



OLD CARS AND NEW LAWS

PLUS WHAATSUUP HERE AND THERE

On April 30th, Ford announced that it plans to stop selling every car in North America, but the Mustang and the Focus Active. Ford says 90% of its North America sales are portfolio is in trucks, utilities and commercial vehicles. This will also apply to Lincoln vehicles. Ford will concentrate on hybrid vehicles.

Car and Tech companies are rolling out laser sensors, artificial intelligence, larger viewing screens that show more of the road, cameras that can read speed limit signs, and systems that slow cars ahead of curves and construction zones are just a few of new items for self-driving vehicles.

Experts are baffled as to why a self-driving Uber struck and killed a pedestrian in Arizona in mid-march. Experts who viewed the videos of the accident say that the SUV's sensors should have seen the woman pushing a bicycle and braked before hitting her. The human backup driver appears to be looking down before the crash.

A driver of a Tesla vehicle was killed in a crash in mid-March in the San Francisco area. Tesla says the vehicle was operating on autopilot and the driver did not have his hands on the steering wheel for 6 seconds before the crash despite warnings from the vehicle. The auto pilot system can keep speed, change lanes and auto park, but requires the driver to keep their eyes on the road and their hands on the wheel in order to take control of the vehicle to avoid an accident. Several groups are urging for tougher regulations on self-driving vehicles. At present, most of the regulations are made by the testing companies.

VW is telling German drivers that if diesels are banned to ease pollution, they can trade in their new vehicles. The company says customers who make purchases from a VW dealer April 1 through the end of 2018 will have three years to bring the cars back and get a model that is still allowed on the road. This applies only to certain countries in Europe.

Time to say good-bye! GM has announced plans to kill off the Chevy Sonic and is considering a plan to end the full-size Impala sedan. Ford is ending the Fiesta model in the U.S. and is considering plans to end the full-size Taurus.

A slew of Chinese automakers are churning out hundreds of thousands of electric vehicles a year. In 2017, 700 electric vehicles were sold in China. Experts say that 54% of global auto sales are expected to be electric by 2040.

There is a company called Phantom Car Care Services located in Mountain View, Ca, that offers a special service for self-driving cars. The service is a remote control computer which allows tele-operators support when the vehicle encounters challenges that cannot be resolved by the autonomous vehicles computers or when passengers seek assistance. The service is fairly new and not much information is known about it.

The “Do Not Disturb While Driving” feature that Apple baked into its IOS 11 seems to be getting some drivers to put down their phones and concentrate on the road ahead. But phone use remains to be a source of unsafe driving, second only to speeding.

Parking related fees can really add up, especially in big cities. In 2017, the average U.S. driver faced \$10,288 in driving expenses composed of direct expenses such as payments for owning or leasing a vehicle, depreciation, maintenance, fuel and insurance. The total also reflects indirect costs such as burned fuel and carbon emissions while idling in traffic congestion and other expenses. Roughly one-third of these expenses were racked up by parking fees, fines, driving around looking for parking spaces or paying for more parking time than needed. New York City drivers \$18,928 in direct and indirect driving costs in 2017 with parking related costs account for 46% of the total. The average New York driver pays \$28 for two hours of off-street parking. Two hours in a parking garage also costs \$28. The most expensive cities to park in are: New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington D C . The monthly rates range from \$493 in New York City, \$330 in Boston and \$243 in Seattle.

Earlier in the year, the National Park Service proposed to raise fees by as much as 50% or more, but on April 12th announced an increase of about \$5.

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

The state will try to recoup the \$1.8 million repair of the Artillery Road overpass that was hit by an over-height truck.

ALABAMA

State Rep Ritchie Whorton’s proposal to require headlights from sunrise to sunset won this year’s “Shroud Award “ for the deadest bill of the session.

ARKANSAS

A planned bike-sharing program in Little Rock is likely to be delayed until spring 2019. Officials have not signed a contract on how the program will run.

CALIFORNIA

The DMV says it has issued one million driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants as of March 31, 2018.

On March 20th, a San Francisco police officer stopped and issued a ticket to a Chevy Bolt EV self-driving car. The police cited the car and "driver" for not yielding to a pedestrian in a cross walk.

California has started testing the issuing of "digital" vehicle license plates. The name of the company producing the plate is Rviewer. Instead of a metal plate, the digital plate would be a computer screen slightly larger than a Ipad. Registering the plate would be done automatically. The cost is \$599 plus a monthly service plan fee of \$8. The plate would also record tolls. DMV plans to test the plate on approx. 100,000 vehicles. More information is available on the company websites. Several other states are considering using digital plates also.

CONNECTICUT

New Haven is offering validate free parking for people who want to attend evening municipal meetings.

COLORADO

A recent report shows that work zone fatalities have gone up. Last year, there were seventeen, compared with seven in 2016 and eight in 2014.

A new state law requires truck drivers to take a class on preventing human trafficking.

FLORIDA

Frequent visitors to the state parks will be eligible for an annual family pass by collecting stamps from all 75 parks.

HAWAII

Legislation to allow registration of former military vehicles as a special interest vehicle has been approved by the state Senate and a House Finance Committee.

INDIANA

State officials have awarded a \$79 million contract to widen a section of Interstate 69 to six lanes.

IOWA

A study says tolls could help finance the widening and rebuilding of a nearly 250-mile-long stretch of Interstate 80, the Des Moines Register reports.

KANSAS

The state is changing how it distributes vehicle license plates. Officials say instead of keeping an inventory in stock at DMV offices, plates will be printed on demand and sent to vehicle owners.

“Lost to DUI” memorial signs are being placed along Kansas highways for victims of drunken driving crashes.

KENTUCKY

A federal judge has ruled that a man’s lawsuit over the state’s refusal to issue him an “IM GOD” license plate can go forward.

Repairs have begun on a damaged bridge over the Ohio River. No completion date has been announced.

MARYLAND

The state Dept. of Transportation has delayed a vote on a \$68.5 million contract amid questionable ties between the winning bidder and the state’s transportation secretary.

MASSACHUSETTS

Three designs have been proposed to replace the Schell Memorial Bridge that has been closed for over 30 years. It is near Northfield.

The state is owed more than \$15 million by out-of-state drivers who used the Massachusetts Turnpike without paying for the EZPass.

MINNESOTA

Four state senators want to prevent driverless vehicles from being tested in Minnesota until they’re proven safe. A snowstorm on 4/03 was blamed for 420 crashes, including 32 with injuries. The information did not disclose whether this was statewide or just in the Minneapolis area.

A bill to allow owners the option of registering certain decommissioned military vehicles as a regular motor vehicle has been introduced in the State House.

NEBRASKA.

Lawmakers have approved a bill to allow higher speed limits on state highways, but stripped out language that would have allowed speed limits of up to 80 mph on portions of Interstate 80.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Parking officials of Dover have voted to approve a deal with Tesla to install two charging stations in a parking garage.

State lawmakers have rejected a measure to protect intoxicated people from being a DUI charge if they only sleep or rest in a parked car until they sober up.

NEW YORK

New York City has banned cars from Central Park as of April 20th, north of 72nd street. Parking will also be banned in Park West and Grand Auto Plaza starting in July.

OKLAHOMA

A state law, forbidding motorists on four-lane highways from impeding traffic by traveling the left lane, resulted in 60 citations during its three days of enforcement.

PENNSYLVANIA

Court officials say distracted driving citations in the state jumped by 52% last year and have increased 172% since 2013.

RHODE ISLAND

A bill has been introduced in the State House that would take the same approach on window tenting as Massachusetts.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Dept. of Transportation officials say a project started two years ago to widen interstate 77 is close to being completed.

SOUTH DAKOTA

A \$12 million street construction project in Sioux Falls began the last week of March. Travelers can expect delays traveling through the city.

UTAH

A new bill extends the emissions inspection exception to vehicles that are model-year 67 or older as well as diesel model-year 97 or older.

VIRGINIA

The Gov. has signed into law, a bill that allows qualifying military vehicles to be registered and operated on state highways.

The state is asking drivers to slow down near ponds for frogs and salamanders migrating to breeding pools.

WEST VIRGINIA

In the first week of April, the state Parkway Authority gave initial approval on a plan to double the tolls on the Turnpike to \$4.

The Gov has signed a bill to allow personalized plates on antique vehicles. The cost is \$40 per year. An antique vehicle is at least 25 years old or older and is owned solely as an antique item.

WISCONSIN

A bill has been introduced in the state that would allow half-track former military vehicles to be registered as special interest vehicles.

WHAATSUUP HERE AND THERE

According to an analysis by Farmers Insurance company, 1 out of 3 collision claims were due to a car door opening onto traffic and most occur in the spring.

USA Today and the web site, Insurance Quitea.com, auto insurance premiums will increase an average of 42% after filing a single claim of \$2,000 or more, down from 44% last year.

R.U.1 ? One in 5 Americans do not tell anyone, including their partners, how much money they make.

Ford is planning on bringing back “suicide” doors on their new Lincoln Continental sedans. It is not known if they will be available on the 2018’s or 2019’s. The original models with the suicide doors were discontinued in 1970. A concept car with the doors was proposed in 2002, but was never produced.

They are also moving production of the Focus from Michigan to China. The former Focus plant will now produce SUVs and the new Ford Ranger pickup truck.

Daimler and BMW have announced that they will merge their car-sharing businesses. They say they will put their mobility services - aps and services that provide transport options for people who may not own cars. BMWs DriveNow and Daimlers Car2go, which

are like rental agencies, the agreement includes services that help hail taxis, find parking spaces and charging stations.

Waymo, the autonomous-car company spun out of Google, has announced that it plans to purchase as many as 20,000 electric cars from Jaguar Land Rover and outfit them with radars, cameras and sensors it has developed to enable the vehicles themselves on public roads. The cars will be used in a ride-hailing service to start in Phoenix by the end of 2018 and then roll them out in other cities across the U.S. No dates were announced.

Ready to go! Police in Madison, Wisconsin charged a man with intoxicated driving after police found him passed out in the driver's seat of a running car with his foot on the brake.

BMW has launched a subscription service that lets drivers choose from among different models in a fleet of luxury cars and SUV's. The pilot program began the first week of April in Nashville. It is not cheap, costing between \$2,000 and \$3,700 per month which includes maintenance, insurance and roadside service. The price range is due to two different tiers of cars. There is no limit on how many times a subscriber can change vehicles.

The U.S. government road safety agency says it has received allegations that defective Goodyear motor home tires that caused crashes that killed or injured 95 people during the last two decades. The tires, G159, are under review by the National Highway Safety Administration. Lawsuits and safety advocates allege that the tires were designed for delivery trucks and not motor homes.

Have you seen one?? There were 4,923 reports of UFO sightings in the world in 2017, down from 5,516 in 2016 according to the National UFO Reporting Center.

Newest info on auto insurance: According to Zebra's 2018 State of Auto Insurance report, the average American pays \$1427 yearly for coverage, which has increased four consecutive years.

A lost art?? Honda has started classes in the southern California area to teach young drivers how to use a manual transmission and may expand the program to other areas.

Ford is testing a program to transport patients to doctors and hospitals for appointments and non-emergency care. They are working with Beaumont Health Network of Michigan and only serving the Michigan area.

LARRY BECKER

25 APRIL 2018

In 1951 Nash -Kelvinator produced the “first American” sport car. It was called the Nash Healey, a partnership of British auto maker Donald Healey and Nash. It was produced from 1951 until August 1954. Some 54 models were sold as 55 models. In early 1954, Nash merged with Hudson and became American Motors.

