

Regional News

October 5, 2012

Tidbits

Region I News

Delaware Driver License Practice Test Now Available In iPhone, Android, and Windows Phone 7

The Delaware DMV and Delaware.gov recently launched a new version of the Delaware Driver License Practice Test on the Windows Phone 7 platform, available at the Windows Phone Marketplace. The driver license practice test also is available for Android and iPhone. All versions can be downloaded at apps.delaware.gov. The practice test debuted last year as a free and convenient tool to prepare future drivers for the written test required to obtain a Delaware driver license. Driver instructors and students alike have praised the app. The mobile practice test has also proven popular with Delaware's Spanish-speaking community as a learning tool. While the app is designed to provide the necessary foundation for novice drivers to meet their new responsibilities, it can also be used by existing driver license holders as a refresher on the rules of the road. Delaware Interactive is the first in the NIC family of companies to make this app available on the Windows Phone 7 platform. For those without access to mobile apps, an online version of the practice test can be accessed through the DMV's website,

<http://www.dmv.de.gov>. *Read the full story in Yahoo Finance.*

http://finance.yahoo.com/news/delaware-driver-license-practice-test-153000733.html?_ylt=A2KJjbzJvWlQ5xkAVHHQtDMD

Maryland Officials Seek to Publish List of Toll Scofflaws

Maryland officials hope that publishing a list of drivers who have not paid their tolls will shame them into paying up. Though current law does not allow the Maryland Transportation Authority to publish a list of toll scofflaws, agency Executive Secretary Harold Bartlett said he hopes to change that so that he can publish a "hall of shame" of the worst offenders. The practice has been a successful way to collect delinquent taxes, said Joseph Shapiro, spokesman for Comptroller Peter Franchot, whose office releases a list of the 50 people who owe the most in back taxes every six months. "Sometimes public scrutiny, embarrassment, whatever it is, works," Shapiro said. The Office of the Comptroller says it has collected more than \$26.5 million in delinquent taxes since posting the first list of offenders in 2000. Publishing a list of toll violators is one of a few ways state officials hope to make a dent in the \$6.7 million owed by nearly 650,000 vehicle owners. The MTA also plans to propose legislation in the next General Assembly session that would enable the agency to issue \$50 citations to people who don't pay the tolls they owe within 30 days. Since the MVA can't suspend a driver's license until after a citation has been issued, this would also enable the state to suspend violators' licenses. Under current law, "video tolling" -- going through an E-ZPass lane without an E-ZPass on the windshield -- is considered a violation and should earn a driver a citation. However, the MTA considers video tolling an acceptable form of paying the tolls as long as the driver pays up within 30 days. Some roads don't have toll booths where people can choose to pay cash, so video tolling is the only option for someone without an E-ZPass. As a result, the state hasn't issued citations -- or suspended licenses -- for toll violations for years. The legislation also would enable the state to penalize violators from other states. Between fiscal 2008 and fiscal 2012, the state was owed about \$1.5 billion in tolls. Of that, about \$19.3 million -- \$12.6 million of which has been paid -- was the result of drivers who drove through an E-ZPass lane without the E-

ZPass. Some of the biggest offenders are rental car companies that have refused to charge their customers for unpaid tolls. In addition to suspending drivers' licenses, Franchot said he would also like to be able to suspend the rental companies' businesses licenses if they don't comply. *Read the full story in The Washington Examiner.*

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/maryland-officials-look-to-publish-list-of-toll-scofflaws/article/2509756>

New York to Mark Veterans' Status on Driver Licenses

Military veterans will be able to get a distinguishing mark on their New York driver licenses under a new law signed Wednesday by Gov. Cuomo. Veterans will also be able to request the mark from the DMV for non-driver identification cards. State officials note that many businesses provide discounts to veterans, and this should make it easier to verify that status. The law will take effect in one year. Meanwhile, the DMV plans to revise its application forms and prepare staff on reviewing documents that show an honorable military discharge. Such license renewals will be processed manually. *Read the full story at Gates Chili Post.*

<http://www.gateschilipost.com/latestnews/x354107913/NY-to-mark-veterans-status-on-driver-licenses>

DMV Expanding Use of Audio, Video to Explain Customer Services; Listen to Driver's Manual Now Online (Connecticut)

DMV is starting a new audio and video section on its website to give customers alternatives to reading about services at the agency. The new section, called Videos and Podcasts on DMV Services, can be found at ct.gov/dmv under Online Services. The DMV's goal is to make information available in a variety of formats so that customers find one that can most easily meet their needs. While offering audio podcasts for several years, DMV is now branching off to use video to explain DMV services. The first offering is a new 2-minute video that outlines the steps to renew a motor vehicle registration. It plans to add more videos in the next few months. In addition, DMV's audio-visual section gives customers an opportunity to listen to someone read the driver's manual and links to its podcasts series for all drivers. Online audio explanations of DMV services began with a variety of podcasts in 2005 and before video could be routinely used at the agency. DMV pioneered the use of podcasts among state agencies. The technology at the time particularly appealed to younger drivers and DMV created for them the "New Driver" series of explanations about safe driving and preparing for licensing tests. These became very popular. Among the podcasts offered today are "New Drivers -- How to Take the On-the-Road Skills Test", "New Drivers -- Know Your Traffic Signs", "New Drivers-- The Dangers of Text Messaging While Driving", "Before Purchasing a Vehicle Be Careful of Altered Equipment", "Tips and Cautions About Buying a Vehicle Online", and "How the DMV Works with Older Drivers". *Read the DMV press release.*

<http://www.ct.gov/dmv/cwp/view.asp?a=807&q=512032>

Proposed Pennsylvania Law Allows Courts to Yank Drivers' Licenses for Unpaid Restitution

A bill allowing Pennsylvania courts to suspend the drivers license of criminal defendants who fail to make full restitution to their victims was passed by the House and Senate on Tuesday. The bill, which passed unanimously in the house and 46 to 3 in the Senate, now goes on to the governor for his signature. It amends the state vehicle code to allow for suspension of licenses in cases where restitution has not been paid in full. The proposed legislation is a critical collection enforcement measure to pursue more than \$90 million in driver offense restitution owed statewide." *Read the full story at YDR.com.*

http://www.ydr.com/crime/ci_21690949/proposed-law-allows-courts-yank-drivers-licenses-unpaid

'DUI Hotel' Offers Offenders 2nd Choice (Pennsylvania)

Nearly 30 years after state legislators imposed stricter punishments for drunken drivers, an Allegheny County program allows them to serve mandatory jail terms in a hotel. The county's DUI Alternative Jail Program, known to some as "DUI Hotel," is a three-day, three-night program held at two participating hotels. Offenders attend

compulsory evaluations, alcohol-education programs and treatment sessions. Proponents say it frees jail cells for more serious offenders. Detractors say it does nothing to keep drunken drivers from repeating their offenses. Some likened the program to a debtor's prison: Those who can afford the program go to a hotel, and those who can't afford it go to jail. Allegheny County officials said 550 offenders completed the program in 2011. This year, 295 offenders did so by the end of July. The county makes the program available to first-time offenders with 72-hour jail sentences who are ineligible for Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition, a program for non-violent offenders with limited or no criminal records. Allegheny became the first county in Pennsylvania to adopt such a program in 2010. Officials in Westmoreland County are considering one. *Read the full story in the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review.* <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/DUI-Hotel-offers-offenders-2nd-choice-3908746.php#ixzz283y1QmrE>

House OKs Bill to Require Pennsylvania Licenses to ID Vets

Military veterans would be entitled to a special designation on state driver's licenses and ID cards under a bill passed by the state House of Representatives.

The main sponsor says the purpose of the bill is to provide a convenient form of identification to veterans who have been honorably discharged. He says they could use it to apply for government services or qualify for discounts offered by some local merchants. Under the bill, veterans would apply to PennDOT to include the designation on their licenses or ID cards at no cost to them. The measure must be approved by the Senate before it can become law. *Read the full story at WFMJ.com.*

<http://www.wfmj.com/story/19689087/house-oks-bill-to-require-pa-licenses-to-id-vets>

Judge Halts Tough New Voter ID Requirement (Pennsylvania)

A judge postponed Pennsylvania's controversial voter identification requirement on Tuesday, ordering the state not to enforce it in this year's presidential election but allowing it to go into full effect next year. The decision could be appealed to the state Supreme Court. The judge based his decision on guidelines given to him days ago by the high court justices, and it could easily be the final word on the law just five weeks before the Nov. 6 election. The ruling came after listening to two days of testimony about the state's eleventh-hour efforts to make it easier to get a valid photo ID. He also heard about long lines and ill-informed clerks at driver's license centers and identification requirements that made it hard for some registered voters to get a state-issued photo ID.

The 6-month-old law - now among the nation's toughest - has sparked a divisive debate over voting rights and become a high-profile political issue in the Presidential contest. The constitutionality of the law was not a question before Simpson. Rather, the state Supreme Court had ordered him to stop the law if he thought anyone eligible would be unable to cast a ballot because of it or if he found the state had not complied with law's promise of providing liberal access to a photo ID that voters were required to carry on Election Day. Last week, the Corbett administration overhauled the process for getting a voting-only ID card - an admission that the state had not met the Supreme Court's test for the whether the law should stand. *Read the full story in the York Dispatch.*

http://www.yorkdispatch.com/ci_21676948/judge-halts-pa-s-tough-new-voter-id

Committee Looks at Driver's Licenses for Migrant Farmworkers (Vermont)

A special Vermont legislative committee is looking into whether immigrants working on Vermont farms should be allowed to obtain drivers' licenses. Advocates told the committee Wednesday that there are no state or federal laws that would prevent the workers from being licensed to drive. But the president of the Vermont Bankers Association said if illegal immigrants have drivers' licenses, then banks may have to request other forms of identification from customers. The dairy farm workers are mainly from Mexico. They're often stuck in remote locations and must rely on employers for rides. Sen. Peg Flory, chairwoman of the study committee, wants to know if there are any long term impacts of making the licenses available to the farmworkers. The committee is in the fact-finding stage. *Read the full story in The Republic.*

Region II News

N.C. DMV License and Theft Bureau Inspectors Arrest Two for Manufacturing Counterfeit Government Documents

NCDMV License and Theft Bureau inspectors arrested two Charlotte residents Monday afternoon, and charged them with eight felonies and seven misdemeanors involving the manufacture of counterfeit government documents. The arrests were made following a two-month investigation into a suspected document lab. DMV inspectors along with federal agents from DHS arrested Ingrid Ramirez Ayala, 18, and Isacc Perez Guzman, 27. Each was charged with three counts of common law forgery, two counts of manufacturing a counterfeit government identification card, and one count each of manufacturing a counterfeit driver license and sale of a counterfeit driver license. Ayala was also charged with resisting arrest. The suspects are in custody at the Mecklenburg County jail under \$27,500 secured bond each. They are also both being held on Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainers. *Read the DMV press release.*

<https://apps.ncdot.gov/newsreleases/details.aspx?r=7109>

Permanent License Plates to Change, Issuance Limited (North Carolina)

Beginning Monday, October 15, the Division of Motor Vehicles will introduce new permanent plates and a new process for their issuance. A new law passed by the General Assembly requires all currently-issued permanent plates to be cancelled and re-issued under new eligibility rules by Dec. 31, 2012. Vehicle owners, depending on their eligibility for permanent plates, must purchase either replacement permanent plates or standard "First in Flight" plates by the December deadline. New orange and black plates will replace the current silver and black permanent plates. Beginning Oct. 15, DMV will no longer issue silver and black plates. A one-time \$6 fee is required for permanent plates; standard registration plates cost \$28-\$33. Current permanent plate holders will be notified by letter to replace their plates. NCDMV expects about 120,000 vehicles to be affected by the change, mostly vehicles that are owned and operated by municipalities and counties across the state. New permanent plates will be available from license plate agencies or by mail. The new law limits eligibility for permanent registration plates to governmental entities and certain other groups. Those approved for permanent plates include vehicles owned by a county, city or town; a board of education; the Civil Air Patrol; an incorporated emergency rescue squad; a rural fire department, agency or association; community colleges; or local chapters of the American National Red Cross and used for emergency or disaster work. All other vehicles must obtain standard registration plates. Examples of vehicles that will no longer be eligible for permanent plates include vehicles operated by orphanages, church buses, mobile X-ray transports, sheltered workshops, non-profit mental health transports, city trolleys and parade vehicles of charitable organizations. All vehicles still have to pass required annual safety and emissions inspections prior to obtaining new registration plates, whether permanent or standard. *Read the DMV press release.*

<https://apps.ncdot.gov/newsreleases/details.aspx?r=7109>

State Broadens 'Move Over' Law (North Carolina)

North Carolina's Move Over Law is broader, and that's good news to the people who work on the state's roads in vehicles with amber lights. A new version of the law, adopted in June by the General Assembly, now requires motorists to change lanes or slow down as they approach utility and maintenance crews – or other vehicles, including tow trucks – with flashing amber lights. The new law went into effect Monday. The original law, passed 11 years ago, included police, fire and emergency medical services, and the Incident Management Assistance Patrol vehicles operated by the state transportation department. It was enacted in North Carolina after a rash of

incidents in which motorists crashed into vehicles whose blue lights were flashing. The law hasn't stopped such incidents. But supporters of the law say it has made the roads safer for law enforcement and other emergency responders, and now they hope to do the same for construction crews, surveyors and tow truck drivers. The law requires motorists to move over at least one lane – when two or more lanes are available in each direction. On roads with only one traffic lane in each direction, motorists must slow down and be prepared to stop. That is the case even if the vehicle with amber lights is on the shoulder. Violating the law carries a fine of \$250, plus court costs. *Read the full story in The Charlotte Observer.*

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2012/10/01/3570059/ncs-move-over-law-broadens.html>

State to Help Vets Get Truck Driver's Licenses

The state wants to help some military personnel train for jobs as truck drivers in West Virginia. The West Virginia National Guard, the state Department of Education and Department of Transportation are assisting veterans with experience driving large trucks and other equipment with obtaining their commercial driver's licenses. Typical training for such a license can cost up to \$10,000. A pilot program announced Wednesday will let 20 National Guard members get the necessary physical exams and additional classroom and skills training for free at the Fred W. Eberle Technical Center in Upshur County. DMV examiners also will travel to the center to administer license tests instead of requiring participants to travel to the DMV. It means the veterans will receive licenses in weeks instead of months. *Read the full story in the WV Gazette.* <http://wvgazette.com/News/201210040027>

Region III News

Michigan Recognized for Growing Organ Donor Registry

Michigan received a special national award Wednesday for its dramatic growth in the number of registered organ, eye and tissue donors who save and heal lives. Michigan, one of four states to receive the special award, had the second highest growth in donor designations in 2011 among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Nearly 400,000 people joined the Michigan Organ Donor Registry in 2011, up from 320,000 the year before – a 25% increase. Secretary of State Ruth Johnson changed department policy so branch office customers are asked, time permitting, if they want to join the donor registry. Organ donation reminders were included on widely used Secretary of State forms and social media is used to promote the Michigan Organ Donor Registry. In 2010, Michigan's rate was 29.7%. In 2011, the rate jumped to 35.4%. So far in 2012, Michigan's rate is estimated to be well more than 40%, and the state is on pace to have over half-a-million new donor registrations. Those who sign up receive a heart logo sticker to place on their driver's license or ID card that indicates their wish to be an organ, tissue and eye donor. A new card with a permanent heart emblem is issued at renewal time. *Read the SOS press release.*

<http://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127--287434--,00.html>

Nebraska State Patrol Receives National Recognition

The Nebraska State Patrol has once again been recognized by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) as having the best overall traffic safety program for State Police/Highway Patrol agencies its size. The IACP recognized the Nebraska State Patrol with its 2011 National Law Enforcement Challenge Award for being the top State Police/Highway Patrol Agency in the category of 251-500 Sworn Personnel. The Nebraska State Patrol has an authorized strength of 486 sworn officers. The National Law Enforcement Challenge recognizes efforts in law enforcement, education and public information in determining the best overall traffic safety programs in the United States. The recognition program focuses on three major traffic safety priorities; occupant protection, impaired driving and speeding. *Read the NSP press release.*

<https://statepatrol.nebraska.gov/articleDetails.aspx>

New Ohio Drivers Licenses Coming In January

Ohio will roll out new driver's licenses starting in January, in conformance with the Real ID. The Ohio version of this latest attempt at a nationally consistent identification card will be called "Safe ID." The new IDs will help cut down on identity theft and make it harder to create fake IDs. The new licenses / ID's will be considerably different from the current variety. The colors will be different and the signature will be raised. They will also not be laminated but instead will be made out of a thinner, bendable plastic material. They will contain the familiar magnetic strip that the current licenses display. The new IDs will have other security features that will be difficult to duplicate. The production process for the new identification will also be considerably different from the current process, in which the state's deputy registrars take the photo and print and laminate the license while the applicant is in that office. The new process still uses the local license bureau to collect identification from the applicant and take the photo, but that is where the new process will verge off. After the application and photo are taken locally, the deputy registrar's office will transmit the data to one central, secure manufacturing location. The applicant will be given a receipt that will act as a temporary identification. The new license should arrive in about four weeks. The state will begin processing new IDs in January 2013 and are expected to completely replace the current IDs by December 2017. Anyone can obtain a Safe ID replacement at any time, starting in mid-January, whether or not that person's current identification has expired. Applying for a Safe ID has the same requirement as applying for a license for the first time. *Read the full story in the Daily News.*

<http://www.dlnnews.com/editorial/4957>

Region IV News

California Law will Allow Illegal Immigrants to Get Driver's Licenses

Hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants in California will be eligible for driver's licenses under legislation signed by Gov. Jerry Brown late Sunday. The measure, Assembly Bill 2189, affects an estimated 400,000 undocumented immigrants expected to meet the requirements of President Barack Obama's new Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. AB 2189 would specify that Deferred Action documents meet the DMV requirement to prove lawful presence in the U.S. It would apply to fewer than one of every four undocumented immigrants in California. The bill extends driver's license eligibility to a select group of undocumented immigrants who already will have the right, under Deferred Action, to live and work in the United States for two years without fear of deportation. Deferred Action is meant for longtime California residents who came to the United States as undocumented immigrants when they were young and generally have lived productive lives since then. It applies to undocumented immigrants between the ages of 15 and 31 who came to the United States before age 16 and have lived in this country continuously for the past five years. Participants must be in school, have graduated from high school or obtained an equivalency certificate, or have been honorably discharged from the U.S. military. They cannot have committed a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more misdemeanors. *Read the full story in The Sacramento Bee.*

<http://www.fresnobee.com/2012/10/01/3012887/california-law-will-allow-illegal.html>

DMV Releases Targeted PSAs, Addresses Advance Appointments and Online Services (California)

This fall, the DMV is making a strong push to encourage advance appointments to further improve its customer service and customer satisfaction. Over the last five years, the department has made impressive strides in decreasing long wait times, increasing the availability of appointments and the number of services available online. DMV is releasing a television and radio public service announcements this fall, to help educate customers about these services. Beginning today, these videos and radio spots will air statewide, with a particular emphasis in the Los Angeles area. The video is available to view on the DMV YouTube channel. The DMV YouTube channel also

offers educational videos about safe driving, videos for teen drivers and answers to common DMV questions. If customers make an advance appointment, they can often be in and out of a DMV field office in less than half an hour. Appointments can be made online 24/7, or through our Customer Call Center. Although wait times are shorter than ever for appointment customers, there are still large volumes of customers not using the advance appointment system DMV offers. *Read the DMV press release.*

<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/newsrel/toc.htm?lang=en>

Brown Signs Bill to End Discount Vanity License Plates for Lawmakers, Fees Will Rise by \$36 (California)

California lawmakers will no longer be getting a break on how much they pay for vanity license plates. Gov. Jerry Brown announced Saturday that he has signed a bill ending a personalized license plate discount for sitting and retired lawmakers. Currently, members of the state Legislature and congressional delegation pay \$12 for vanity license plates and are exempted from annual registration fees. AB2068 would require lawmakers to pay the same price as their constituents for personalized plates — about \$48. The bill also adds a \$38 annual renewal fee. The state estimates the increased fees will generate less than \$30,000 a year for environmental causes. The legislation was not intended to be a moneymaker, but to restore fairness. *Read the full story in The Republic.*

<http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/5c605db5b55a48c7b75173ef0dcadbe9/CA--Lawmakers-License-Plates>

California Hopes to Make Some Money Issuing Vintage Plates

For an extra \$50, California car enthusiasts will soon be able to order vintage license plates, including the black plates with yellow lettering issued by the DMV in the 1960s, thanks to action taken by Gov. Brown. AB 1658 is aimed at Californians who restore and drive vintage automobiles, as well as residents who are just nostalgic for the good old days. Other plates to be offered after Jan. 1 include those used in the 1950s, with a yellow background and black lettering, and those issued in the 1980s, with a blue background and yellow lettering. The DMV will only produce one of the designs once 7,500 applications have been received for that design statewide. The cost of producing the plates would be covered by the money raised if the minimum number of each of the three designs is sold. State officials hope additional plates are ordered to bring in money above the cost. Excess funds beyond those needed by the DMV to run the program would go toward environmental programs. *Read the full story in the LA Times.*

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/california-politics/2012/10/california-dmv-vintage-license-plates.html>

Plate Stickers/Tags Being Eliminated in Saskatchewan

Effective Nov. 1, 2012, SGI, the administrator for vehicle registration in Saskatchewan, will no longer be issuing licence plate stickers/tags. By eliminating stickers/tags, SGI is making it even simpler to renew licence plates. SGI ensures all motorists receive registration renewal reminders by letter or email and offers easy and convenient registration renewals at any motor licence issuing office, online through MySGI, by phone, or by mail. Eliminating stickers/tags will result in annual savings of \$100,000 for SGI, which will be redirected to support traffic safety enforcement technology, such as Automatic Licence Plate Recognition (ALPR) systems. Blank stickers/tags will be issued upon renewal after Nov. 1 to cover existing stickers/tags.

Utah Driver License Records Available Online

DPS has launched a website that allows Utahns to easily obtain their official driving record online. Driving records are an important part of many employment screenings, employer safety programs and insurance reviews. Now, instead of going into a driver license office, Utahns can go online and retrieve a copy from the convenience of their own home, he said. Most commonly, a driving record is used to: Check driver license status and license suspension, check traffic tickets, violations and fines, and check driver license classification Davenport said the new service protects personal information by using multi-point authentication and billing "cross-match technology."

The individual reports cost \$9 when obtained from the new service and are available immediately as a PDF. Additional copies can be downloaded and printed free of charge within 10 days of the initial purchase. [Read the full story in The Salt Lake Tribune.](#)

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/money/55024207-79/license-driver-utah-check.html.csp>

Other News of Interest

Congress Passes Military Commercial Drivers License Act

The U.S. Congress has passed S. 3624, the Military Commercial Drivers License Act of 2012, a bill that allows uniformed service members to get a commercial driver's license where they are stationed, rather than in their home state. The legislation seeks to ease the transition from military to civilian life, while also supporting the trucking industry, which faces a driver shortage. The bill was introduced and passed in the Senate on Sept. 22 and was passed by the House on Sept. 28. It now awaits President Obama's signature to become law. [Read the full story at JOC.com.](#)

<http://www.joc.com/washington/congress-passes-military-commercial-drivers-license-act>

FMCSA Security Bulletin # 092512.01

Another round of fraudulent USDOT Letters dated September 24, 2012 are being distributed, largely by fax, to motor carrier officials. The letters appear to be from the U.S. DOT Procurement Office and are signed by a fictitious name Julie Weynel – Senior Procurement Officer† who is NOT an employee of USDOT. The letters are an attempt to obtain banking information from the targeted carriers. Motor Carrier officials and their employees - as well as government and law enforcement officials, should be vigilant and on the lookout for fraudulent attempts to gather financial (or other personal identifiable Information – PII) data by fax, e-mail, or telephone. Requestors should be verified and authenticated before such data is provided! You may find additional information on the USDOT Office of Inspector General Websites: http://www.dot.gov/ost/m60/fraudulent_letters.htm or <http://www.oig.dot.gov/fraud-alert>.

Did you know . . .

Monday is Thanksgiving Day in Canada and Columbus Day in the U.S. Safe and happy holiday wishes to all!

- *The very first Thanksgiving celebration in North America took place in Canada when Martin Frobisher, an explorer from England, arrived in Newfoundland in 1578. He wanted to give thanks for his safe arrival in the New World. This means the first Thanksgiving in Canada was celebrated 43 years before the pilgrims landed in Plymouth, Massachusetts! Thanksgiving for Canadians is about giving thanks for the harvest season rather than the arrival of pilgrims.*
- *Christopher Columbus first went to King John of Portugal with his idea to find a westward sea passage to Asia but after months of waiting, the answer was no thank you. Queen Isabella's response to Columbus's idea was that his price was too high and that he wanted too many ships. If he in fact reached the Indies, Christopher Columbus was asking for a title, a coat of arms and one tenth of all profits for Spain. It took Queen Isabella six years to agree. Christopher Columbus, having given up, was four miles out of town when the Queen's courier caught up with him and shared the news. It wasn't easy to get the money or the ships, but it was even harder to find a crew. Many people still believed that the earth was flat and that at some point a ship would hit a waterfall and fall off of the side of the earth. A royal decree on April 30, 1492 ordered the suspension of*

judicial proceedings against criminals that agreed to sail with Christopher Columbus. Even so, only four prisoners took advantage of this offer.