

AAMVA Regional News

June 15, 2012

Region I News

Hate the D.C. DMV? Now You Can Give It A Grade

It's no secret that many D.C. city services have improved over the years. But if you feel like you were treated in particularly poor way while at the DMV, for example, there's now a way for you help give it a failing grade. This week Mayor Vincent Gray rolled out Grade.DC.gov, a new website that allows residents to offer feedback on five city agencies and contribute to giving them each a grade. Grade.DC.gov harnesses innovative analytical technology to see what you are saying online about services provided to you by the District Government. Feedback is collected from the website and combine the data with comments on social media sites like Twitter, Facebook and various blogs. This data allows a grade to be formed for each of the pilot agencies - DMV, DCRA, DDOT, DPW and DPR. This grade helps agencies to be more transparent and make strategic improvements to services. The eventual outcome-a single grade for participating agencies-could serve as a simple and understandable indicator as to how they're serving residents. The feedback form isn't particularly groundbreaking, but that the tool will measure tweeted reactions is certainly a step forward. [Read the full story at DCist.com.](#)

License Plate Proposal Could Yield Dividends *(New Jersey)*

After a year of study, the Motor Vehicle Commission will soon shift management of plate manufacture and distribution to a private vendor, to be named July 20. No change in color or design is expected, but the winning bidder will be required to produce plates that hold up under normal wear for at least five years. The contract will require the vendor to pay the state as much as \$6 for each plate delivered in faulty condition. The cost for a pair of traditional passenger plates is expected to hold at \$11. In the past, the MVC has acknowledged only that peeling and fading are caused by extremes in weather or overly harsh cleaning solvents. Conditions improved when the agency changed its metal sheeting process in 2005, but last year its chief administrator called peeling plates "one of my personal bugaboos." "Other states don't have this problem," said Commissioner Raymond Martinez. For nearly a year, Martinez made a point of randomly questioning car owners about plate condition, but this week he declined to discuss his "little poll" for fear of compromising the bidding process. Bids are due Thursday. In the 31-page request for proposals, several pages are devoted to ensuring that plates measure up to the most exacting standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials. [Read the full story at NorthJersey.com.](#)

New Jersey Parents Could Face Test before Teen Gets License

New Jersey lawmakers have advanced a bill that would increase requirements for teens to get driver's licenses -- even though Gov. Chris Christie vetoed an identical bill earlier this year. The bill was advanced unanimously by the Assembly Transportation and Public Works Committee on Thursday. It can now head to the entire Assembly. Under the bill, teens would have to have learner's permits for at least one year and must log 50 hours of practice driving time before getting their licenses. Their parents would also be required to go through driver orientation courses. The Insurance Institute of Highway Safety says the measure would decrease the number of road fatalities statewide by 3% each year. The state Senate has not yet voted on the reintroduced bill. [Read the full story at NBC Philadelphia.](#)

Fake IDs Net Dozens of Charges *(New York)*

Officials confiscated 81 driver's licenses from concertgoers at Saratoga Performing Arts Center's beer garden, including 61 from underage drinkers who had purchased fake identification and may have inadvertently put their

own identities at risk. DMV investigators ticketed 61 people for possession of a fraudulent license, 19 for using another's license and one for possession of an altered license at Friday's and Saturday's Dave Matthews Band shows. All face losing their driver's license for 90 days to a year and terms of community service. One individual who refused to cooperate will be charged with a felony. Many of the fraudulent IDs were purchased for \$75 to \$150 on an Internet site previously based in Beijing and now in Malaysia. Many teenagers provide "ID mills" their valid names, which the companies typically sell up to seven times to others seeking fake identifications. The licenses taken at the DMB concerts were from different states, including Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Jersey. [Read the full story in the Teams Union.](#)

Drivers Aiding in Sex Trafficking Will Lose License Under New Law (New York)

The City Council passed a law Wednesday that would fine and revoke the licenses of taxi and livery car drivers if they are convicted of committing a sex trafficking crime. Drivers for hire will be fined \$10,000 under the new law, which will go into effect later this year. The new legislation also requires drivers seeking new licenses or renewals to complete a program that educates them about sex trafficking violations. Council Speaker Christine Quinn said three airlines — Jet Blue, Delta and American — had agreed to train their employees about how to identify a sex trafficking victim and what to do if one approaches them. [Read the full story at WNYC.org.](#)

Pennsylvania Lawmakers Considering Bill that would Penalize Drivers for Ignoring Flood Roadblocks

State lawmakers are considering a bill that would penalize drivers who ignore roadblocks and plunge their vehicles into flooded roadways, endangering their lives and taxing rescuers. The bill would levy a \$250 to \$500 fine for violations along with two points on a driver's license and the cost of any rescue that is required. The state House approved the measure last month and sent it to the Senate for consideration. Local emergency and police officials are hailing the idea, saying such rescues often happen when crews are trying to deal with flood damage and downed trees and power lines. [Read the full story at Lehigh Valley Live.](#)

Region II News

Alabama Governor Signs through Texting and Driving Law

On May 8, Governor Robert Bentley signed through the texting law. Beginning on August 1, the new bill will ban text messaging on the public roads of Alabama. The bill specifically bans the sending of text messages, emails and instant messages for drivers. Exceptions were written in to allow contact between emergency services and GPS systems. Alabama now becomes the 38th state to have a texting law in place, including a few others nearby in the southeast. The new law will be set for primary enforcement. If someone is found in violation of the new law, their first offense will include a \$25 fine. The second offense will go up to \$50, while a third would be a \$75 fine. After the third violation, the fines would continue to be \$75. According to DPS statistics, electronic communications were involved in over 1,200 accidents back in 2010, as well as five deaths. DPS also pointed out the true distraction time that can be brought on by texting behind the wheel, which is about 4.6 seconds per text where the eyes would be off the road.

New Jersey Considers Tougher Penalties for Texting Drivers Involved in Fatal Accidents

New Jersey lawmakers again are considering how to crack down on drivers who text while at the wheel. The latest measure would allow prosecutors to seek convictions for vehicular homicide or assault by auto if the use of a cell phone behind the wheel results in death or injury. Another bill that's awaiting action in the full Legislature would increase the fines for texting while driving. It also allows a judge to suspend the license of a third-time offender for 90 days. [Read the full story at Newworks.org](#)

North Carolina DMV Works with Environmental Crimes Taskforce to Charge Two Area Vehicle Inspectors

Two former employees of Perla Motorsports were arrested over the past two weeks by the DMV's License and Theft Bureau for performing clean scans on 18 vehicles in 2011. Carlos Efrain Ramos Ucles, 20, was arrested June 1 and placed in jail on a \$5,000 secured bond. Benton Lucas Foreman, 33, arrested on June 6 and placed in jail on a \$10,000 secured bond. Foreman was charged with 15 felony counts of issuing an electronic inspection authorization for a vehicle that did not pass inspection and was not issued a waiver. Ucles was charged with three counts of the same felony charge. A clean scan of a vehicle involves the use of a substitute vehicle to pass the inspection of a vehicle that would not pass on its own. At the time of the offenses, Foreman and Ucles were licensed state inspectors at Perla Motorsports. They are charged with performing clean scans for customers whose vehicles would not pass inspections either because of a check engine light or for not-ready issues. Customers would pay extra money for this service. Perla Motorsports' license to operate an inspection station was suspended for nine years in September 2011 and the business was fined \$4,500 for allowing clean scans on vehicles. The arrests follow a yearlong joint investigation by the Bureau of Investigation's Diversion and Environmental Crimes Unit, the Environmental Protection Agency's Criminal Investigation Division, the Division of Air Quality and the DMV's License and Theft Bureau. The case remains under investigation. [Read the DMV press release.](#)

New Charges Filed Against Newton DMV Examiner (North Carolina)

Fifteen more felony charges been filed in the case of the DMV examiner who has been charged with giving away driver's licenses illegally. Cathy Warlick Rudisill, 62, was originally charged with 13 counts of wrongful issuance of a driver's license on May 9. Now she's facing 28 counts of the crime. It's not clear why Rudisill may have issued licenses illegally, if she was paid to do it or if she was giving licenses to illegal immigrants. Rudisill worked in the Newton office of the DMV as a senior examiner. She'd worked there for almost two years when she was arrested. Her salary was \$34,784. Each of the 28 warrants described what she did as, "Knowing it is false, enters false information concerning a driver's license or a special identification card in the records of the division." The problems came to light April 25 when someone tipped off Rudisill's boss. The informant told him it was possible to get a NC driver's license in Newton without presenting proper documentation or taking a written test. Her boss looked into the allegation and found that Rudisill had issued 54 questionable licenses from Jan. 1 through May 4 of this year. The average processing time on a license is about 30 minutes. Rudisill was allegedly getting it done in less than five minutes. She is also accused of allowing the license recipients to take the tests manually rather than on the computer system as required by the state – thereby eliminating the electronic record of the test. The only time manual testing is allowed is when the computer system is inoperable and the Driver's License Examiner has received permission from Raleigh NCDMV headquarters to proceed with the manual test. Rudisill never got permission to give manual tests. [Read the full story in the Hickory Record.](#)

South Carolina Now Offers Driver License Appointments

South Carolina has launched an experimental program that allows people to make appointments to take their driver license tests. The program is being tried at 12 offices across the state. The other offices are continuing with their walk-in format. The program began last week and offers appointments from 2-4:30 p.m. weekdays. In the new plan, people can make appointments by calling a participating office and leaving a message with their names and phone numbers. DMV staff members will return the call within one business day. Participating offices will handle only appointments from 2-4:30 p.m., unless someone with an appointment cancels or is more than 10 minutes late. Then walk-in customers will be taken. [Read the full story in The Charlotte Observer.](#)

Tea Party, High Schools Might Get South Carolina Car Tags

An unofficial symbol of the Tea Party – as well as logos of South Carolina's 200-plus public and independent high schools – would be able to be put on S.C. customized vehicle license tags under a bill likely to be passed later this month. A Tea Party emblem – a coiled rattlesnake with the message "Don't Tread on Me" – would give that fledgling movement of anti-big government, anti-tax activists a highly visible perch on perhaps thousands of S.C. vehicles that more established political parties don't have. The Tea Party plate is just one of some two dozen categories of new plates the bill would authorize. The largest category of new license plates would be one that allows supporters of the state's 200-plus public and independent high schools to get customized license plates for their schools. If all 200-plus high schools eventually get their own license tags, that would more than double the 140 or so plates now authorized for sale to the motoring public. Some 38 colleges and universities now have their own license plates. In general, any group wanting a customized license tag under the new law would have to pay the DMV \$6,800, up from the previous \$4,000. That covers the increasing expenses of producing a tag. Then any individuals wanting to buy the new tag have to pay an additional fee. The cost varies with the tag. [Read the full story at Herald On-Line.](#)

Drop in Plate Sales Could Mean Less Funding For MADD (Tennessee)

Volunteers with the Mothers Against Drunk Driving organization are urging Tennesseans to make a trip to their county clerk's office and purchase MADD TN license plates. The Tennessee Chapter of MADD could be facing a loss of more than \$15,000 in funding next year because of a plunge in sales of MADD TN license plates. Only 434 plates have been sold statewide, leaving MADD TN 66 plates short of the 500-plate minimum that keeps specialty license plates in circulation. MADD must sell those 66 plates before June 30 or the specialty plates will be retired and the funding they provide to the organization will be lost. The money from the plates makes up about 4% of MADD Tennessee's total budget. Tennessee started issuing the MADD license plates in 2001. The plates were well received in their first few years of circulation with about 850 sold in one year. In recent years sales have gradually tapered off. He said it might be due to a larger variety of organizations offering specialty plates now. The license plates cost \$35 and have an annual fee of \$56.50. [Read the full story in Knox News.](#)

Texas' Specialty License Plate Program Close to Reaching 100,000 Mark

My Plates has sold more than 98,000 personalized license plates to Texas drivers and has contributed \$10.5 million to the state's general fund so far. My Plates, a joint venture between Etech of Nacogdoches and Pinnacle Technical Resources has a five-year contract with the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles. A stipulation in the contract guarantees \$25 million to the state's general fund. TxDMV Chairman Victor Vandergriff says that My Plates is on track to meet or exceed their commitment to the state. The contract began in 2009. My Plates offers 140 different license plate backgrounds and designs. [Read the full story in the San Antonio Business Journal.](#)

Texas Auto Dealer License Form Process Goes Online

The Texas DMV announced Monday that vehicle dealers can now check the status of their license application on the agency's website, www.txdmv.gov/. The new program, Dealer License Application Status, allows dealers to see where their application is in the process, from receipt of the paperwork to the mailing of the license.

Dealers must provide an email address on the license application to use the system. The TxDMV will send the dealer a confirmation email with a work item number. That number will track the dealer's application and where it is in the process. The automated Dealer License Application Status will keep dealers informed and at the same time reduce phone calls to staff so they can quickly process these applications. The auto industry contributes almost \$3 billion in motor vehicle sales and rental taxes, making it the second largest tax contributor to state revenue. The DMV is charged with overseeing the state's motor vehicle services that provide consumer protection, assist motor vehicle-related businesses and raise revenue for the state. For every \$1 it spends, the TxDMV returns

\$10 to build and maintain highways, roads and bridges and provide needed services to Texans. Each year the agency registers almost 22 million vehicles; regulates vehicle dealers; credentials buses and big trucks for intrastate and interstate commerce; and awards grants to law enforcement agencies to reduce vehicle burglaries and thefts. [Read the full story in the Times Record News.](#)

DPS Hopes to Speed Driver's License Process with Megacenters (Texas)

For years, the DPS has been peppered with complaints about long lines and poor customer service at driver's license offices. In the latest attempt to fix that problem, the agency is opening what it calls "megacenters" in Fort Worth and other major metro areas. The centers -- most of which haven't been built -- will be larger than most typical DPS offices, with employees trained to handle driver's license requests quickly. A groundbreaking is scheduled this morning for a DPS megacenter in east Fort Worth. The facility is tentatively scheduled to open in January. Existing DPS offices will remain open. All the offices will continue to issue new and renewed driver's licenses, commercial licenses, identification cards and parent-taught driver certificates. But while Tarrant County motorists may still go to whichever DPS office they choose, agency officials hope they'll be drawn to the new megacenter in east Fort Worth, where the emphasis will be on the use of technology to speed up the customer flow. The goal of the megacenters is to ease demand within regions by increasing capacity to serve the growing population in Texas. Each megacenter will be larger than a typical office and will employ at least 25 people. Megacenters will also feature expanded parking and will utilize technology and online scheduling to expedite transactions and enhance customer service. North Texas will get two new DPS offices -- the one in east Fort Worth, and another in Garland, scheduled to open in September. Similar offices are being built in Austin, Houston and San Antonio. The work is made possible by a \$63 million infusion from the state Legislature; lawmakers say one of the most common complaints they hear from constituents is the long process and bureaucratic obstacles involved in getting a license. While other state agencies are cutting programs and laying off employees, the DPS is planning to use its funding boost to build the new megacenters, install new equipment and technology, give raises to employees and hire more workers. The agency issues about 6 million licenses a year. [Read the full story in the Star Telegram.](#)

Texas DMV Working to Streamline License Plate Requests

The Texas DMV has created a new program on the TxDMV.gov site that allows dealers to check the status of their license applications. The Dealer License Application Status program will keep dealers informed about the status of the license and reduce phone calls to staff. [Read the full story in Biz Journals.](#)

Region III News

ACLU Helps Indiana Youth Group in Fight with State

The gay youth group that had its specialty license plates revoked by the state earlier this year is looking to overturn that decision with help from the American Civil Liberties Union. The Indiana Youth Group is appealing the state's decision to end its specialty plates and expects to have a December hearing on the issue. Executive Director Mary Byrne said she thinks the hearing will give them a chance to show that selling low-numbered plates to supporters is common practice among groups with specialty plates. BMV spokesman Dennis Rosebrough said the Indiana 4-H Foundation is also appealing the termination of its specialty plates by the state. Rosebrough said the groups broke their contract with the state when they sold their plates for more than the \$40 standard fee. Indiana Youth Group maintains it is a common practice among Indiana's some 100 organizations with specialty plates to give out low-numbered plates as thank-you gifts. The group sued the state in 2010 after the BMV turned down its request for a specialty plate in 2008 and 2009. [Read the full story at Wane.com.](#)

Patrol Wants Bridges Named for Troopers Killed On Duty (Iowa)

The Iowa State Patrol wants Johnson County's support in naming two interstate bridges after troopers who died in the line of duty. The proposal is part of a statewide effort to honor the 10 troopers who died while serving the state during the patrol's 77-year history. In Johnson County, the patrol wants to name the Interstate Highway 380 bridge over the Iowa River in the northern part of the county after Trooper Harold DeGear. He died after he was hit by a car while writing a ticket in 1954. A bridge over the Iowa River on Interstate Highway 80 in Coralville would be named after Trooper Allen Nieland. He was killed in 1990 in an airplane crash while searching for a robbery suspect. Naming the bridges in the troopers' honor would help provide "some recognition for those guys for what they gave up for Iowa," said Sgt. Dave Willis of the State Patrol. In May, Cass County supervisors approved naming two bridges to honor two troopers who died in an airplane crash near Atlantic in 1989. Troopers Lance Dietsch, the pilot, and Stanley Gerling were searching for an elderly man who had wandered away from a nursing home. The bridges are located near Lewis. DOT's office of Traffic and Safety, which is overseeing the process, said he expects all 10 troopers to have bridges named in their honor and for the signs to be installed this summer. The bridge signs will be 6.5 feet wide and 3 feet high and include the State Patrol shield. [Read the full story in the Des Moines Register.](#)

State Highway Patrol to Increase Enforcement at High-Accident Areas across State (Ohio)

This summer the State Highway Patrol will beef up patrols in high-crash areas in response to a 12 percent hike in the number of traffic fatalities this year. The patrol will send out three regional traveling tactical squads to areas with a high number of fatal and serious accidents. Troopers will stop and ticket drivers who are exhibiting dangerous driving such as speed, improper passing or following too closely. Metropolitan areas are not included since they already have patrol posts. "The summer-long initiative, which also serves as a high visibility enforcement effort, will be using mapped crash data to not only focus on high crash areas, but also the days and times when most of the crashes are occurring," said Col. John Born, patrol superintendent. [Read the full story at Cleveland.com.](#)

Region IV News

Cell Phone Ban is Reducing Distracted Driving Deaths in California

Some time has gone by since 2008 when hand-held cell phones were banned for automobile drivers in California. Drivers initially reacted poorly to fines for speaking, texting, or working from their cell phones while driving. While many drivers are still attempting to air traffic control their lives from their driver's seat, and multi tasking while driving is still a problem, most drivers in general have mellowed out and have diminished their use of cell phones and smartphones in the car. So, at least anectdotally, according to the results of this study, the [cell phone ban in cars](#) is actually saving lives in California. The Office of Traffic Safety announced recently that the total number of traffic deaths in California has declined by 22%; the death-by-cell phone rate dropped an even more stunning 47%. Breaking down the study by years, in the first year alone after the cell phone ban, the CHP reported 700 fewer fatal accidents, and that there were 75,000 to 100,000 fewer collisions--the biggest single year-to-year drop in the history of the state. Though the base fine for being caught driving with a phone in your hand is still only \$20, Governor Jerry Brown vetoed an increase last year on the grounds that the law is working because it is strictly enforced. Drivers are realizing that distracted driving is risky behavior, and most people are complying. [Read the full story in The Legal Examiner](#)

Easier Access Sought for Driver's Licenses (Colorado)

Proponents of a ballot proposal that would offer Colorado driver's licenses to all residents of the state whether they are a legal resident or an undocumented immigrant are busy gathering signatures despite cries that the initiative

would legitimize illegal behavior. The petition specifications for Initiative 52 have been approved by the secretary of state and proponents have until Aug. 6 to collect the 86,105 valid signatures needed to place the initiative on the November ballot. Proponents had only collected just over 6,500 signatures as of the May 22 public announcement of the initiative. The proposal asks Colorado voters to make a statutory change to approve driver's licenses for all, despite legal residential status. In order to obtain a driver's license in Colorado under I-52, applicants would be required to pass the driving test, as well as show their Individual Tax Identification Number issued by the IRS; provide a Colorado tax return from the previous year; and present one government-issued form of identification from their country of origin. The idea is to require proof of identity, residency in Colorado and economic contributions to the state in order to qualify. The stated purpose is to "make communities stronger, the economy healthier, and the roads safer," according to proponents, who argue that because undocumented immigrants are unable to obtain a legal driver's license in Colorado they are more likely to forgo carrying insurance, or more likely to flee the scene of an accident if they are involved in one. [Read the full story in the Colorado Statesman.](#)

[New Mexico Busts Alleged Driver's License Fraud Ring](#)

New Mexico authorities on Wednesday detailed what they called a "recipe for fraud" as they announced the bust of a sophisticated ring that specialized in helping illegal immigrants obtain fraudulent driver's licenses. The recipe included reams of fraudulent documents — from rental agreements to bank statements, vehicle titles and insurance paperwork — that were used as proof of residency to obtain licenses in at least 54 cases. The probe is continuing, and authorities said that investigators believe hundreds of licenses have been fraudulently obtained through the ring over the past couple of years for illegal immigrants living outside of New Mexico. Arrest warrants were issued for nine people. A criminal complaint details the ring that authorities say was operating in eastern New Mexico. Those named in the complaint face dozens of charges ranging from forgery to conspiracy to commit altered, forged or fictitious licenses. The investigation began eight months ago after several foreign nationals were found to be using the same phone numbers to make appointments at the MVD office. Several applicants also were using the same addresses as their places of residence, even though they did not live there. It was a phone call from a Brazilian woman living in Georgia inquiring about her license that unearthed the scam. The woman told authorities she agreed to pay Collazo-Medrano \$4,000 for a driver's license. The scam involved her flying to Amarillo, Texas, and being driven to Portales, where her paperwork was prepared. A hold was put on the license due to fraud suspicions. The woman demanded her money back, and Collazo-Medrano allegedly told her that he didn't need her money since he was making \$30,000 a month getting fraudulent licenses for others. State officials said they are working to revoke the 54 licenses that were connected to the busted ring. About 92,000 foreign national licenses have been issued in New Mexico since 2003. Out of those, only 16,000 license holders filed a return this tax season. Each time the state has tried to prevent fraud through administrative measures like requiring in-person appointments or tracking addresses and phone numbers of applicants, the rings have become more creative in finding ways around the system. [Read the full story in the Wall Street Journal.](#)

[Other News of Interest](#)

[NMVTIS Unavailable Weekend of June 30 and July 1](#)

The following information is a revision from previously communicated info. In order to minimize the impact on the jurisdictions, AAMVA is reducing the window when NMVTIS will be unavailable on the weekend of June 30 and July 1. The NMVTIS central site and NMVTIS sub-applications (State Web Inquiry and State Batch Inquiry) will be unavailable to all jurisdictions starting on Saturday, June 30th at noon time EDT until Monday July 2nd at 2am EDT. During this period, the pseudo batch transactions and the batch files from jurisdictions will not be processed. They will be scheduled for processing after the system is made available to the states on Monday 7/2. The reason for

the extended outage is to ensure a smooth rollout of California AB 1215. For those unfamiliar with AB 1215, starting on July 1, 2012, California used car and truck dealers are required to query NMVTIS before selling any used vehicle. If the NMVTIS report shows a previous salvage or other state title brand or reported event, such as Insurance Total Loss, then this information must be disclosed to consumers in advance of a sale. A very high volume of traffic to NMVTIS is anticipated during this period as used car and truck dealerships query NMVTIS for all vehicles on their lots in order to comply with this California law. The AAMVA team remains dedicated to providing quality services that meet the critical business needs of our customers, including providing advance notice of all planned outages. Should additional questions exist, please contact Tom Kubala, AAMVA's Director of Operations at 703-908-8269, or email tkubala@aamva.org.