

AAMVA Regional News

October 12, 2012

Tidbits

The Oregon DMV has released an RFP for contractor services to assist the DMV in planning for a system modernization initiative. They are seeking a contractor with knowledge and expertise to review, analyze and perform a thorough examination of DMV's current computer systems. Responses are due November 15. You can review the RFP by [clicking here](#).

The Ohio State Highway Patrol offers training this month to citizens interested in helping law enforcement spot illegal activity on the road. The Community Shield training will include information on detecting impaired drivers, homeland security threats and human trafficking. Attendees will receive a free license plate bracket.

Region I News

State Voter ID Cards Now Available *(New Hampshire)*

New Hampshire state voter ID cards are now available for any qualified New Hampshire voter in need of identification to meet the state's new voter ID law. Voters whose name appears on the checklist, and who do not have an acceptable ID for voting purposes, are eligible for the state-issued ID card for voting purposes only. These free cards can be picked up by getting a voucher from the Town Clerk's office and taking it over to the DMV, where they will issue you an ID for voting purposes only. People without an acceptable ID on Nov. 6 can still vote, but they must first sign a "challenged voter affidavit" at their polling place. The Secretary of State's Office reminds voters that the acceptable forms of ID for voting this year are: a drivers license from any state, even if expired; a non-driver photo ID issued by the DMV; a U.S. military ID; a U.S. passport, even if expired; a valid student ID; a valid photo ID card issued by federal, state, county or municipal government; any photo ID deemed legitimate by a supervisor of the checklist, town or city clerk, or moderator; or verification of identify by a supervisor of the checklist, town or city clerk or moderator. The vouchers obtained from one's town or city clerk can then be taken by the voter to any DMV licensing office for processing. One is not eligible for the free voter ID if they possess a NH drivers license or non-driver photo ID issued by the NH DMV. The DMV will issue the voter a valid, temporary ID card, and the original photo ID will arrive in the mail about two weeks later. [Read the full story in the Amherst Patch.](#)

Pennsylvania Could Soon Yank Licenses of Some Drivers

Pennsylvania drivers who fail to take care of debts owed for incidents of bad driving could soon be out of luck when it comes time to renew their driver's license. The Senate voted 46-3 to advance a bill to the governor that is supposed to help the state collect about \$90 million for victims of driving-related offenses through restitution. House lawmakers already approved the bill – HB1617 – by unanimous consent. State law requires a minimum 50% of payments made by a defendant to be applied to restitution. Awaiting the Governor's signature is a bill that would allow Pennsylvania courts to suspend the driver's license of any defendant failing to pay full restitution for such incidents as striking a building. [Read the full story in Land Line Magazine.](#)

DMV Promoting Online Renewals/ Highway Message Boards (Rhode Island)

Drivers will see a new message while traveling on Rhode Island's roads. "Save Time...Renew your License & Registration Online." The DMV has partnered with the DOT to display the reminder on highway message board throughout the state. The goal is to inform Rhode Islanders of the many convenient services now available on the DMV's website. Customers must have a valid Rhode Island operator license eligible for renewal up to 45 days before its expiration date and more than 180 days past due. A credit card and billing address are needed to complete the transaction, in order to use the online license renewal service. To process a registration online, customers need a current vehicle registration renewal notice, current insurance card, credit card and billing address, and printer connected to a computer in order to print a receipt. [Read the full story at FoxProvidence.com.](#)

Administration Underscores Importance of School Bus Safety with New Report Card (New Jersey)

Reinforcing the importance of the state's stringent school bus inspection program, the Motor Vehicle Commission has announced the availability of a powerful tool that allows parents to check the safety records of their child's school bus from the comfort of their own home. The newly-enhanced School Bus Report Card is available 24-hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week at njmvc.gov. Twice a year, the MVC inspects all New Jersey-registered school vehicles utilizing a stringent 180-point checklist that ensures that only the safest vehicles are permitted to transport students. The inspection results are then entered into the MVC's online report card for parents or guardians to view. In addition to improved search functions, the enhanced School Bus Report Card calculates and supplies the percentage of buses within a particular school yard or bus company that were either initially approved or put out of service. The report also details the reason for a bus' failure, if the bus is pending for re-exam, when that re-exam occurred or will occur, or subsequent exam results. Also available online is the MVC's School Bus Safety Activity and Coloring Book. The book, which may be downloaded, is designed to teach youngsters what they need to know about how to safely ride a school bus. At approximately 1,300 locations statewide, 24,000 school vehicles, including school buses, small school vehicles, dual-purpose vehicles and summer camp vehicles, are subject to scheduled inspections every six months by the MVC. Access to vehicle fleet locations for on-site inspections, which is provided under the School Bus Enhanced Safety Inspection Act, allows for better monitoring of carrier operations and maintenance procedures, interaction with mechanics and operational staff, access to inspection and repair records and the ability to ensure more timely inspection of vehicles. Each year, the biannual inspections result in approximately 47.17% of school vehicles being temporarily placed out-of service and 12% are issued 30-day rejection stickers. Violations can range from serious issues, such as brake and steering system problems, to minor defects affecting interior dome and step lighting. Most times, the violations issued are addressed and re-inspected during the same visit. Once the MVC has re-inspected the vehicles, approximately 95 percent are deemed safe for the road. In addition to scheduled inspections, the School Bus Inspection Unit also performs monthly, unannounced inspections with the New Jersey State Police as part of the New Jersey School Bus Task Force. [Read the MVC press release.](#)

State Senate Moving Bill to Ease Vehicle Inspection Rules (Pennsylvania)

The Senate is moving legislation to ease requirements for motorists to have their cars inspected annually for both safety and emissions. A bill facing a likely floor vote next week would waive safety inspections for a new car's first two years and waive emissions inspections for a new car's first 10 years. It would also waive any emissions testing for vehicles powered by electric, hybrid electric and compressed natural gas. Emissions tests are required in 25 counties. The measure started out addressing just emissions tests, but the bill in the Appropriations Committee was amended earlier this month to add the safety inspection waiver. House action would depend on how much can be accomplished with just several voting days left this session. "Pennsylvania is one of only 12 states that still have safety inspections at all," said the sponsor. "And Pennsylvania drivers pay close to \$50 a year for new equipment before you count any repairs. For new vehicles, the safety inspection is pretty much wasted money." Gov. Tom

Corbett's Transportation Funding Advisory Commission last year recommended ending safety inspections for new vehicles during the first two years. This move would save motorists an estimated \$24 million annually. The statewide emissions failure rate is less than 2.5% for all vehicles with the newest vehicles failing at a rate of one quarter of one percent. Newer state and federal laws have done much to address emissions problems, starting with the requirement that cars sold in Pennsylvania have to meet more stringent California emission standards. [Read the full story in the Republican Herald.](#)

Region II News

A New Look for Florida License Plates

Florida is making plans to produce a new license plate and citizens will get a chance to pick the winner. Right now several prototypes are under consideration with variations of green stripes or accents, but all are flat plates with solid black letters. The new plate would dump county names and replace them with "Sunshine State" or "In God We Trust," the state's motto. The goal is to make Florida's new license plate more readable for police and cameras. It is estimated Florida loses millions of dollars every year at toll booths and intersections when cameras cannot read the plates of violators. The leader of Florida's Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles says in this year alone, red light cameras missed about three million license plates because they were unreadable. Julie Jones says the current plate's raised lettering makes it harder for police and cameras to read the tag. "An embossed tag that's flat gives us an option to a lot of different fonts and some different colors and specifications that we can now customize and eliminate the error rate associated with the reading of the tag," says Jones. In the period from January until August, there were 2.8 million unreadable tags in the red light camera process across the state. These were because tags were marred but also because a lot of cameras have difficulty reading the difference between S's, 8's, V's, Y's. The cost of the redesigned plate is estimated at \$31 million. Jones says there will be no cost to drivers, because she's finding efficiencies in the manufacturing and distribution process to help save money on the process. One cost-saving measure would allow you to order your plate from a state website and have it mailed directly to your home. Jones will ask Gov. Rick Scott and members of the Florida Cabinet on October 23 for permission to go ahead with the license plate redesign. If the Cabinet approves the plan, then Floridians will get the chance to vote online for their favorite sample plate at the end of November. Then the issue would go to the Legislature for approval next year. The plan is to roll out the new license plates starting in 2014 and continuing through 2015. [Read the full story at WTSP.com.](#)



Vehicle Taxes Soon to be Due Up Front (North Carolina)

Drivers will soon have to pay more up front to get their license plates renewed. Beginning in the summer of 2013, the DMV will be collecting motor vehicle taxes before renewal of license and registration. The DMV will be rolling out the new program in July. It's expected to significantly cut down on the number of people who duck out of paying their vehicle taxes. The state legislature passed a several law years ago allowing the DMV to start collecting the vehicle taxes, but it's been a long process for the state and local tax agencies to prepare to launch the program. As it stands now, drivers already have to pay to get their cars inspected before the DMV will let them renew the tags. Starting July 1, the vehicle tax must be paid up front too. The vehicle registration process can still be done online, but the taxes will be added to your total bill. Credit card payment will be available. [Read the full story at WECT.com](#)

Georgia Law Requiring Proof of Legal Residency Creates Licensing Backlog

For nurses, hair stylists, kickboxing instructors and even geologists, Georgia's desire to clamp down on illegal [immigration](#) is having an unintended side effect. Things are so jammed at the secretary of state's office that renewing a state license for some of the 200 professions that require one is taking weeks instead of days. For some brand-new nurses, the wait for a license can stretch into three months. The reason is a new law that went into effect at the beginning of the year. It requires people seeking professional licenses to prove they are in the U.S. legally. That means people who used to renew online must now find and send in what the state deems a secure and verifiable document: a copy of a driver's license, a passport, a green card or other government-issued ID. Even a call to ask about how to get a license or why things are taking so long has become a problem. State licensing workers can answer only about three-quarters of the nearly 459,000 calls that come into the call center in a year because the new requirements are bringing more questions and arrived during a period of recession-driven staff cuts. The licensing division has shrunk to 87 employees, down 30 percent since 2008. Mr. Kemp, who has to cut his budget by 3 percent this year, will not reduce staffing at the division any further. The workload is too heavy, plus the division brings in \$24 million a year. Instead, he is laying off staff at the state archives and eliminating public hours there. One would think that simply checking a piece of identification would not gum up the works, but the state licenses 475,000 people over all. Although not all of them renew at the same time, the new step requires hand-checking each application for the correct documents. And despite efforts by the state's professional boards to educate people about the new requirements, more than 8,300 applications have arrived without proof of citizenship or legal residency so far this year. Mr. Kemp will ask the legislature next year to change the bill so that only first-time applicants will need to prove their status. [Read the full story in the New York Times.](#)

DMV Expands Program For New Drivers To Be Tested (South Carolina)

The South Carolina DMV is expanding a program that allows driving instructors to give both written and road skills tests to new drivers. The agency expanded the program across the state because a three-month pilot program was successful. Some 35 driving schools in a dozen counties tested more than 1,700 new drivers during that time. The program allows students to take the tests with their instructors, and it cuts the number of people who must be tested at the DMV office. DMV certifies the instructors. If the new drivers pass the tests, they get a sealed certificate to present to the DMV office. They must appear in person to get their license. [Read the full story in the Sacramento Bee.](#)

Region III News

New Indiana License Plate Marks State's Bicentennial

The new Indiana license plate that will go on millions of vehicles will pay tribute to the state's upcoming bicentennial. Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman and former Congressman Lee Hamilton are co-chairmen of the Indiana Bicentennial Commission. They unveiled the state's new standard license plate during an event Thursday morning at the Indiana Historical Society's headquarters in Indianapolis. The bicentennial commission is organizing activities to celebrate the 200th anniversary of when Indiana was granted statehood in 1816. The new plate design will replace the current standard auto tag introduced in 2008 that features the state flag's torch and stars on a blue background. [Read the full story at WTHR.](#)



Kansas Highway Patrol to Begin Using Electronic Citations

The Kansas Highway Patrol will begin issuing citations in a different form next week in part of the state next week. All Kansas Highway Patrol officers, including state troopers, motor carrier inspectors, and Capitol Police officers, will eventually be using an electronic form of citation, rather than the typical hand-written copies that people may be

familiar with. With support from the district courts throughout Kansas, the Patrol will make the switch to electronic citations in the northwest region next week, and will switch the other six regions of the state over in the next few months. An important thing for motorists to be aware of is that for the new electronic citations, no signature is required. Switching to electronic citations will allow for better efficiencies in the Patrol's way of doing business. Some benefits include: grant tracking for particular initiatives—seat belt enforcement, construction zone, saturation patrols, etc.; improved internal stats to provide more consistency in training and oversight; citations will be easier to read, resulting in more accurate entry of information over handwritten copies; citations will be integrated with the Kansas Law Enforcement Reporting system, which the Patrol utilizes for accident and arrest reports; reduced lag between the time the ticket is issued and the time the information is available to the courts, improving customer service to the public; reduced time to process tickets for the 35+ courts moving to electronic file transfer; tickets will now include Citepay information so those who were cited can pay online (citations also include court contact information); ability for courts to manage court dates electronically, allowing better management of traffic court dockets; ability to report on traffic citations/warnings issued in a given county. Green initiatives—reduced number of duplicate copies will be required. Violations and warnings can be printed on a single page. No new hardware was required to implement the system in patrol vehicles. The Patrol leveraged existing equipment, which was already in place in Patrol vehicles. Courts have the option to purchase an additional interface for electronic file transfer, or can continue to manage information through manual data entry. [Read the KHP press release.](#)

Former St. Joseph License Office Employee Indicted for Helping Illegal Aliens Obtain False IDs *(Missouri)*

A former employee of the fee office in St. Joseph, operated by a contractor for the Department of Revenue, along with a St. Joseph husband and wife, have been indicted by a federal grand jury for their roles in a conspiracy to provide false identity documents so that more than 100 illegal immigrants could fraudulently obtain driver's and non-driver's licenses. The federal indictment alleges that all five co-defendants participated in a conspiracy from July 1, 2010, to Jan. 10, 2012, to sell fraudulently obtained birth certificates and Social Security cards in the names of others. These birth certificates and Social Security cards would then be used by illegal aliens to obtain Missouri driver's or non-driver's licenses, all of which could then be used by the illegal aliens to remain unlawfully in the U.S., to unlawfully obtain employment and for other unlawful purposes. According to the indictment, illegal aliens would travel from across the U.S. to obtain licenses at the St. Joseph license office by using the unlawfully obtained birth certificates and Social Security cards. Document sets were sold to illegal aliens for between \$500 and \$950. Isabel and Hector Mendoza allegedly charged an additional fee of \$100 to escort them to the license office. McNamara, an employee at the license office during the time of the conspiracy, allegedly facilitated the issuance of licenses to illegal aliens who were escorted by the Mendozas. The Mendozas paid McNamara to accept certain identity documents that he was not supposed to accept. The Mendozas paid McNamara \$70 to \$100 for each time he issued a license to an illegal alien who failed to provide adequate identification documents. [Read the full story at InfoZine.com](#)

Region IV News

Phoenix ID Cards Urged for Migrants *(Arizona)*

A Phoenix City Council member has proposed creating city-issued identification cards for undocumented immigrants in order for them to satisfy identification requirements in light of Arizona's controversial immigrant-ID provision in Senate Bill 1070. Councilman Michael Nowakowski is asking that the possibility of creating a city-issued identification card for immigrants that have a Mexican 'matricula consular' card or an equivalent of a foreign identification, but not a valid form of state identification be explored. He fears that, without proper IDs, undocumented immigrants may not report crimes for fear of revealing their residential status. He said the

proposed ID cards would also increase safety for police officers. The Mexican matricula consular card, a photo ID issued by the Mexican government, is not recognized by the Phoenix Police Department because it does not contain information such as height, weight, hair color and eye color. Arizona AG Tom Horne said his initial reaction was to oppose any city-issued ID cards because they might lead to voter fraud. A few U.S. cities, including San Francisco and Trenton, N.J., have begun issuing identification cards for undocumented immigrants. Recently, Los Angeles Councilman Richard Alarcon proposed allowing undocumented immigrants to use city library cards as official identification and debit cards. [Read the full story at AZCentral.com.](#)

Proposition 33: Drivers Who Dropped Insurance Would See Rate Hike (California)

Billionaire insurance executive George Joseph has been fighting with consumer advocate Harvey Rosenfield for two decades over California's landmark automobile insurance law. This November, the two are squaring off again over a ballot initiative that would roll back a provision of the 1988 law and let insurance companies charge drivers based on their history of coverage. Proposition 33 would allow anyone who went five years without a 90-day lapse in payments to maintain a "continuous coverage" discount even if they changed insurers. Opponents have seized upon a provision that says drivers who had dropped insurance coverage in the past would pay higher premiums. The legislation makes an exception for service members and grants an 18-month grace period to people who lose their jobs. Supporters say the change would lower rates for the 85% of drivers who already have car insurance. The initiative also would help insurers lure drivers from competing carriers because the continuous coverage discounts would follow the consumer. Consumer groups say the initiative would hurt students, people recovering from illness, the long-term unemployed and others who dropped auto insurance for what they believed were valid reasons. The initiative is necessary to get around Proposition 103, a 1988 law that forces insurers to set rates using only three main factors: driving experience; miles traveled per year; and safety record. Coverage history is specifically excluded. If voters adopt Proposition 33, insurance companies would have the option of charging higher rates for previously uninsured drivers but still would be constrained by Proposition 103's prohibition on excessive rates. [Read the full story in the Contra Times.](#)

New Mexico Governor Vows to Meet Federal License Requirements

Republican Gov. Susana Martinez asked a federal agency on Wednesday whether there will be another extension of a looming deadline to comply with a nationwide law imposing security standards for driver's licenses. In a letter to DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano, Martinez asked for clarification on what will happen to New Mexico – and potentially other states – if they fail by 2013 to meet requirements of the Real ID Act. Martinez said New Mexico isn't in compliance with the law because it issues driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. However, the governor plans to push again in next year's Legislature to change the law. Similar attempts have failed in the Legislature since Martinez took office last year. Martinez's letter to Napolitano came as states face a Jan. 15, 2013, deadline for meeting federal requirements for certain security features on driver's licenses and identification cards. A Homeland Security spokeswoman said the 2013 deadline for the Real ID requirements applies to states – not individuals. Martinez said the state's practice of granting driver's licenses to illegal immigrants poses a public safety risk and "undermines the validity and security of every New Mexico driver's license." [Read the full story in the Albuquerque Journal.](#)

Washington State Has Highest Seat Belt Use Rate in the Nation

There is yet another sign that Washington drivers are doing the right thing. A newly-released federal report shows that Washington State had the highest seat belt use rate in the nation in 2011 at 97.5%. This marks the seventh consecutive year Washington's seat belt use rate has been above 95%. Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center estimates that wearing lap-and-shoulder restraints reduces a vehicle passenger's risk of dying in a crash by 61%. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration released a report and table comparing seat belt

use rates for all states and territories. The national average in 2011 was 84%. Experts believe that traffic deaths are reduced by good public policy, well-built and maintained roads, and successful education and enforcement efforts. "Our troopers have placed a very high priority on seat belt violations," said WSP Chief John R. Batiste. "They see first-hand the results of not wearing seat belts and are extremely motivated to reduce these unnecessary injuries and deaths." The way states take the observation seat belt survey is changing, so the method will be uniform across the country. This may cause seat belt use rates to change next year. [Read the WSP press release.](#)

Other News of Interest

U.S., Canada Forge New Inspection Agreement

The United States and Canada have preliminarily agreed that American personnel may inspect Buffalo-bound trucks in Fort Erie, Ontario, as part of a long-sought plan to improve traffic flow across the Peace Bridge. The plan calls for the Peace Bridge to serve as one of two experimental border crossings for 18 months beginning in late December, though the details of allowing armed ICE and Customs and Border Protection officers to operate in Canada – a major sticking point in previous negotiations – have yet to be determined. Still, sources close to the talks say the two governments have agreed to one of two options. One involves allowing U.S. law enforcement officers to carry guns on Canadian soil but be subject to stringent Canadian laws and regulations. The sources say that plan could receive tough scrutiny from the officers' union. Another option would allow armed Canadian law enforcement personnel to accompany U.S. officers during inspections in Fort Erie, similar to current U.S. operations at major Canadian airports. Either way, the sources say DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano has assured negotiators the plan is virtually certain to be implemented. The pilot program will initially involve only the Peace Bridge and another international crossing that sources say is located in the State of Washington, with an eye toward a permanent arrangement that will require the approval of Congress and Parliament. The Washington State program is expected to begin first, followed by the larger scale effort on the Peace Bridge. Initiation of the pilot program requires a bilateral memorandum of understanding expected to be completed soon by Homeland Security and Public Safety Canada, working with Customs and Border Protection and the Canada Border Services Agency. In order for the pilot program to become permanent, it must prove successful in expediting traffic, trade and tourism between the United States and Canada, with no adverse impact on security. [Read the full story in Buffalo News.](#)

Did you know . . .

In the heyday of sailing ships, all war ships and many freighters carried iron cannons. Those cannons fired round iron cannon balls. It was necessary to keep a good supply near the cannon. However, how to prevent them from rolling about the deck? The best storage method devised was a square-based pyramid with one ball on top, resting on four, then nine, which rested on sixteen. Thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon. There was only one problem...how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding or rolling from under the others. The solution was a metal plate called a 'Monkey' with 16 round indentations. However, if this plate were made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it. The solution to the rusting problem was to make Brass Monkeys.' Few landlubbers realize that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled. Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannonballs would come right off the monkey; Thus, it was quite literally, 'Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey.'

All this time, you thought that was an improper expression, didn't you?