

AAMVA Regional News

November 16, 2012

Tidbits

Mike Marando, Public Information Officer, for the California Department of Motor Vehicles has retired after 30 years of public service. Mike has been with the DMV for 6 ½ years and is looking forward to so-called retirement. He has all kinds of plans so definitely won't be bored. We thank him for his great service, his active involvement in AAMVA and we wish him the very best of luck and good health as he begins to march to the beat of his very own drummer. November 16 is his last day as a DMVer. Way to go Mike!!

Region I News

Connecticut DMV to End Extensions for Registrations

The DMV announced Thursday the end of extensions on the expiration dates of licenses, registrations and emissions tests. These extensions also resulted in the waiver of late fees for these credentials while the state grappled with the effects of Hurricane Sandy. The extensions will stop on Monday, November 19, at the close of business, for those whose licenses, registrations and emissions compliance expired during the extension period that started on October 29, 2012. These extensions were given because of the disruptions caused by the impact of Hurricane Sandy and the closure of DMV offices in the storm's immediate aftermath. Beginning Tuesday, Nov. 20, enforcement action may be taken on expired licenses, registrations and non-compliant emissions. In addition, on Tuesday Nov. 20, DMV and AAA will be charging late fees at all offices. [Read the DMV press release.](#)

Nats License Plates Coming to D.C. and Maryland

The Nats have announced the upcoming availability of Nationals license plates for fans in D.C. and Maryland. The Nationals need registered drivers to sign up now in order to start our program in the District of Columbia and Maryland. There is no cost for this sign-up stage. Once the program starts and applications are approved there will be a fee (up to \$100) to purchase the actual plate. Fans that place their name on this sign-up list will be contacted by the Nationals with more information on how to acquire the Nationals-branded plate. The proposal introduced to the District in 2011 that paved the way for such offerings set certain guidelines for team plates. The plates would all cost \$25 and the team's logo would be displayed to the left of the plate's numbers. [Read the blog in the Washington Post.](#)

PennDOT Launches Site for Drivers to Pick Emergency Contact Through Licenses

The Pennsylvania DOT has launched a website that allows drivers to designate a person to contact during an emergency through a person's driver's license. The system was developed to help police officers and other emergency responders cut down on the time it takes to find family and friends of a victim during an emergency situation. A user can log onto www.dmv.state.pa.us and click on the "Emergency Contact Information" button. Customers log on with their driver's license number, the last four digits of their Social Security number and their date of birth. The information for an emergency contact can be changed at any time. The information is available

to emergency responders through a secure law enforcement connection to the system. [Read the full story in the York Daily Record.](#)

Region II News

Department of Driver Services Posts Average Wait Times Online *(Georgia)*

The Georgia Department of Driver Services has announced a new website enhancement aimed at saving customers valuable time before obtaining driver licensing services. Now customers can check average wait time data at www.dds.ga.gov before visiting any of the 64 statewide customer service licensing centers. To access the Wait Times for each CSC customers should visit the DDS' website at www.dds.ga.gov and enter a zip code or click the map in the "locations box" at the top right corner of the homepage. Wait Times may be accessed under the street address of each CSC location or directly at www.dds.ga.gov/cscwaittimes. On the CSC's Wait Time Information page, customers' will find the Average Expected Wait Time legend. It utilizes green yellow and red colors and symbols to rate the days of the week and hours for receiving service. The graph lists the CSCs hours of operation by days of the week and displays the color codes. Wait Times for nearby CSCs may also be displayed for a side by side comparison. The data is compiled from two weeks of each location's Average Wait Time and is refreshed regularly. The times are published for comparison purposes only and may not reflect the actual wait times you experience. The DDS website also enables customers to create a Custom Document Checklist, so a second trip will not be necessary. Many transactions are still available online allowing many customers to skip a trip to the CSC completely. [Read the DDS press release.](#)

North Carolina Man Charged In Driver's License Scam

A North Carolina man has been accused of taking money from people and promising to obtain driver's licenses for them. Donald Albert Thomas, 43, was arrested Tuesday and charged with three counts of felony obtaining property by false pretense and one count of armed robbery. Police say Thomas targeted Latino people who did not have a license. Police say Thomas did not deliver any valid license. Thomas is accused of telling his victims that he knew someone who worked at the DMV and for enough money he could provide a valid license. Police say one of the victims paid more than \$2,000. [Read the full story in the San Francisco Chronicle.](#)

Bill Seeks Repeal of Driver Responsibility Law *(Texas)*

A bill filed Monday by Rep. Larry Gonzales, seeks to repeal the controversial Driver Responsibility Program, which penalizes drivers convicted of certain traffic offenses with annual surcharges. Gonzales' bill is just the latest in a years-long campaign by critics to put an end to a program they say is ineffective and unfair. But the program also provides millions of dollars to trauma centers across Texas, and the specter of eliminating those funds has emergency care providers worried. The program has generated about \$751 million for the state since its creation in 2003. About half of that has gone to the state's general revenue fund. About \$381 million of the program's revenue, though, has gone to the Designated Trauma Facility and Medical Service Account. The fund, created in 2004 helps offset the costs of emergency care hospitals provide for patients who cannot afford to pay for it. The Driver Responsibility Fund was established to discourage unsafe driving and to raise revenue for the state. Under the program, each conviction for a moving violation means points on a driver's record. Once a driver reaches six points, the program assesses an annual surcharges for license renewal, starting at \$100 and increasing \$25 for each additional point. Surcharges must be paid every year a driver has six or more points on his or her record. Some first-time convictions, including DWI, driving without insurance or driving with an invalid license,

automatically result in surcharges. Fees for those violations can be up to \$1,000 and must be paid for three years. The charges come in addition to fines and court fees already associated with each offense. If the surcharges aren't paid, driver's licenses are suspended. Lawmakers have attempted to adjust the program, offering fee reduction and temporary amnesty programs. The latest of these efforts is an indigency program started last year that allows low-income drivers to pay 10% of the original surcharge owed. The program caps the amount such drivers would have to pay at \$250. [Read the full story in the Texas Tribune.](#)

Region III News

Superman License Plates before Ohio Senate Committee (Ohio)

The Ohio Superman license plate came another step closer to reality Wednesday when Rep. Bill Patmon outlined the measure for the Senate Highways and Transportation Committee. House Bill 339, which provides Ohio drivers more choices for specialty license plates, passed the House unanimously and could pass the Senate before the end of the year. The committee will vote on the bill, send it to the full Senate for a vote, and then to the governor for his signature. Patmon said he wants to make sure the plates are available in 2013, the 75th anniversary of the debut of "Action Comics" No. 1, the first appearance of Superman. The plates, which will feature the Superman insignia and the slogan "Truth, Justice and the American Way," will honor Clevelanders Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, who created Superman in Glenville during the Great Depression. Originally, the plate would have contained the legend, "Ohio: Birthplace of Superman," but DC Comics and its parent company Time Warner objected to the term. After some discussion, all parties agreed on "Truth, Justice and the American Way." [Read the full story at Cleveland.com.](#)



Region IV News

Licence Plate Scanning Technology Goes Against Privacy Laws, B.C. Commissioner Rules

Police departments in B.C. could be forced to change the way they use licence plate scanning technology after B.C.'s privacy commissioner said collecting the data on non-offenders violates privacy laws. In a report Thursday, Commissioner Elizabeth Denham said that changes must be made to the Victoria police department's automated licence plate recognition program, after an investigation suggested the technology could be used as a surveillance tool. The decision has implications for other agencies in B.C. that use the technology and could lead to stricter laws to prevent police from keeping data on drivers with no criminal backgrounds or those under no suspicion. At issue is the collection of non-hit data, or information collected that police have no reason to believe relates to criminal activity. Using specialized cameras mounted to squad cars, Victoria police use the program to photograph and record licence plate numbers, including time and location. The ALPR system compares this data to a database of plate numbers maintained by the RCMP called an "alert listing." An alert listing could include the licence plate numbers of stolen vehicles or vehicles whose owners are wanted for a crime. A "hit" occurs when there is a match between a licence plate and the listing. If there is no match, the item is categorized as a "non-hit." The data is transferred to the RCMP which deletes the data after 30 minutes. The RCMP has been considering keeping non-hit data for a longer period of time. But Denham said any extended use of that information would not be authorized under B.C. law. And she concluded that sending the non-hit data to the RCMP is not in line with privacy laws. A spokesman for the Victoria police, said the information must go to the RCMP because it is on an encrypted device

that can only be destroyed with the RCMP. That is because the RCMP manages ALPR for all police in B.C. Victoria police transfer the data to the RCMP "for the sole purpose of its destruction." [Read the full story in the Vancouver Sun.](#)

DMV Answerman to Hit the Internet (California)

Look out -- here comes the [DMV Answer man](#), who will not only tickle your funny bone, he will answer many frequently asked questions such as how to register your car for the first time, how to get a California driver license, and what happens if your car fails the smog test among many others. "We believe that our customers will enjoy getting to know the DMV Answer man and will hopefully look forward to his future video appearances," said Department of Motor Vehicles Chief Deputy Director, Jean Shiimoto. "We are always looking for innovative ways to provide information to our customers." During the summer, DMV hit the streets and prompted citizens to ask the DMV Answer man DMV-related questions. The Answer man answers each question in his humorous style, telling funny antidotes about himself or his friends and family while getting important DMV points across. There will be a total of nine DMV Answer man videos that will be periodically posted on the Web with new installments coming in the future. [Read the DMV press release.](#)

California Lawmaker May Propose Tripling Vehicle Registration Fees

A controversial plan to raise the cost of registering your car in California could soon be in the works in Sacramento. Even with the Democrats' new supermajority, there are doubts lawmakers will be able to push through another tax. In what could be the Democrats' first test in the new supermajority powers in the Legislature, a group called Transportation California has asked St. Sen. Ted Lieu to introduce legislation to triple the vehicle license fee to register cars. They want it to be a constitutional amendment so the money will be dedicated to roads, which means voters would still have to approve it. The proposed formula is 1.35% of the value of the vehicle. It could raise as much as \$4 billion a year for roads and public transit, both of which have been underfunded for years because of the budget crisis. The car tax is a touchy subject with Californians. Their hatred of it partly led to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's victory as governor because he promised to repeal the law that tripled the car tax in the first place and he did the first day on the job. Pollsters say another tax measure probably wouldn't stand a chance. [Read the full story at KFSN ABC 30.](#)

DMV Warns Against Phone Solicitations (Nevada)

The DMV is warning Nevadans about a telephone sales pitch circulating in Northern Nevada. Callers sometimes say that DMV records indicate the motorist is overpaying on insurance. At other times, callers have identified themselves as DMV employees. The callers offer discounted auto insurance and ask for information about the motorist's vehicles. Often, the caller will leave a message with a return phone number, (775) 473-1342. Other numbers have been reported. The DMV advises motorists to be aware that these calls are not endorsed by the department in any way. Motorists should not give their personal information over the telephone unless they are sure they are dealing with a legitimate company. The Nevada Division of Insurance encourages consumers to verify whether an insurance agent or company is legitimate. The Nevada License Inquiry Service is available at (888) 872-3234 or on the Division's website at doi.nv.gov. [Read the DMV press release.](#)

Law Returning Licenses to DWI Suspects (New Mexico)

New Mexico highways are crawling with drunk drivers who have figured out the secret to beating the system and getting their driver's licenses back, according to a seven-month investigation by News 13's Larry Barker.

"It has just become a muddy mess," said Gordon Eden, secretary of DPS . "We are putting the legal right to drive back into the people's hands who are causing the vast majority of our motor vehicle fatalities in this state."

The loophole doesn't occur in court, however. It happens at the state's MVD. That's because after a person is arrested for driving while intoxicated, state law automatically revokes their driving privileges for up to one year. However, the person can challenge the loss of their license by asking for an administrative hearing presided over by an MVD hearing officer. The hearings are not court proceedings. If the person can prove the DWI arrest was not by the book, the MVD must return the license unfettered. Here's the problem: police officers are required to attend the hearing and justify the driver's arrest. Hearing rules require only the driver's lawyer to attend the hearing. If the police officer is just 10 minutes late or does not show up, MVD automatically restores the person's driving privileges. Since 2003, more than 14,000 drunk drivers got a break when police officers failed to show up for MVD administrative hearings. Among the statute changes the Governor will ask the Legislature to consider in January is a provision to allow police officers to testify over the phone rather than in person. Eden said fixing the problem is up to legislators in Santa Fe. "It's going to take an action by the Legislature," he said, "to correct the mayhem that we are creating to these administrative hearings. [Read the full story at KRQE.](#)

Families of Fallen Soldiers Could Get Silver Cross Licence Plates (Saskatchewan)

There are special Roughrider licence plates and ones for veterans, now the families of those who given the ultimate sacrifice may get some extra recognition. Premier Brad Wall has asked SGI to look into the possibility of a Silver Cross licence plate for the families of those who have lost a loved one in combat.

The medal, which is awarded to the mothers and/or spouses of fallen soldiers, could be replicated on licence plates, one per family, and may silver in colour with a cross in the middle of it. It would even afford them the privileges of any veteran, like free entry to national and provincial parks. Wall has asked SGI and the Royal Canadian Legion for their reaction to the suggestion. Ten Silver Cross medals have been handed to Saskatchewan families since the Afghanistan conflict began. The medal was first awarded in 1919. [Read the full story at News Talk 980.](#)

Other News of Interest

More Law Enforcement Agencies Require Body Armor

A rising number of law enforcement officers are required to wear body armor after two consecutive years in which police were being killed by gunfire with increasing frequency, a new Justice Department study has found. Ninety-two percent of officers reported that their agencies now have mandatory body armor policies, up from 59% in a similar 2009 survey. The jump also comes in the wake of a 2010 directive by Attorney General Eric Holder, who warned that local police risked losing millions of dollars in federal aid if body armor did not become mandatory. The new report, based on a survey of more than 1,000 officers, also found that 78% of police said their agencies had written policies related to mandatory body armor use, up from 45% in 2009. [Read the full story in USA Today.](#)

Did you know . . .

- *The Blues Brothers once held the record for crashing the most police cars in a movie at approximately 30. The record was eventually broken by Blues Brothers 2000.*

- *In Carrie, the slow motion scene at the end of the movie was filmed in reverse to simulate ghostlike movement effects. If watched vigilantly, cars can be seen driving backwards in the upper left hand corner of the screen.*
- *When the Mother-Ship passes over the Devil's Tower near the end of Spielberg's movie, Close Encounters of the Third Kind, R2-D2 can be seen hanging from the bottom of the ship.*
- *In the movie E.T. there is a scene where the young boy lures the extraterrestrial with some Reese's pieces. Originally Spielberg was going to use M+M's, but he could not get the rights. Reese's pieces were the replacement.*
- *The Godfather was the first movie in over twenty years in which Marlon Brando was required to audition.*
- *"Halloween" was originally going to be titled "The Babysitter Murders".*
- *The mechanical shark used in the movie Jaws was nicknamed Bruce, named after Spielberg's lawyer.*