

## AAMVA Regional News

November 9, 2012

### Tidbits

- Jurisdictions, Ontario is looking for information on law enforcement collecting fees at roadside. You can find – and respond to – the survey by [clicking here](#). Be sure to log onto the website to access the survey.
- The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles has released an Invitation to Negotiate for the Production and Distribution of License Plates and Registration Certificates. Deadline for submission is December 3 at 2:30 p.m. You can find the ITN by [clicking here](#).
- With the election last week, a number of states will see changes to their Governor. Those include. Indiana – where Mike Pence (R) is the Governor-elect. Montana elected Steve Bullock (D). New Hampshire's Governor-elect is Maggie Hassan (D). North Carolina will see Pat McCrory (R) take the helm. Washington's election saw Jay Inslee (D) eek out a win. None of these elections will see a switch in party. Puerto Rico's Governor-elect is Alejandro Garcia Padilla (PDP), which is a switch in party. The following states retained their incumbent leadership: Delaware, J. Markell (D); Missouri, Jay Nixon (D); North Dakota, J. Dairymple (R), Utah, G. Herbert (R), Vermont, P. Shumlin (D) and West Virginia, E. Tomblin (D).

### Region I News

#### **State Approves World Acadian Congress Commemorative License Plates** *(Maine)*

For approximately two years, officials in Aroostook County and Canada have been planning for an event that could draw more than 50,000 people to the region. While the event is still two years away, planners are taking steps to draw as much attention to the World Acadian Congress as possible. That is why organizers are thrilled with the state's decision to issue a commemorative license plate to mark the significant event. It is the first time such a plate has been issued since the U.S. celebrated its Bicentennial in 1976. A commemorative license plate is different than the official license plates issued by the state to support various causes such as agriculture, the University of Maine, and breast cancer research. It does not have any numbers or letters on its face and cannot replace the legally issued plates. The legislation passed by state lawmakers will allow for the World Acadian Congress plate to be placed over the face of the existing legal plate on the front of the vehicle. The commemorative plate will expire in December 2015 and can remain as the visible license plate on the front of vehicles registered in Maine through that time. The existing legal plate on the back of the vehicle must remain on and visible. The license plate is currently in production, and officials plan to debut the new design during a press conference later this month or in December. The organizer's goal is to have 6,000 of the \$25 plates available for sale before the holiday season. The cost for the state to produce each of the high-quality metal plates is \$9. Under the legislation, \$16 from the sale of each plate will go to the organizing committee of the World Acadian Congress in Maine. [Read the full story in Bangor Daily News.](#)

#### **New Jersey Assembly Seeks to Up Penalties for Drunk Driving Parents**

The penalties for New Jersey drunk driving offenses may get even stricter soon, if a new bill introduced in the state Assembly moves forward. The bill, which was approved by the Assembly Law and Public Safety committee in late September, seeks to impose new penalties for drunk driving parents or guardians who cause accidents that injure their minor children. If the bill is passed, causing such an accident would become a fourth-degree crime. Applicable penalties could include a fine of up to \$10,000 and 18 months in prison. If the accident causes serious

injury to a minor child, the violation becomes a third-degree crime. Penalties for third-degree crimes include fines of up to \$15,000 and three to five years in prison. Under current New Jersey law, parents or guardians who drive drunk with their child in the car can be charged with disorderly persons offenses. This is true regardless of whether the parent or guardian is involved in a drunk driving accident. If the bill passes, these heightened penalties would be imposed in addition to the penalties for the underlying DUI crime. [Read the full story in the Digital Journal.](#)

### **Senior Leadership Changes at ServiceOntario**

After guiding ServiceOntario through a transformational journey that saw the integration of services including Ontario driver's licences and health cards over the past six and a half years, Deputy Minister and Chief Executive Officer Bob Stark retired from the Ontario Public Service on October 31, 2012. Effective November 1, 2012, Frank D'Onofrio assumed the role of interim Deputy Minister and Chief Executive Officer, ServiceOntario. Frank has been with the Ontario Public Service since 1980. He joined ServiceOntario in June 2006 as ADM, Operations, following five years as Assistant Deputy Minister of the Road User Safety Division in the Ministry of Transportation (MTO). Effective November 5, 2012, Richard Steele will be filling the role of interim Assistant Deputy Minister of the Business Development Division of ServiceOntario, in addition to his current ADM responsibilities leading the Service Delivery Strategy Division. Both DM/CEO D'Onofrio and ADM Steele remain committed to ServiceOntario's continued evolution collaboration with its partners to enhance the service experience for individuals and business.

### **New York Extends DMV, Tax Deadlines for Sandy Victims**

People affected by Superstorm Sandy can have an extended period for motor-vehicle renewals, tax filings and payments. To help New Yorkers meet payment and renewal deadlines, the DMV will extend its previously scheduled dates. The DMV will extend deadlines for driver license renewals, learner permits, nondriver ID cards and vehicle registrations. This will apply if the expiration date is Nov. 13 and will be extended for an additional day. DMV hearings through Friday will be postponed and a rescheduled date will be provided by mail. Vehicle inspections were not included in the list of extensions, but a 10-day temporary registration will be given. Counties statewide are eligible to receive an extension for tax filing and payment deadlines on taxes. [Read the full story in the Poughkeepsie Journal.](#)

### **New License Plates Available for Decorated Military Personnel, Veterans (Pennsylvania)**

Members and veterans of the United States Armed Forces decorated for valor or meritorious service during a time of armed conflict can now proudly display their medal through a new series of military license plates offered by PennDOT. PennDOT's new series of plates offers a design exhibiting one of the following military decorations: Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star for Valor and Bronze Star. Veterans and military personnel interested in these new plates can visit PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services website, [www.dmv.state.pa.us](http://www.dmv.state.pa.us), and select the "Military License Plates" link under the "Military Personnel/Veterans" Information Center for a complete listing of available military license plates. The page provides images of each plate and links to the appropriate application form. In addition to these plates, PennDOT's Specialty Plate Program offers a variety of license plates including those honoring individuals who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and in major conflicts from World War II to Operation Enduring Freedom. The majority of military license plates can be requested by filling out Form MV-150, "Application for U.S. Military Veteran Registration Plate," which also contains instructions for applying for the plates and the respective fees. Specialty license plates are also offered for active-duty and reserve military personnel and members of service-related organizations. [Read the PennDOT press release.](#)

## Region II News

### **Justices Agree to Hear Red Light Camera Cases (Florida)**

The Florida Supreme Court will hear two cases on the legality of fines collected from motorists caught by red light cameras before the Legislature passed a law authorizing their use. The justices on Tuesday accepted jurisdiction of appeals from conflicting lower court decisions. At stake could be millions of dollars in fines collected across the state. They may have to be refunded if the justices side with the 5th District Court of Appeal. The city of Orlando is appealing the Daytona Beach-based court's ruling that fines collected before the law was passed in 2010 were illegal. The 3rd District Court of Appeal in Miami came to the opposite conclusion in upholding fines collected by the city of Aventura. The cases will not affect motorists ticketed after the law was passed. [Read the full story in the Miami Herald.](#)

### **Deal Appoints Mikell to Head Georgia Department of Driver Services**

Gov. Nathan Deal recently announced the appointment of former Rockdale County prosecutor Rob Mikell to commissioner of the Georgia Department of Driver Services. The agency conducts driving tests and issues all Georgia driver licenses, state identification cards and other regulatory functions. Mikell will fill the vacancy left by outgoing Commissioner Greg Dozier, who is being named assistant commissioner, chief of staff of the Georgia Department of Corrections. Mikell served as an assistant district attorney for Rockdale County from 1997 to 2000. He has been Deputy Commissioner of DDS in Conyers for five years. "Rob has proven himself as a great deputy commissioner for five years, and he's well-prepared to take on this added responsibility. Congratulations", said Governor Deal. Mikell has served as deputy commissioner of the Department of Driver Services since March 2007. He currently serves as president of AAMVA Region II, is a member of the AAMVA International Board of Directors and Chairman of the Suspended and Revoked Drivers Work group. [Congratulations Rob and good luck!](#)



### **DMV Defends System of Independent License Plate Offices (North Carolina)**

The DMV has closed seven independently operated license plate offices statewide in the last two years, but officials said Thursday that they plan to keep using contractors to run the offices. The DMV shut down a license plate office inside University Mall in Chapel Hill on Wednesday after an internal review showed accounting irregularities and other inappropriate activities. Investigators are trying to determine whether criminal charges are warranted. Donna Boone, the DMV's vehicle services administrator, said the internal review turned up monthly discrepancies, starting early this year, between money coming in to the Chapel Hill office and the amount deposited on a timely basis into the state's bank account. Caprina Kirkpatrick, 43, who has operated the Chapel Hill office since 1999, denied any wrongdoing. She admitted that the office made a lot of mistakes, but she said they weren't intentional or malicious. The DMV has contracts for 122 license plate offices across the state. The offices provide vehicle registration services and title transactions, as well as vehicle license plate renewals. In addition to Chapel Hill, which was the only license plate office in Orange County, the agency has closed offices in Lillington and Columbia this year. In 2011, four license plate offices, including those in Siler City and Saint Pauls, were shut down because of questionable practices. The reasons for the closures range from accounting irregularities to knowingly processing fraudulent paperwork to not keeping the right hours. Boone said, however, that the DMV doesn't plan on making changes to the contractor system. [Read the full story at WRAL.com](#)

### **DMV Inducts First Employee to the DMV Hall of Fame (South Carolina)**

The DMV inducted the agency's first Hall of Fame inductee, Elizabeth "Betty Jo" Mills, this week. Mrs. Mills received the honor for more than 50 years of exemplary service to DMV. "The first time I met Betty Jo, I knew she was

someone special," said Executive Director Kevin Shwedo. "This was a woman who knew and loved DMV. She wasn't afraid to tell me what she thought and she didn't sugarcoat it." A native of Sumter, Mrs. Mills began her DMV career in August of 1962 as a temporary clerk in the Sumter DMV office. Within two years, she earned a promotion to Manager and later to District Manager. During her career at DMV, Mrs. Mills also received the agency's Award for Exemplary Service, which honors a career's worth of excellence by employees who have excelled in leadership positions of significant responsibility. Mrs. Mills continues to serve DMV as a Relief Examiner and travels to DMV offices to provide assistance every day. She remains a model DMV employee, coaching and mentoring other employees wherever she goes. Mrs. Mills also actively supports her community and church through volunteer work. "The Hall of Fame is a way for DMV to not only recognize our best employees over the course of a career, but also to shine a light on their contributions for years to come" said Shwedo. [Read the DMV press release.](#)

### **Commissioner Urges Fee Hike for Online, Mail-In Driver's License Renewals (Tennessee)**

One of the governor's top commissioners is suggesting the state charge drivers a convenience fee for renewing their licenses online or in the mail. It would be the first increase in driver's license costs since the 1980's and one Finance and Administration Commissioner Mark Emkes says is due. "If you're giving them a more convenient service, I think most citizens would be willing to pay a little bit more for that," Emkes said. Governor Haslam said he's up for re-evaluating the driver's license renewal costs and other fees, but said he isn't sure now is the right time to increase it. Tennesseans now pay \$19.50 for a five-year driver's license. Wait times at the centers average 33 minutes, with a total visit time of about 45 minutes. The goal is to reduce those times by about 10 minutes. Department of Safety Director Gibbons said he is unsure about charging a higher fee to drivers who stay home and renew their licenses online or by mail. "All I can say is we've taken a look at our driver's license fees, [and] we've compared it to other states. We're kind of on the low side ... but we're not proposing a change as part of our budget," Gibbons said. Budget hearings will continue through Thursday and pick up again next week as Haslam and top state officials hear spending and revenue proposals from state agency heads in preparation of building the state's annual budget which this year runs at about \$31.5 billion. [Read the full story in the Nashville City Paper.](#)

### **Judge: DMV Can't Revoke Ethnically Offensive Tags**

The DMV was wrong last year when it revoked a Chesapeake man's license plate, a judge has ruled. It doesn't matter from a legal standpoint if some Muslims might find the ICUHAJI vanity tags offensive. Circuit Court Judge John W. Brown said that if the state is going to let people praise a religion or ethnicity on their license plates, it also must let them denigrate them. The DMV must now either return the license plate - which can be read, "I see you, Haji" - to Sean Bujno or find another, permissible reason to keep the ICUHAJI tags from the Iraq war veteran. The DMV said the department is still reviewing the judge's 14-page opinion. No decisions have been made regarding Bujno and his license plates. Bujno, who was honorably discharged in 2009 from the Army, had the plates on his car for more than four years before the DMV revoked them. In a letter dated Nov. 3, 2011, the DMV informed Bujno the tags violated a prohibition on letter combinations that could reasonably be interpreted as "socially, racially, or ethnically offensive or disparaging." The DMV apparently was responding to a citizen complaint, Brown said. Meyer said the plates were not meant to be offensive. While "Haji" is a common and often derogatory term used by U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan to refer to Arab people, the attorney said it also is an honorific term for a person who has made a pilgrimage to Mecca, or the "hajj." Meyer said his client has expanded the meaning to include all U.S. soldiers who have served in Iraq, not just Arabs. In court earlier this year, an attorney representing the DMV disagreed. Assistant Attorney General Janet Westbrook said Bujno requested HAJIKLR plates in 2007 and was subsequently denied. When he revoked the tags, Commissioner Richard Holcomb also noted a bumper sticker on Bujno's car. It read: "God Bless Our Troops, Especially Our Snipers." Meyer said his client's father - not Bujno - requested the HAJIKLR tags. As for the bumper sticker, Meyer argued the DMV wasn't

allowed to consider anything except the plate type, character combination on the plate and the make, model and year of the vehicle. Brown agreed. "The commissioner exceeded his authority under the Guidelines," he wrote. "If the DMV wishes to reconsider the revocation, it may not consider the wording of (Bujno's) bumper sticker." [Read the full story in The Virginian-Pilot.](#)

## Region III News

### **4,000 Indiana Drivers' Licenses Reinstated In Proof-Of-Insurance Case**

About 4,000 Indiana drivers will have their licenses reinstated as part of an agreement the Bureau of Motor Vehicles reached Monday with the ACLU, whose client sued the agency last summer over proof-of-insurance issues. Over the past year, the BMV has suspended driver's licenses of people listed in the Previously Uninsured Motorist Registry, a database that tracks drivers who have had their licenses suspended at least once for driving without insurance. The registry was authorized by a 2010 state legislation that enabled the bureau to randomly select people and check if they have gained insurance. About 155,000 people are on the registry and are required by law to be listed for five years. But the ACLU argues that state law does not give the bureau the authority to suspend people's licenses for not providing insurance merely because they have a license. Although it is against the law to drive without auto insurance, Indiana residents are not required to provide proof of insurance for obtaining a driver's license. In the meantime, the bureau is setting forth regulations regarding the registry. The agency will send out letters to 1,200 Indiana drivers no later than Nov. 12 telling them that their licenses have been restored. The bureau found that the rest of the 4,000 drivers have either moved out of state, or have let their licenses expire. The BMW also may seek legislative changes to the statute. Whether that would include repealing the registry completely or simply tweaking the existing law remains unknown. [Read the full story in the Courier-Journal.](#)

### **Cops Move to Protect License Plate Data** *(Minneapolis)*

Minneapolis police are making changes to protect the sensitive information in their massive vehicle tracking database from possible misuse by stalkers and others. The city's database is filled with location information collected by small license plate readers mounted on squad cars and bridges, logging data on every plate they spot in the hope of finding wanted vehicles. Since the data is classified as public, anyone can request location information on someone else's car -- provided they know the license plate number -- and find out where it has been seen on a handful of days. The city used to keep that data for a year, but now discards it after 90 days. That's still longer than St. Paul, which keeps data for two weeks, and the State Patrol, which discards it after 48 hours. Minneapolis police are working to create an audit system to track access, as well as department-wide policies governing when the information can be searched and by whom. They are also seeking a state law change to keep the information private, which would allow vehicle owners to see only their own data. The Legislature is likely to take up the issue next year. [Read the rest of the story in the Star Tribune Minneapolis.](#)

### **CDL Test Waiver for Veterans** *(Indiana)*

The BMV will waive the required drive skills test for select veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces who had specific drive training and were truck drivers during their military service when they apply for an Indiana CDL. The Indiana Military CDL Skills Waiver Program will begin on November 12, 2012. Under federal guidelines governing the issuance of CDLs, all applicants must pass a written knowledge test and a drive skills test. Under the new rules, the BMV may waive the skills test requirement for a veteran who completed an approved military driver training program and operated a truck as a regular duty. Using a form available on the myBMV.com website or at any BMV license branch, the applicant will need to document his/her military service and training. If the skills test waiver is approved, the applicant will only need to pass the Indiana CDL written test to receive his/her CDL. If a veteran has

not completed an approved military driver training program but can document that he/she has operated trucks in the military service, the BMV program requires the applicant to take both the IN CDL written knowledge and skills tests, but the fees for the skills test and the truck rental will be reimbursed if the applicant passes the tests.

## **Region IV News**

### **British Columbia Reports 17% Drop in Auto Theft so Far in 2012**

Auto theft crimes are down 17% throughout British Columbia over the first half of 2012, the provincial government said this week. A decade ago, B.C. was witnessing high rates of auto crime and had one of the highest rates of car theft in North America. With the introduction of the Bait Car program in 2002, along with support from police and community volunteers, vehicle thefts and break-ins have dropped 74% and 62% respectively through the province. While the numbers may be down, the provincial government and the province's public auto insurer ICBC say drivers still need to be vigilant and can take steps to protect their vehicles and their belongings.

### **Saskatchewan Party to Study Lower Drinking Age**

The Saskatchewan Party will be taking a long, hard look at lowering the province's drinking age to 18 from 19. The governing party passed a resolution at its convention during the weekend that could see the liquor laws in the province change. "We take resolutions at the convention very seriously, but before we make any change we are going to have to consult," Premier Brad Wall said. The legal drinking age in Manitoba, Quebec and Alberta is 18. Wall said he understands the arguments made by the young people who argued in favour of the change at the convention. "You can see the rationale that these young people come with. Someone can serve their country, be in harm's way. Someone can choose their government .... and yet that person serving his country can't go to the (Royal Canadian) Legion and have a beer," Wall said. "On the other hand, do we want to be broadening the access to alcohol for young people? There is really two sides." Although the vote passed at the Sask. Party convention, it will still have to pass a vote in the legislature to become law. Before that happens, the move is sure to face strong opposition. Saskatchewan has one of the highest impaired driving rates in the country. Drinking and driving is most common among young people between the ages of 18 and 25. Wall said before anything formal is proposed, the government will consult groups such as MADD and other government institutions such as SGI, the SLGA and law enforcement. [Read the full story in the Star Phoenix.](#)

## **Other News of Interest**

### **Governors Strengthen Policy on Drugged, Distracted Driving**

Members of the Governors Highway Safety Association have strengthened their policy positions regarding drugged and distracted driving. The new policy broadens GHSA's support of distracted driving legislation by calling for a ban on hand-held devices by all drivers. Previously, the Association supported a ban on texting for all drivers and a total ban on electronic devices for new drivers and school bus drivers. The group notes that texting bans are hard to enforce because some drivers may claim they were dialing when stopped for texting. The GHSA has also broadened its drugged driving policy by supporting zero-tolerance laws. This means a driver can be charged with impaired driving solely for having a drug in his or her system. Seventeen states currently have such laws on the books. The Association is encouraging states to adopt a stricter penalty for driving under the influence of multiple drugs, such as a combination of alcohol and another drug, or a mix of drugs other than alcohol. [Read the full story at HR.BLR.com](#)

*Did you know . . .*

- *Veterans Day is a federal holiday that honors the anniversary of the signing of the Armistice that ended World War I. This holiday is sometimes called Remembrance Day or Armistice Day.*
- *The Armistice was signed during the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th Month - November 11, 1918.*
- *According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, there are about 22.2 million living U.S. veterans.*
- *An estimated 11-20% of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Researchers find that about 30% of Vietnam Veterans and 10% of Gulf War Veterans also struggle with PTSD.*
- *The states with the highest percentage of veterans under 25 are Alaska, Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Wyoming, and Virginia.*
- *Most living veterans (9,671,000) served in the Army, followed by the Navy (4,997,000), Air Force (4,057,000), and Marines (2,374,000).*