

AAMVA Regional News

October 19, 2012

Tidbits

Greg Dozier has been named Assistant Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Corrections. He has served as Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Driver Services since May, 2005. Under Greg's leadership, DDS received numerous awards for innovations and customer service. Greg most recently was recognized by the Georgia Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration where he received their Public Administrator of the Year for 2012. Greg also served on the nine-member Georgia Driver Education Commission. In June 2008, Greg was appointed to the AAMVA Region II Board of Directors of the and earlier this year he was appointed as the AAMVA Region II President. Rob Mikell has been named Interim Commissioner. We wish Greg the best of luck in his new position and appreciate his involvement and contributions to the AAMVA community. And good luck to Rob too!

An Idaho legislative task force convened to consider equalizing the speed limit for trucks and passenger cars will not make a recommendation to the Legislature to do so. The speed limit for heavy trucks on the state's four interstates is 65 mph. It is 75 mph for other vehicles. The group was split evenly on endorsing the change.

Region I News

MVA Offers Answers to Test Questions; Hoping to Improve Young Drivers' Knowledge *(Maryland)*

Do you know what a double-yellow broken line means on each side of a lane? Only about a quarter of all people who take the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration driver's knowledge test do. This and several other questions that most Marylanders do not answer correctly will be revealed next week, National Teen Driver Safety Week. By logging onto the MVA website, www.mvmaryland.gov; the Facebook page, Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration; or Twitter: MD_MVA, three questions drawn from the official knowledge test will be revealed each day, along with the correct answer. The information is being posted so that more new drivers are better able to prepare themselves for the complex and heavily travelled roadways in Maryland. Teen Driver Safety Week is a statewide campaign as part of the DOT and law enforcement agencies' Toward Zero Deaths, to drive down the number of fatalities on Maryland's roadways to zero. [Read the full story in the Cumberland Times-News.](#)

New York Drivers Could Get Points Forgiveness

Governor Cuomo has announced a multilevel initiative to keep drivers with a history of repeat alcohol- or drug-related driving convictions off the road. The DMV will issue new regulations giving New York some of the toughest protections in the nation. Under current law, drivers convicted of multiple alcohol- or drug-related offenses cannot permanently lose their licenses. The only time a driver faces losing a license permanently is with two convictions arising from separate crashes involving a physical injury. With the change, the DMV will be able to review the lifetime record of all drivers who apply to have a license reinstated after a revocation. The DMV will deny such an application if the applicant has five or more alcohol- or drug-related convictions in his or her lifetime or three or more convictions in the past 25 years, plus at least one other serious driving offense during that period. The new

laws will ensure that drivers whose licenses have been revoked or suspended for 6 months or 1 year cannot regain driving privileges until their full term of suspension or revocation has ended. [Read the full story at NJ1015.com.](#)

Rhode Island Governor to Launch Plan to Curb Distracted Driving

Rhode Island is launching a new program to reduce the number of distracted drivers on the roadways. Gov. Chafee, House Speaker Gordon Fox and the Rhode Island Association of Justice plan on Wednesday to unveil a new educational initiative for new drivers that aims to stress the dangers of engaging in distracting behaviors while driving. The state recently began another new program that asks students and teachers at Rhode Island high schools to sign a pledge not to text while driving. Officials say 43% of teens admit to texting while driving. Many say their parents set a bad example by doing the same. [Read the full story at Boston.com.](#)

Region II News

Tax Collectors Object to Plan to Outsource Some License-Plate Distribution (Florida)

The state's 67 tax collectors are objecting to part of a proposal to redesign Florida's license plates that would outsource distribution of tags ordered over the Internet. Tax Collectors have concerns about the DMV's privatization plan, saying it could create problems for drivers who will then blame local officials. The plan won't affect the money the tax collectors get from the state to process vehicle registrations and renewals. DHSMV Director Julie Jones wants to replace all license plates with a new tag within the next two years and have the manufacturer distribute tags ordered either by mail or over the Internet, something the tax collectors and private agencies now do. The tax collectors fear drivers may have trouble getting a live person at a private company to speak with them. And they point out problems the state has had with past privatization efforts. Jones said she has concerns about the tax collectors' ability to distribute 15 million new plates - about three times the amount they normally handle - and thinks cutting out the middle-man could save money and create a more efficient system. The privatization plan would primarily save money by storing the license plates at a central location rather than the 1,300 different places around the state where the tags are currently distributed. And it would allow the number of warehoused plates to be reduced, also creating a savings. About two-thirds of drivers currently get their tags at their local tax collectors' offices. The collectors get an extra fee - up to \$2.50 - for each tag or decal they handle. The collectors will still be able to keep \$1 for tags that are ordered online even though they would no longer be handling them. Last year, tax collectors received about \$93 million statewide for processing tags and decals. Gov. Rick Scott and the Florida Cabinet will vote on whether to approve the license-plate redesign on Tuesday. [Read the full story in the Palm Beach Post.](#)

Kentucky Appeals Court Upholds Random License Plate Scans

Judges in Kentucky have no problem with police randomly scanning the license plates of motorists who are not suspected of any crime. The state Court of Appeals last week upheld the conviction of Timothy Gentry who was stopped on October 3, 2009 because a Lexington police officer conducted what he said was a random license plate scan. Officer Jason Newman testified he spotted a red Dodge Charger parked on Breckinridge Street in September 2009. For no reason, he decided to run the license plate number. He identified the owner as Dominick Evans, a black man with a suspended driver's license. He saw nobody near the car, so he took no action. Weeks later, Officer Newman saw Gentry, a black twenty-three-year old man, driving a red Charger. It had the same license plate. Though Gentry was driving properly, Officer Newman conducted a traffic stop. After asking for Gentry's proof of insurance, registration and driver's license, Officer Newman quickly realized the man he thought would be

behind the wheel turned out to be someone else. Gentry, however, admitted he also had a suspended driver's license. Because of this, Officer Newman issued a ticket instead of taking him into custody. A month later, however, prosecutors upgraded the charge to a felony third-offense of driving on a license suspended for drunk driving. At trial, Gentry argued there was no valid reason for the stop and that he had been racially profiled. Kentucky's constitution bans arbitrary state action. The three-judge appellate panel found no cases in the state dealing with the expectation of privacy of drivers and their license plates. The court reviewed findings in other states before siding with the practice of random plate searches for vehicles parked on a public street. [Read the full story at The Newspaper.com.](#)

DMV Continues to Roll on Improving Service (South Carolina)

Recent experiments in better customer service at the DMV by all accounts have proved successful. Appointments for driving tests, a pilot project, worked so well this summer that the policy was expanded in September to all DMV offices. Driver's license applicants can make appointments between 8:30 and 11 a.m. for road tests given between 2 and 4:30 p.m. weekdays. Walk-ins are still welcome in the morning, but you risk a longer wait. Now the department is building on that success with a program to offer applicants the option of taking the written and road tests with a private instructor. Individuals and driving school and high school instructors can get certified to administer the tests. If students pass, they take their test certification to a DMV office where they are photographed and issued a license. The benefits: No trip to the DMV and nervous students might be more at ease with a teacher they're familiar with. A red flag the change raises is that people paid to teach driving skills also get to grade their students -- and their own work. The old system has a third party rating the efficacy of the instruction. But the DMV has taken that into account. The program stipulates that a student could be randomly selected to re-take the test with a DMV agent to check the quality of private instruction. If that is found to be sub-par, the instructor's certification and the driver's certification could be suspended. A private testing program already existed for commercial drivers and motorcycle licenses. And for those who find that the written test trips them up, there's now an app for that. DMV has an app that quizzes users with 15 to 20 multiple-choice questions at a time. The questions are randomly drawn from a pool of about 200 questions. [Read the full story at IslandPacket.com.](#)

Eighth-Grade Students Earn their License to Drive ... on the Internet (Virginia)

Close to 600 Madison County eighth-grade and high school students have earned their "digital driver's license," or DDL, since the beginning of the school year — and there's no real driving involved. The district uses DDLs to teach "appropriate online behavior" when interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness. The DDL exam guides students through the nine elements of digital citizenship: Access, Commerce, Communication, Literacy, Etiquette, Law, Rights and Responsibilities, Health and Wellness, Security and Self Protection. For example, on the Digital Access, Health & Wellness section of the exam, one question is: "If you are riding in a car with someone who is looking at their cell phone, should you ask them to stop and focus their eyes on the road (even if it is an adult)? Yes or No?" The DDL program is part of the district's internet-safety policy, which makes it compliant with CIPA, the Children Internet Protection Act of 2000. CIPA was enacted to protect students and address concerns of students being exposed to obscene and harmful content over the internet. Schools must be CIPA compliant in order to receive federal dollars for technology expenditures. [Read the full story in the Richmond register.](#)

Groups Team Up To Help Soldiers Earn CDLs Staff Report (West Virginia)

The West Virginia National Guard, the Department of Education and DOT are collaborating to address a growing truck driver shortage in West Virginia. The West Virginia Department of Education's National Guard Commercial Driver's License Pilot is designed to help military personnel with experience driving large trucks and other equipment to get their commercial driver's license in a more cost-effective, speedy manner. Traditional training for a CDL license can cost up to \$10,000. Through the pilot, 20 Guard members can get the necessary physicals and additional classroom and skills training for free at the Fred W. Eberle Technical Center. DMV examiners also will travel to the center to administer CDL tests instead of requiring participants to travel to them. They should have a valid CDL in weeks instead of months. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that by 2020 the demand for truckers will increase by 330,100 from the 1.5 million drivers now on the road. Despite the job potential, these positions are difficult to fill, and even harder to keep filled. Servicemen and women have already cleared many hurdles that keep some potential employees from earning their commercial driver's license. Not only do they have valuable field experience driving heavy equipment and trucks, but also they often have a clean driving record and the ability to pass medical exams and regular drug testing. West Virginia employers in the coal, oil and gas fields, and other businesses are eager to hire commercial drivers with such attributes. [Read the full story in The Fayette Tribune.](#)

Region III News

White Announces Innovative Use of Technology to Upgrade GDL Instruction Permit Process (Illinois)

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White announced his office has upgraded the Graduated Driver Licensing Instruction Permit application process using technology to improve efficiency and virtually eliminate paperwork and errors. Illinois is credited with having one of the most comprehensive GDL programs in the nation. Since the strengthened GDL program went into place in 2008, teen driving deaths have dropped 50%. The upgraded permit process is web-based and user-friendly for high school driver education instructors, students and parents. The new system allows high school driver education instructors access to a secure area on the office's web site to electronically input all class information, test results and student information required for the issuance of an instruction permit. The new automated instruction permit process opened as a pilot project at three schools and is now expanding statewide. The driver education instructor is given a student access code by the SOS's office to share with each student. The student, using a computer at home or at school, or even via his or her iPhone, may then input their information and submit the application electronically back to the instructor. This process eliminates the manual completion of applications, and cuts down on errors. This process significantly reduces keystrokes at the facility, decreases production time and produces a more accurate and error-free document, White noted. The process also offers an opportunity for students and parents to take part in the interactive instruction permit application process together. [Read the SOS press release.](#)

Iowa DOT Releases Android Version of its Driver's License Practice Test

It's now going to be easier to prepare for getting a driver's license in Iowa for those with an iPad. The Iowa DOT is announcing the release of a new app – "IA Driver Test for iPad" – that serves as a practice test for the exam that drivers must take to get their driver's license. Developed in partnership with Iowa Interactive, the iPad app was created to assist Iowans to be safe drivers and provide the foundation necessary for applicants to successfully complete the knowledge test. The app generates 15 questions, randomly chosen from among 69 included in the real knowledge test given at any Iowa driver's license station. Users can repeat the test as often as they like; each new test generates a different set of 15 questions. The app also tracks a user's high scores. The app is not just for

teens, it's great for experienced drivers as well. Take the quiz just for fun or as a refresher to see if you are as smart as a 14 year old – the youngest age in which someone in Iowa can get an instruction permit to drive. Mark Lowe, director of the MVD, said, "It might not be as easy as you think. Iowa's traffic laws are always changing and it's likely there will be a question or two that stump even the most seasoned driver." Lowe encourages people to use the app as a practice aide after studying the Iowa Driver's Manual. Parents are urged to talk to their young drivers about their test results to foster discussion about safe driving rules and behaviors. The free app is available to download to your iPad through the iTunes Store; search for "IA Driver Test for iPad." Don't be fooled by imitation apps developed by others that may be unreliable; the app will appear with an Iowa DOT icon. Currently, the app is only compatible with iPad (requires iOS 4.3 or later). However, the Iowa DOT is already working toward making it accessible through other mobile platforms, including Android tablets. [Read the DOT press release.](#)

State Grants More Leeway to Iowa Farmers without Commercial Driver's Licenses

New state regulations announced Wednesday let Iowa farmers without commercial driver's licenses drive big trucks further from their home base. Farmers and farm helpers have previously been exempted from commercial driver's license requirements while operating commercial motor vehicles within a 150-mile radius of their home farm. Many farms own large trucks or trailers for grain and hay transport. The new federal highway bill that became effective Oct. 1 added provisions exempting commercial motor vehicles operating as "covered farm vehicles" from that regulation, among others. States were given up to three years to amend their safety regulations to comply with the new federal law, called MAP-21, but the DOT said it's taking immediate actions in order to give regulatory relief to the agriculture industry. Under the new regulations, vehicles of 26,000 pounds or less can be operated anywhere in Iowa and any other state under the exemptions. Vehicles weighing more than 26,000 pounds can be operated within 150 air miles of the driver's farm or ranch operation, either in Iowa or across state lines. The commercial motor vehicles must have special identification to allow law enforcement to identify the vehicle as a covered farm vehicles. Pending the release of final federal rules, Iowa farmers have two options. They can have their vehicles registered as a special farm truck and displaying either a farm plate or "F" sticker, or they can complete state form 441088 and carry it in the power unit of the covered farm vehicle. DOT officials said commercial motor vehicles are considered covered farm vehicles when they are operated by a farm or ranch owner or operator, or an employee or a family member of the farmer, when they are used to transport agricultural commodities, livestock, machinery or supplies to or from a farm, when they are not operated for hire, and when they are not transporting hazardous materials in quantities requiring placarding. The DOT cautioned that only two bordering states, Missouri and Minnesota, have agreed to immediately honor the covered farm vehicle exemptions for Iowa farm operators traveling in their states. Away from Iowa's borders, Kansas, Wyoming and Colorado have also indicated they will honor the exemptions. Wisconsin, Nebraska and South Dakota have reciprocity agreements with Iowa that remain in effect. State regulations in Iowa will be amended after FMCSA issues a final rule implementing the MAP-21 farm vehicle extensions in the next few months. [Read the full story in The Gazette.](#)

Kansas Unveils a New, More Secure Driver's License Design

Starting this week, Kansans will start receiving a redesigned and more secure driver's license. The new license includes several security features that make it extremely difficult for counterfeiters to forge including: ultra-violet image of the cardholder's portrait and date of birth on the back of the card (viewable with UV light); multi-colored, highly detailed holograms; highly detailed ultra-violet (UV) image of the state flower (viewable with UV light); two ghost images of the cardholder's portrait in addition to the conventional photograph; and tactile printing that you

can feel. Kansas' driver's license and ID card design was last changed in 2004; states typically change their designs every four to six years. Driver's license and ID cards using the old design will still be valid and people will not need to come in to get a new card until their current card expires. The new design will also not cost extra.

[Read the DOR press release.](#)

DMV Delivers Online Services (Nebraska)

Nebraskans have challenged state agencies to deliver services in a way that better serves their needs and fits their busy lifestyles. One agency responding to that challenge is the DMV through its ClickDMV online services. The DMV currently provides 19 online services that streamline and save time for businesses and individuals alike. The DMV has emphasized online services for individuals. So far this year, 83,615 Nebraskans have used the ClickDMV driver licensing services. The site allows Nebraskans to renew their driver licenses, obtain duplicates, check current point totals, reinstate their driving privileges, and request a driving record. Those who live in Douglas, Lancaster, and Sarpy counties can check the wait times at all the DMV Examining Stations before leaving home. If the wait is more than 30 minutes, they can "take a number" and reserve a spot in line from home. Click DMV's Motor Vehicle Services allows us to renew license plates online, order specialty and message plates, estimate motor vehicles taxes and conduct a title search that will provide a prospective vehicle buyer with information relating to salvage branding, odometer, and liens. Nebraskans have conducted 119,484 motor vehicle related transactions using the ClickDMV services since Jan. 1, 2012. Motor carriers can access ClickDMV to file quarterly reports and make payments to maintain compliance with both the International Registration Plan and the International Fuel Tax Agreement. Using carrier specific data and providing for mileage and tax calculations, these online services are saving businesses time and money when meeting their regulatory compliance standards. Through its premium subscriber services, the DMV offers a Certified Driver Record Search available to city and county attorneys who need certified driving records to prosecute criminal cases. These services offer immediate access to the information that used to take two weeks to obtain. Additionally, car dealers can access motor vehicle title and lien information via subscriber services, which gives them access to information about vehicles that they never had before. In September, the DMV released the Handicapped Permit Service. This permitting system is being used by approximately 470 medical professionals. This service removed statutory barriers that often required individuals to make four trips to various offices before a permit could be issued by the DMV. The online system allows medical professionals to log in and submit the permit applications directly to the DMV. The new system removes the complicated application process and reduces two weeks from application to receipt of the permit by the customer. Nebraska's Department of Motor Vehicles is one more example of how our state's e-government efforts better serve the needs of our citizens. [Read the Governor's Op Ed in the Beatrice Daily Sun.](#)

New Law that Prohibits Cell Phone Use for Many Teen Drivers Takes Effect on November 1 (Wisconsin)

A new state law that prohibits drivers with an instruction permit or probationary license—which includes many teenagers—from “using a cellular or other wireless telephone except to report an emergency” while driving takes effect on Nov. 1. A driver violating this restriction on cell phone use is subject to a forfeiture of \$20 to \$40 for a first offense and \$50 to \$100 for a subsequent offense within a year. Although the law will affect many teen drivers, the cell phone restrictions also apply to other drivers with a Wisconsin probationary license, such as: drivers licensed in other countries, persons with suspended or revoked instruction permits or probationary licenses, new state residents who have fewer than three years of driving experience, new state residents under the age of 21 and new state residents who surrender a license that is expired for more than six months. Wisconsin law also prohibits texting while driving for all motorists of all ages. [Read the DOT press release.](#)

Mayor Villaraigosa Wants City ID Card for Immigrants *(California)*

LA Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa is pushing a plan to create an official city photo identification card that could double as a prepaid ATM card and help immigrants get access to banking services. The initiative could reduce crime because fewer people would have to carry cash, but critics say it's another ill-advised City Hall effort to accommodate illegal immigrants. The idea for the city ID card originated in his office, the mayor said, as part of previous efforts to help immigrants open bank accounts so they wouldn't become targets of crime. A handful of cities, including San Francisco and Oakland, issue identification cards to anyone who can prove residency, regardless of immigration status. "It will be an official ID," Villaraigosa said in a recent interview. [Read the full story in the Los Angeles Times](#)

Sheriffs May Fight Immigrant License Law *(New Mexico)*

A newly formed sheriffs group said Friday that it may lobby for the repeal of a New Mexico law allowing illegal immigrants to obtain driver's licenses. A number of sheriffs oppose the law, saying it could lead to illegal immigrants using fake addresses and criminal syndicates getting licenses for those living illegally in the country. Members of the New Mexico Sheriff's Association will vote in 10 days on whether the group will launch lobbying efforts to repeal the law during the next legislative session. [Read the full story in the Santa Fe New Mexican.](#)

New Mexico Plan Giving Licenses to Illegals to Backfire in 2013, Governor Martinez Warns

New Mexico's policy of giving illegal immigrants driver's licenses could soon come back to bite the state's law-abiding residents when stringent new federal requirements for IDs take effect in January, the governor is warning. With a key provision of the federal Real ID Act set to kick in on Jan. 15, Gov. Susana Martinez claims there will be no way to differentiate between state IDs issued to residents who furnish federally-required documentation and those issued to illegal immigrants based on less stringent requirements. Martinez is predicting the federal government will have no choice come Jan. 15, 2013, but to no longer recognize her state's licenses as valid identification at airport ticket counters or for entry into federal buildings or complexes such as the state's large Kirtland and Holloman Air Force. "It's deeply concerning that New Mexicans who work at our labs, get on an airplane, or need to show identification at any other federal facility will no longer be able to use their driver's license to do so," Martinez said after sending an Oct. 10 letter of inquiry about the act to DHS Director Janet Napolitano. "This is not just an inconvenience; it is an incredible burden on our citizens and our businesses, and on our ability to be competitive with our neighboring states." While New Mexican officials staunchly defend the validity and reliability of the documents used to obtain the card, Martinez said it opens a door for the possibility of fraud. An estimated 49,000 undocumented immigrants live in New Mexico, and since the law went into effect, some 80,000 licenses have been issued to foreign nationals, many of whom are not from the state. [Read the full story at FoxNews.com](#)

DUI Deaths Rise in Utah

The Utah Highway Patrol last year shifted from a year-long special focus on catching drunken drivers to enforcing speed limits and seat-belt use instead. The number of deaths related to driving under the influence increased from 25 to 39, up 56%. So UHP Superintendent Daniel Fuhr told the Legislature on Wednesday that his agency will return to make DUI enforcement a special emphasis in 2013. The report shows that in 2010 when the UHP focused

on DUI —and conducted more DUI enforcement blitzes — related deaths were much lower than other years. Police also made about 1,000 more DUI arrests than usual. Other findings of the report include: 13,031 DUI arrests were made by police agencies statewide in fiscal 2012, which ended June 30. That was 785 fewer than the previous fiscal year. 972 arrests were made during specialized DUI overtime enforcement events, which involved 100 law enforcement agencies statewide. The average blood alcohol content for those arrested was 0.14, with the highest at 0.39 — nearly five times the legal limit of 0.08. [Read the full story in the Salt Lake Tribune.](#)

Other News of Interest

Nearly 4,600 DREAMers Approved for Deferred Action

Nearly 4,600 young undocumented immigrants have been granted temporary permission to live and work in the United States, according to statistics released from USCIS. Just under 180,000 requests have been accepted for processing through the program, which halts deportations for qualifying DREAMers and allows them to apply for work permits. The statistics run from the start of the program on August 15 until October 10. The newest numbers show a sharp jump in acceptances since the first round of statistics were released last month. During the first month, only 29 requests were approved, with more than 82,000 DREAMers accepted for processing. An estimated 1.7 million undocumented immigrants nationwide could potentially be eligible for the program. Although USCIS has begun notifying some individuals of a decision on their request, it is expected that the average length of time to process a request will be between four and six months. As this process is in its initial stages, USCIS will continue to provide regular updates on the deferred action for childhood arrivals process on a monthly basis. [Read the full story at ABC/Univision online.](#)

Latest Tech Gear Turns Police into Robocop: Police Departments are on the Cutting Edge of New High-Tech Communications Gear that is Heavy on Video And Cameras

RoboCop would be proud. Maybe even amazed. Like the main character of the then-futuristic 1987 movie about an all-seeing humanoid cop, patrol officers are being equipped with the kind of high-tech communications gear that puts them on the cutting edge. Officers are being wired to wear wide-angle miniature cameras on their uniforms that see and hear what they are seeing and hearing. They are being issued new smartphone-like devices so video of suspects or tactical situations can be fed to them in the field. Their cars automatically scan license plates and tip them off if they are about to encounter an ex-con. Police departments are jumping headlong into social media, connecting with the community to turn the tables on crime. They are even writing their own blogs from their patrol cars so officers can keep each other updated about events on their beats. Even wilder stuff is on the horizon. One inventor, for example, is marketing a sleeve with a built-in video display, a camera, a laser beam and a stun gun for self-defense. Motorola Solutions, a huge supplier of police radios for decades and now also of laptops and other communications gear, is showing departments how a Ford Police Interceptor can be transformed into a rolling TV studio. A demonstration version of the car, Ford's law enforcement version of the Taurus sedan, is equipped with seven video cameras to cover every angle of an officer's encounters with the public, victims or suspects. One camera, for instance, automatically scans license plates. Another camera aimed at the back seat records an arrestee's words and actions on the way to the slammer. Instead of storing those hours of video in the car for retrieval later, the Motorola Solutions version has it constantly uploaded to a data center where it can be processed and stored. Motorola Solutions envisions officers wearing not only video cameras, but also heart-rate monitors so police operators know when the officer is in a high-stress situation. And a sensor records whenever they release the strap on their pistol holster. That data, too, get fed back to the station. Big corporations aren't the only ones

with new ideas for high-tech communications for law enforcement. Entrepreneur David Brown gave up his job as a technician in the film industry to pursue his dream of developing a sleeve that police officers can wear with a built-in video screen and a camera, a sort of full-sleeve update of Dick Tracy's two-way wristwatch. The sleeve also has a laser pointer to light up potential troublemakers and a stun gun for self-defense. One advantage of the sleeve over other versions of such gear is that it would be much more difficult to wrest away from an officer in a struggle.

[Read the rest of the story in USA TODAY](#)

AmeriWorks Financial Services Announces Driver License System to Replace the Use of Paper Checks

AmeriWorks Financial Services, Inc. has announced it is seeking funding to resume the development of a virtual check system using a driver license to identify a consumer at a point of sale while reducing consumer fraud. The system, which has Provisional Patent protection, will eliminate the use of a paper check at the register by allowing for a virtual check transaction, called a DOT.chek. The consumer must apply for membership in a financial data base managed by AWKS. The consumer's driver license and checking account are linked electronically and AWKS is notified by the member's banking institution of any returned checks. When an enrolled consumer swipes their driver license at the point of sale, the validity of the driver license is instantly checked and the checking account information in the consumer's account managed by AWKS is verified for accuracy and any payment defaults. If approved, a receipt, similar to a credit card receipt, prints out at the point of sale; the consumer signs this receipt; the retailer keeps a copy for their records and the consumer takes the goods or services completing the transaction. By swiping a driver license or state ID card at the point of sale, funds for approved transactions are transferred by AWKS from the consumer's checking account to the merchant within 36 hours, the time it takes for a paper check to clear. The Driver License System does not guarantee the transaction but replaces the use, verification and cost of accepting a paper check at the point of sale. AWKS will charge \$0.20 per swipe or ¼ of 1% of the transaction total up to a maximum of \$0.50 for each swipe transaction. AWKS will also charge a monthly membership fee to consumers of \$1.50 to remain in the financial data base as well as charge the consumer and the merchant \$1.50 for each electronic funds transfer. The Company has a licensing agreement in place with a major driver license information provider and an agreement with independent programmers who will write the software code that will allow current swipe devices to recognize a driver license as payment for goods and services. AWKS expects to contract with VeriPhone for site installation of needed swipe devices. The Company is seeking funding of \$250,000 to complete a pilot test of the DOT.chek system and the initial roll out after completion of the pilot testing. The system will be ready for testing within six months of funding the project. AWKS estimates that projected gross revenue from the DOT.chek system in supermarkets and small retail businesses to be in excess of \$3,000,000; \$16,000,000 and; \$26,000,000 respectively, for the three years following funding, testing and integration of the system. [Read the full story in the Sacramento Bee.](#)

Walmart Begins Selling Life Insurance with MetLife's Products

MetLife is going straight to the consumer to sell their life insurance products. The U.S.-based life insurer has begun selling life insurance policies at Walmart. Branded with images of the "Peanuts" Snoopy, the prepaid policies have a term of one year. Consumers in South Carolina and Georgia can pick up a pre-paid card at their local Walmart store for as little as \$69 and call MetLife to activate the policy. The insurer says consumers will need to provide their name and answer six basic questions about their health to see if they qualify for coverage. If the consumer does not qualify, the money will be refunded or can be used as a Discover card.

Pet Car Safety Restraints Found to be Less than Effective in Recent Study

Pets have become so imeshed in our everyday lives, and it's not uncommon to see a dog with his head peering out of an open window or, much to the dismay of many, riding in the back of a pick up truck. With more willingness for so many people to try and keep their four-legged friends safe when partaking in activities alongside them, it wasn't long before pet product companies took notice. They've carved out a pretty nice niche in that area, with gear designed for plenty of different activities - seat belts and car harnesses included. There's been much talk in recent months about the safety of pets while riding in vehicles, with one state, New Jersey, being a pioneer in making the push for a safety harness use law. With so much focus on the idea, sales of vehicle restraints for pets have increased — but are these products as good an idea as they are touted to be? One organization says not so fast. Center for Pet Safety conducted a pilot study that suggests that the safety belts were not safe. Lindsey Wolko, founder and chairman of the Center for Pet Safety says, "Saying that these products prevent your pet from becoming a projectile in an accident is a potentially misleading statement. In our pilot study, the harnesses tested failed to keep the dog from becoming a projectile in a standardized crash simulation." Of four of the leading dog car harness brands, none held up in tests. All of them demonstrated that they either could lead to plausibly serious or fatal injuries for not only the canine but driver, too. A 55-pound crash dummy dog was used to see how the seat belts would hold up in a collision at 30 miles per hour, patterning the same motor vehicle safety standards used to test child seats. There are no set standards when it comes to pet car restraints, so there isn't criteria by which to discern their success or failure. One thing that is clear is that restraining a pet may help reduce incidents of distracted driving. [Read the full story at annarbor.com.](http://annarbor.com)

Did you know . . .

"The buck stops here." U.S. president Harry S. Truman had a sign with this inscription on his desk. This was meant to indicate that he didn't 'pass the buck' to anyone else but accepted personal responsibility for the way the country was governed. Truman didn't originate the phrase, although it isn't likely that we would ever have heard of it had he not adopted it. Fred M. Canfil, United States Marshal for the Western District of Missouri and a friend of Truman's, saw a sign like it while visiting the Federal Reformatory at El Reno, Oklahoma in 1945. He thought it would appeal to the plain-speaking Truman and arranged for a copy of it to be made and sent to him. It was seen on the President's desk on and off throughout the rest of his presidency. On the reverse side, i.e. the side that Truman saw, it was inscribed, "I'm from Missouri". That's a short form of "I'm from Missouri. Show me". Natives of that Missouri (a.k.a. the Show Me State), which included Truman, were known for their skeptical nature.