annual auto insurance rates in 125 cities, using a profile of a 26-year-old man insuring a 2012 Camry with a \$500 deductible, living in an urban zip code. Seven of the lowest-cost cities were in North Carolina, where a unique set of laws cap rates and personal-injury awards while giving regulators broad control over price increases. The sixth highest cost cities are” #1- Detroit, #2- New Orleans, #3- Grand Rapids, #4- Newark, #5- Baton Rouge and #6- Hialeah, Florida.

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.

ALASKA

Within months, the city of Juneau is expected to have enough electric vehicle charging stations for a driver to go the longest distance possible in the community without fear of losing charge.

License plates could get a new look under a bill proposed by Rep. Peggy Wilson. Bill HB203 would allow for license plates to have a standing grizzly bear, modeled after the 1976 bicentennial plate.

ARIZONA

A state House committee has approved a bill that would require cities and towns to calibrate police radar cameras every 24 hours.

CALIFORNIA

Darrell Steinberg, our great Senate leader, proposes to raise the gas tax by 15 cents a gallon starting in 2015 and would rise to 43 cents a gallon by 2030. Steinberg said his proposal is a better alternative to the rising gas taxes that drivers would otherwise face under California's existing law to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Under the bill, AB 32, oil companies will have to buy carbon credits for all the fuel they sell starting next year.. Experts say that may lead to higher gas taxes. We can thank Sen. Steinberg as he also helped write AB 32.

A new license plate has been unveiled featuring the image of Snoopy, the comic beagle of "Peanuts" fame. The plate was sponsored by Toni Atkins, assembly member, from San Diego. The proceeds from the sale of the plates will go to competitive grants for museums. The plates will join a dozen other special interest plates offered by the state.

A new bill would allow DMV to designate on a driver's license that the holder of the license is a veteran.

It's only begun and the \$23.9 million takedown of the old S.F./Oakland Bay Bridge eastern span has fallen six months behind schedule – prompting officials to reopen negotiations with the contractor to try to speed things up. One immediate effect of the delay: The scheduled hookup of the popular bike and pedestrian path to Yebra Buena Island has been pushed back. CALTRANS had hoped to have the old bridge out of the way and the bike path needs to be connected by early 2015. There is still much debate on whether the new span was built using material that met all safety requirements.

The U.S. EPA has approved revised rules issued by the Ca. Air Resources Board for off-highway Recreation Vehicles including off-road motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles and recreational off-highway vehicles, sometimes called UTVs or side-by-side. The rules establish evaporative emissions standards for OHRVs to be phased-in between 2018 and 2021.

CONNECTICUT

Rep. Craig Miller and Sen. Robert Kane have voted against adding a \$3 administrative fee to a \$15 charge for obtaining driver histories from the DMV, but the bill was passed. The administrative fee will be used to support a new state Web portal that businesses will use to obtain driver records online.

D.C. – WASHINGTON

As of Feb. 1st, automated traffic cameras will be positioned to catch drivers who block intersections, roll thru stop signs, fail to yield to pedestrians, pass thru an intersection at an unsafe speed or take a vehicle on a street too small to accommodate it, the Washington Post reports.

DELAWARE

Gov. Markell has proposed a 10-cent increase in the gas tax to pay for \$50 million additional spending on roads and bridges.

Legislation to exempt reconstructed vehicles that are 25 years old or older from emissions testing has been passed. Under the bill, the vehicle must continue to meet and be inspected for safety and anti-tampering requirements for its model year. The vehicle also must meet all requirements to be classified as a “reconstructed” vehicle.

GEORGIA

The state Dept. of Revenue has approved a special license plate featuring the Confederate battle flag. Sons of Confederate Veterans spokesman, Ray McBerry, said the group views the plate as a way to honor people's heritage.

IDAHO

A bill to punish drivers who get behind the wheel with a known untreated medical condition did not pass in the State House. Opponents argued that the bill was too broad.

ILLINOIS

Cheap, cheap gas!! An error caused pumps at a Shell station in Woodstock to sell for a penny gallon. It is not known how much time past before the error was discovered.

The Abraham Lincoln Tourism Bureau is preparing to repair the roadside attraction dubbed the world's largest covered wagon by the Guinness Book of World Records.

INDIANA

Motorized scooters would have required to to have license plates under a bill approved by an Indiana House committee.

KENTUCKY

Legislation has been introduced to change the valuation procedure on vehicles in the state for purposes of the property tax. The bill would value "newer vehicles" at the higher "clean trade-in value" instead of the lower "average trade-in" value at which they are currently assessed. The bill also would put a new valuation procedure in place for older vehicles. Vehicles 20 years old or older would no longer be presumed to be in "original factory" or classic condition. Original factory and classic vehicles are assessed as high-value collectibles.

The Kentucky Historical Society has approved a proposed highway marker to honor country music entertainer Louis “Gramdpa” Jones at his birthplace.

MAINE

DII or SUI??? A man who crashed his snowmobile into a parked car on a residential street has been charged with snowmobiling while drunk. Police say that Jeffery Hayden, 30, is charged with operating after suspension and criminal operating under the influence.

MARYLAND

Legislation requiring a vehicle emissions inspection facility, at the request of the owner of a vehicle that has failed an on-board diagnostics test, to immediately conduct an exhaust emissions test of the vehicle at no cost to the owner will be considered by house EPA. The bill provides that vehicles pass the exhaust emission after a failed OBD test would be deemed in compliance with emissions standards established for the vehicle.

MICHIGAN

A TV station review of public records has found that the city of Detroit is owed \$82 million in fines and late fees for unpaid parking tickets.

MINNESOTA

The Dept. of Public Safety estimates that roughly 1 in 8 drivers on state roads do not have a valid driver’s license.

MISSISSIPPI

That’s not the Hells Angels behind you!! Police in the city of Olive Branch are adding a complement of motorcycles to start a unit that will be easy to maneuver in congested city streets.

Pike County may soon require permits for log trucks and other heavy trucks to operate in the county.

MISSOURI

On Feb. 12th, a judge in St. Louis issued an order prohibiting the city from enforcing its red-light camera ordinance. The ruling by Circuit Judge Ohmer mean's the city can not send violation notices or collection letters and can not process payments. On Feb. 13th, city leaders said they would appeal the order and seek a court order allowing enforcement until the appeal is decided.

A proposal to name part of a highway after late television news icon Walter Cronkite has been sent to a joint transportation committee.

NEVADA

The Las Vegas Police Dept. has announced that it will no longer respond to minor fender bender traffic accidents. They will respond to accidents that involve injuries or accidents requiring traffic control for tow trucks

NEW HAMPSHIRE

State lawmakers are debating proposals to increase the speed limit to 70 MPH along most of Interstate 89 and on Route 101 from Manchester to Hampton. NHPR radio reports that the bills sponsor Rep. Steve Vaillancourt said the higher limits are more in line with the speed drivers actually travel on those roads.

NEW JERSEY

Legislation has been introduced to require the state to issue exempt certificates for motor vehicles not required to be inspected.

Legislation has been introduced in the New Jersey State Senate to require the issuance of a single license plate for motor vehicles. The bill requires that the single registration plate be attached on the rear of the vehicle. Owners who were issued two plates prior to the enactment and effective date of the bill can return one plate to the DMV. (No information if there is a cash refund for returning the plate).

Legislation has been introduced to add the state's current law governing historic motor vehicles to permit their use for pleasure driving one day a week. Currently they are restricted to exhibitions, and educational purposes by the owner.

A bill has been reintroduced that would create a vehicle registration classification for street rods and replica and custom vehicles and provide for special license plates. The bill is a version of SEMA model legislation.

NEW MEXICO

Las Cruces is pulling the plug on its red-light traffic enforcement cameras. The Las Cruces Sub-News reports that the city isn't renewing its contract with Red Flex Traffic Systems and the police will stop issuing citations based on camera images. City Manager Robert Garza said city officials don't have solid data indicating that the cameras are producing results.

University of New Mexico officials will soon start offering additional parking for disabled fans attending Lobo games.

The state's tax on gasoline and diesel would increase 5 cents a gallon, to 22 cents for 10 years under a proposal to help finance highway construction projects across the state.

NEW YORK

With 12 pedestrian deaths so far this year, Mayor Bill de Blasio is taking aim at jaywalking. Police are handing out tickets for an offense that has long been ignored.

OKLAHOMA

Few people in Tulsa are taking part in a parking-ticket amnesty program. As of Feb. 7th, fewer than 200 of the 19,000 outstanding parking tickets have been cleared. The city is willing to wave late fees for drivers who agree to pay the base fine. One driver has 106 unpaid parking tickets.

RHODE ISLAND

The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority has begun installing temporary reflective sticks on the Newport Pell Bridge as it awaits a report on whether to put in a permanent median barrier.

SOUTH CAROLINA

The city of Greenville has banned texting while driving effective April 1st. The ban on using a handheld device while driving also applies to vehicles stopped in traffic or at a stop sign.

TENNESSEE

Police may have grounds to arrest people for DUI even if they pass field sobriety tests, the State Supreme Court said in a ruling that involved a Sevier County man whose DUI charges were thrown out after he passed six field sobriety tests. The unanimous opinion reinstated the charges against David Dyane Bell.

UTAH

A bill to add more stretches of highway with a speed limit of 80 mph is close to becoming a law. A Senate committee unanimously approved the bill. Utah has several stretches of highway, mostly in rural area, where the speed limit is 80 mph.

WASHINGTON

Legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives to require the issuance of only a single plate for vehicles that do not include a front mounting bracket as manufactured. Legislation has been introduced to exempt collectible vehicles of any age from emission testing. The bill defines collectible vehicles as as a vehicle of unique or rare design, of limited production and as an object of curiosity that is maintained primarily for use in club activities, parades, exhibitions and other functions of public interest.

WEST VIRGINIA

Legislation has been introduced that would exempt motor vehicles, including automobiles, motorcycles, airplanes, trucks and tractors that are older than 25 years from personal property tax. The vehicles would need to display current antique licenses and could not be used for daily transportation.

Legislation has been introduced for the issuance of special license plates for use on collector cars and allow for the transfer of the special plates temporarily between the collector motor vehicles owned by a collector. Under the bill, most cars 25 years old or older will qualify for the collector plates. The bill stipulates that a collector may operate collector vehicles on the streets and highways without registering each collector motor vehicle if the vehicle displays the special plate. The bill has the support of SEMA.

Legislation to provide that a motor vehicle that has been started by use of a remote starter when the vehicle is locked is not an unattended vehicle and not in violation of the law, has been introduced. Currently, no persons driving or in charge of a motor vehicle may permit it to stand unattended without first stopping the engine, locking the ignition, removing the key and effectively setting the brake. The bill has the support of SEMA.

WISCONSIN

The City Council of Wausau has passed an ordinance that prohibits drivers from using hand-held electronic devices but allows hands-free phones. GPS are allowed, provided the drivers set their destinations beforehand.

The state is encouraging municipalities to switch to vehicles that run on alternative fuels in a bid to reduce fuel costs and create carbon footprints. About 10% of the vehicle fleets participating in the program are in Oshkosh, the Northwestern Media reports.



WHAATSUP HERE AND THERE

AAA wants us to enjoy the lower prices for gas as it predicts that gasoline prices will increase in the spring. For all of 2014, AAA expects the nationwide average for gas to be at least 5 cents cheaper than last years \$3.49.

What did your car say? Obama administrate officials say they are completing an analysis of testing of technology that lets vehicles communicate with each other and will propose requiring automakers equip new cars and trucks with the devices. The Transportation Dept. estimates the devices could prevent up to 80% of accidents that do not involve drunken driving. There is still much work to be done on the technology of the system and automakers say that it will add to the cost of the vehicles.

Researchers for the Center for Disease Control and Protection state that 1 in 3 children killed in vehicle crashes in 2011 were not buckled up. Every state and Washington D.C. have child restraint laws, but the ages of the children covered vary by state.

The South Carolina state parks are adopting a flag system for its beaches April thru Oct. so swimmers will know about water conditions. Signals include two red flags when it is unsafe to swim and a purple flag when dangerous marine life is around.

There are two free apps for visitors to the Great Smokey Mts. in Tennessee, a driving app and a hiking and biking app.

The J. D. Powers Vehicle Dependability Survey in mid Feb. reminded us of good cars they don't make anymore. By good, they mean reasonably trouble. That's not the same as desirable. Some yuck-o models last along time too. Some of the models are: Buick Lucerne, Cadillac DTS, Chevrolet Avalanche, Ford Ranger, GMC Canyon, Honda Element, and the Toyota FJ Cruiser. These models were discontinued by the manufacturers due to slow sales.