



OLD CARS AND NEW LAWS

PLUS WHAATSUUP HERE AND THERE

Congress has indicated that they are considering raising the federal gas tax to fund publicly popular infrastructure improvements. Constituents are demanding that that infrastructure, notable roads and bridge repairs done now. More than 47,000 of our 616,087 bridges have been found to be structurally deficient and in poor condition. Parts of Route 101, Interstate 405 and Interstate 10 in California have the most traveled structurally deficient bridges. Iowa tops the list with the biggest number of structurally deficient bridges, followed by Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Illinois, Missouri, North Carolina, California, New York, Louisiana and Mississippi. The current federal gas tax is 18.4 cents per gallon on gas and 24.4 cents a gallon on diesel. Most federal spending on roads, bridges and mass transit, comes from the highway trust fund. Until 2008, the gas tax and other highway revenue funded these projects. But since then, the tax has been insufficient to cover costs so lawmakers transferred funds from the federal budget to keep it afloat. Shortfalls are expected to accelerate by 2021. One research group estimates that many people will drive less if the gas tax is increased, but that in turn would lessen the need for more highway repair. At present time, no new bills to increase the federal gas tax have been introduced.

Los Angeles is number one on the list of aggressive drivers, followed by Philadelphia, Sacramento, Atlanta, San Francisco, San Diego, Orlando, Detroit, Austin and Las Vegas according to Gas Buddy. Friday is the most aggressive driving day of the week and Wednesday is the least aggressive day. L.A. and Philadelphia were leaders as hard braking and rapid acceleration with San Diego, Orlando and Detroit having the most accidents due to speeding.

Tesla announced that it is accepting deposits for its new Model Y vehicles, but wait times may be up to 8 months. It is essentially a crossover version of the Model 3. Models with five and seven seats are available. Starting prices range from \$39,000 for the basic version to \$60,000 for a performance model that comes equipped with software and sensors capable of autonomous driving whenever it becomes legal. Buyers will have to pay for system upgrades that cost from \$3,000 to \$5,000. The model Y has a battery range of 230 to 300 miles, depending on which version you choose.

A recent safety study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has found that the back seat passengers often lack sufficient protection in frontal crashes. In some crashes, poorly engineered seat belts are killing or badly injuring back-seat passengers while front-seat passengers in the same vehicle survive or avoid serious injury.

Jaguar said that it is looking to use a type of ultraviolet light technology, like the medical industry has been using for more than 70 years. The average driver spends almost 300 hours per year behind the wheel. According to the company, trials suggest the technology can cut four major superbugs by up to 30%.

Jay Leno predicts that children born today, most likely by the time they are 18, may not have ever ridden in an internal combustion engine car. Leno spoke at an event discussing electric vehicles.

Tesla is building a solar array on top of a Frederick, Maryland County landfill that will generate up to 1.9 megawatts of power.

Not all of the following bills are laws at this time. They have been recently introduced, and are currently under consideration by the respective legislatures.

ARIZONA

A project to provide travelers on I-10, with timely warnings about potentially deadly low-visibility conditions from dust storms on a 10-mile stretch of road between Phoenix and Tuscon is just months from completion, according to the Arizona Daily Star. It will include radar, closed-circuit cameras and digital warning signs.

On April 22nd, Gov. Ducey signed a law banning cellphone use while driving.

CALIFORNIA

A trip across the Golden Gate Bridge will soon cost you more. Bridge officials have voted to increase the toll to \$9.75 by 2023. It is not known if the tolls will be increased yearly or just increased to \$9.75 in 2023.

A state audit has found that the DMV has significant deficiencies and an out dated organizational structure that set conditions for poor customer service and failed to implement a new federal mandated ID program. State Dept. of Finance auditors determined that the DMV was not prepared to implement the Real Id program. On one visit to a DMV field office, auditors found long lines of customers waiting for service, but 30% of the service windows closed. Gov. Newsom says he will take immediate action to resolve the problems.

Two new bills pertaining to DUI, have been introduced. One would require all DUI offenders to have the interlock systems installed in their vehicles. At present, not all first time offenders are required to have the systems. The second bill would lower the legal blood alcohol limit from .08 % to .05 %.

A motorist has sued the DMV over their refusal to issue special plates reading COYW. He says that it is supporting his favorite English football team. COYW is a acronym for the slogan “Come on you Whites”. DMV says the abbreviation could “have racial overtones” and carry” connotations offensive to good taste and decency”.

April has been designated as “Distracted Driving Awareness Month” with increased enforcement and expanded education of hands free cell phone use.

Members of Gov. Newsom’s staff met with a state Assembly group to request money to correct problems and update the DMV, but the group said they saw no improvements to fix the problem and refused to allocate money for the project.

Assemblyman Kevin Kiley has introduced a bill, (AB 862) that would prohibit the DMV from operating a secret DMV field office that only serves a select group of individuals in state government including Members of the Legislature and their staff.

Problems at the DMV include registering over 1,500 ineligible voters, including non-citizens, preventing over 500 eligible voters to register due to failure to submit paperwork on time, employees sleeping on the job over 2,000 hours and dozens of technology outages disabling operations for hours at a time and failure to comply with federal law requiring the Real ID identity verification. The director responsible for the mismanagement has resigned, but is collecting a “nice” retirement salary.

A recent report on causes of stress cited that drivers in the Los Angeles area spend an equivalent of 15 workday hours stuck in traffic.

COLORADO

Legislation is under consideration to reinstate the state’s motorcycle helmet law.

D.C. WASHINGTON

The Washington Monument, which was closed to tourists since 2016, is on rack to reopen in August of this year.

The D.C. Mayor wants to do away with confusing signs around the city. She is asking residents to report misplaced or contradictory signs by sharing a photo and location on social media with the hashtag, #GoodSignDC, WTOP radio reports.

IDAHO

Gov. Little has signed legislation to designate U.S. Highway 20 as the Idaho Medal of Honor Highway.

Legislation to require motorists to slow down and move over when approaching tow trucks and maintenance vehicles parked along roadways with their lights flashing was been signed into law by the Gov.

INDIANA

Dozens of drivers in the Dalesville area have filed claims seeking money from the state after their cars were damaged while driving on a pothole- afflicted section of I-69.

IOWA

A proposal to heat highways in the state to help eliminate hazardous driving is under consideration. The state Dept. of Transportation and Iowa State University are working on the project.

Drivers who have unpaid traffic tickets are challenging the state's ability to seize part of their tax refunds to collect the money

MARYLAND

The Francis Scott Key and Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridges will go cashless later this year. Motorists will have to pay with credit cards or the E-Z Pass system.

MASSACHUSETTS

Residents of Havenhill who report potholes to city officials could find themselves a few dollars richer as a bonus for reporting the potholes.

The state Senate is debating a bill that would let residents list a nonbinary gender designation on their driver's licenses.

MICHIGAN

Newly introduced legislation would lower the legal blood alcohol concentration to .05.

Four new license plates were unveiled on April 16th, each featuring a logo of the Detroit Lions, Pistons, Red Wings and Tigers.

MISSISSIPPI

The state Dept. of Transportation is closing 27 additional bridges after inspectors found the structures unsafe, bringing the total to 61 closed bridges.

MISSOURI

The state Dept. of Revenue (DMV) is now offering drivers licenses and ID cards that comply with stricter federal requirements under the Real ID act.

Water from flooded areas caused more than 160 local roads to be closed.

MINNESOTA

The state Senate has approved tougher penalties for people who text while driving.

MONTANA

The states DMV has been notified by Dept. of Homeland Security that the state is now in full compliance with the Real ID Act and regulations

NORTH DAKOTA

Gov. Burgum has signed legislation that will seal the court records of convicted DUI drivers, if they are not charged with another DUI or any other crime for seven years.

NEBRASKA

The mayor of Omaha is making a temporary policy exemption to pay for some vehicles damaged by the city's potholes.

The city of Lincoln is eliminating toll takers from city parking facilities and replacing them with automated toll collection machines.

NEVADA

Lawmakers are considering allowing 14-year-olds to drive if their school districts do not provide transportation. They would be allowed only to drive to and from school.

The state DMV is now offering on-line appointments for DMV service's as a way to eliminate long wait times. At present, it is only in the Las Vegas area, but may be state wide soon.

Las Vegas officials say a 3-year overhaul is coming to the Strip. The project will start in June and will repave the entire core of Las Vegas Boulevard.

NEW YORK

A coalition of public transit supporters is celebrating a plan to impose new tolls on motorists entering the parts of Manhattan. There is opposition from several groups, especially businesses.

New York City is trying to fix a disintegrating highway that serves as a critical traffic artery, while protecting the Brooklyn Heights Promenade Park, known for its view of the Manhattan skyline. Built in the 30's, the park makes up the top deck of a 1.5-mile stretch of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. The structure is now 65 years old.

NORTH CAROLINA

All of the roads in the state that were closed due to damage from Hurricane Florence, are now open. It took seven months to reopen all of the 2500 roads.

OHIO

State lawmakers have slashed Gov. De Wine's proposed gas tax down to 6 cents per gallon, a third of what the Gov. wanted.

On April 3, a compromise raised the gas tax to 10.5 cents per gallon and 19 cents a gallon for diesel fuel.

A bill before the Legislature would require drivers under 18 years old to use their learner's permit for a full year. That would mean minors would have to be at least sixteen and a half before they could get their probationary driver's license.

OKLAHOMA

A new grant program in Tulsa hopes to encourage business to invest in neon signage to light Route 66 and help bring more tourists to the Tulsa area.

PENNSYLVANIA

The state Turnpike is stacked with \$11.8 billion of debt. The Turnpike Commission is stuck in a hard place between a state mandate and a federal lawsuit.

The elimination of registration stickers for license plates has saved money and improved customer service, the state Dept. of Transportation says.

Rhode Island

A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit over the state's new truck tolls.

Providence Mayor Jorge Elorza says the city will make 700-more electric bicycles available for rent.

A new bill would allow New York Yankee fans to show team pride on their license plates.

VERMONT

The state will offer a third gender option on driver's licenses and ID cards as soon as this summer.

March 31st marked the start of the paving season starting with Interstate 89.

VIRGINIA

A proposal in the state would ban motorists from holding and using cell phones while driving. AAA has asked Gov. Northam to amend another bill to include the ban.

WASHINGTON

A new report says there are nearly 400 structurally deficient bridges in Washington.

Seattle's new tunnel is carrying 5,500 vehicles during peak hours, less than expected.

WEST VIRGINIA

State officials say they hope some new measures will make a dangerous section of Interstate 77, safer for travelers.

A long delayed project to expand the Coalfields Expressway has finally started.

A road construction project will cause delays for some visitors to the New River Gorge National River through July.

Wyoming

A state lawmaker is trying again to impose tolls to widen I-80, the state's busiest highway'

WHAATSUUP HERE AND THERE

Police in Jackson Mississippi say that someone is stealing the tires off patrol cars while parked in the Police Dept. parking lot.

Most states are very lax to enact new laws or to increase enforcement of laws requiring auto dealers (mostly used car dealers) to inform buyers about vehicle recalls or major safety problems with the vehicles they are selling.

Tom Mayor, consultant for KPMG, who advises car companies on their strategies, says self-driving cars are 10 to 15 years away, but 6 new technologies will be available before the self-driving cars are. They are more secure ways to start your car, in-car monitoring systems, augmented reality, partially self-driving tech, bigger, more advanced touchscreens and more driver assistant systems.

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