



TIDBITS

Blair Grant, from ICBC has retired.

Thought this was nifty. At a news conference in the Washington D.C. area, police used this car to tell people that there are two ways to get home when drunk.

The New Mexico Motor Vehicle Division anticipates releasing their upcoming Driver and Vehicle System Reengineering Project RFP#30-333-00-12463 on January 11, 2013. Anyone interested in this RFP who is not currently registered as a vendor with the State Purchasing Division (SPD), is urged to do so register as registration is required for access to [SPD's RFP pages](#) where all documents related to the RFP will be posted. A pre-proposal conference is tentatively (pending publication of the RFP) scheduled for January 24, 2013 , beginning at 1:00 p.m. MST in the Taxation and Revenue Department Secretary's Conference Room on the third floor of the Joseph Montoya Building, 1100 South St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505. Interested vendors are prohibited from any marketing communications that may relate to the Reengineering Project RFP, including sharing of any material that may be primarily "informative" as to the related product offerings of any potential offerors.

REGION I NEWS

**DMV Sees 450% Increase in Mobile Users of Website Summaries of Information to Help Readers** *(Connecticut)*

A new DMV analysis showing a two-year increase of 450% in mobile and tablet users visiting its website is leading the agency to make frequently viewed web pages easier to read on these smaller devices. In its comparative analysis of users visiting the DMV website in 2010 and 2012, the agency found mobile and tablet users jumped from 270,500 to 1.5 million. These devices today account for nearly 25% of the 6.1 million visits to the website in 2012. DMV has created a [DMV Easy Answers Page](#) that will give the smaller-screen readers compact and summarized versions of information. Links to any further detailed information are at the bottom of each page. Total site visits increased by 45%- from 4.2 million to 6.1 million -- since 2010, a 45% increase. With the increase in total customers, the DMV Easy Answers approach can also help those who want to just quickly find an overview of a topic. The Easy Answers' topics range from forms of payment accepted, license information and registration policies to making name changes on DMV records, emissions testing and suspension of credentials. The top four mobile or tablet devices using the DMV website in the last year have been the iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch and Sony Ericsson Lt 15i. The top 10 pages visited overall on the website in 2012 are: 1) Homepage; 2) Directions and Offices; 3) Online Services - Main Menu; 4) Sample Tests; 5) Contact Us; 6) Forms - Main page; 7) Teen Drivers - Main Menu; 8) Phone Center; 9) SelectCT ID Overview; and 10) Forms - List of all DMV Forms. [Read the DMV press release.](#)

**Cuomo to Make DMV Fun** *(New York)*

Gov. Cuomo plans to make Department of Motor Vehicles offices friendlier places, complete with customer-service reps to greet and assist motorists and self-serve kiosks, starting at 15 locations this month. The changes are aimed at cutting in half the average hour-long wait at DMV offices by early 2014, he said.

The plan also authorizes morning, late and possibly Saturday hours at some DMV locations, pharmacies and AAA offices to conduct official vision screenings for driver's-license renewals. Motorists would be able to reserve a place in line on-line or

with their smartphones. Officials said the DMV plan will serve as a trial for a "customer-service initiative" across state agencies and authorities that will be unveiled next year. [Read the full story in the New York Post.](#)

### **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 are now able to proudly display their medal through a new series of military license plates offered by PennDOT. The 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. 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. A link to the listing of these license plates is also on the Military License Plates Web page, and applications must be requested through the approved organization's local representative. [Read the full story at KittanningPaper.com.](#)

## **Region II News**

### **Floridians Select New License Plate Design**

After three weeks of online voting for the new Florida license plate, the design with the solid green bars and the artistic orange forming the 'O' in the word Florida is the most popular. A total of 50,124 votes were cast in the online contest. The online poll represents one part of the process to select the new plate design. Before the design is manufactured, the public's vote will be factored in with input from the Governor, Cabinet and policy makers. The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles needs to upgrade the basic Florida plate to a design that increases readability and features a seven-character configuration. A committee of more than 20 stakeholders, including state agency personnel, law enforcement, tax collectors and affiliated associations participated in the development of the final license plate designs. [Read the DHSMV press release.](#)



### **Lawmaker Mulls Abortion-Rights License Plates (Georgia)**

A Georgia lawmaker is looking to give drivers who support abortion rights the option to demonstrate their viewpoint with a specialty license plate. Out of 125 specialty plates, Georgia drivers have the option of purchasing one showcasing their anti-abortion standpoint. However, specialty license plates promoting an abortion-rights viewpoint are not offered. Sen. Gloria Butler is looking to review an amendment she introduced in 2005 after the General Assembly approved anti-abortion plates. A judge in North Carolina recently ruled that offering specialty plates on one side of the issue but not the other was discriminatory and unconstitutional. Butler says that motivated her to reconsider the amendment. [Read the full story in the Augusta Chronicle.](#)

### **Oklahoma Launches New Motorcycle Safety Website**

The Oklahoma Highway Safety Office recently launched a new Oklahoma Motorcycle Safety & Education website <http://www.okiemoto.ok.gov>. The site provides one convenient location for motorcyclists to find legislation, training opportunities, and other motorcycle safety information. The new website offers educational videos featured on the homepage,

as well as links to other websites that promote motorcycle safety. The new website was built using OK.gov's GoGov! Web Management Suite, allowing for easy and quick web development and maintenance, while utilizing a standard state agency web template. The Oklahoma Motorcycle Safety & Education website and services result from a partnership between the Office of Management and Enterprise Services and OK.gov. [Read the full story at Yahoo.com.](#)

#### **UVa and DMV Testing Out a Virtual Driving Test (Virginia)**

What if you could take your driving test without getting into a car? Well, now the University of Virginia School of Medicine and the Virginia DMV are teaming up to make that happen. This year, two Virginia DMV's, one in Charlottesville, the other in Fairfax, are testing out an alternative to in-car driving tests with a virtual reality driving simulator. It works just like a car, except you don't move. The program tests your road skills with stop lights, emergency and other careless drivers. The research project is to find out how fair and accurate the driving simulator is. It's not necessarily to replace driving tests, but maybe to one day work alongside them down the road. "It's not going to be like driving your own car but it will test the same skills. The experience is equipped with a speedometer, rear and ride view mirrors, a 180 degree view, and a blinker. The simulator tests your vision. It tests your motor skills, so, your ability to break in front of other cars and to avoid potholes and things like that. It also tests some things such as memory, your working memory and your ability to do all of those things while seeing signs on the highway and remembering what they were." If you decide to volunteer for the driving simulator, the test results aren't going to affect your current drivers' license or insurance in any way. Within the next year, the research staff hopes to have a thousand volunteers try out the system at the two simulator locations. The test takes about an hour to an hour and a half to complete. It's up to volunteers to get in the driver's seat for the research process to get moving. [Read the full story in Newsplex.com.](#)

### **REGION III NEWS**

#### **Michigan Passes Bill Banning Cell Phone Use by New, Teen Drivers**

Michigan lawmakers have passed a bill that would ban cell phone use by new drivers. The Michigan Legislature passed the bill, known as "Kelsey's Law," 74-33. The law prohibits drivers with a level 1 or 2 probationary license from placing a call, answering a call, or listening to or engaging in "verbal communication through the cellular telephone." It does not apply, however, to drivers using a voice-operated system that's integrated into the vehicle. Violators face a \$100 fine and a civil penalty. Kelsey's Law is supported by public safety and medical groups, which say the ban could save the lives of inexperienced drivers. The bill is named after 17-year-old Kelsey Raffaele, who died in a car crash while talking on her cell phone. The bill, which was approved by the state Senate in a 28-10 vote in March, awaits Gov. Rick Snyder's signature. Other restrictions that drivers with a level 1 or 2 graduated license currently have to follow include no driving between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., and having no more than one passenger who is less than 21-years-old at any given time - both which carry exceptions for employment and authorized school or religious activity, or accompaniment by a parent or legal guardian. [Read the full story at CBS 62.](#)

#### **Michigan DREAMers Won't Get Licenses; Civil Rights Groups Sue**

Michigan has said it will not permit young undocumented immigrants granted deferred action to obtain driver's licenses. But immigrant-rights groups are not going down without a fight. Several groups, including the National Immigration Law Center (NILC), filed a suit against Republican Michigan Secretary of State Ruth Johnson this week for blocking licenses for DREAMers. The deferred action program, which awards young undocumented immigrants two-year, renewable reprieves from deportation, also makes recipients eligible for work permits. But DREAMers argue those permits don't do much good unless they have a way of getting to their jobs. Some also say they find it difficult to get to school without a license. About 15,000 young people are eligible to apply for deferred action in Michigan. There's no breakdown of how many have applied by state, but almost 103,000 have been approved nationwide. According to Gisgise Dávila Gendreau, a spokeswoman for the Michigan Department of State, Michigan cannot legally issue the licenses. "State law doesn't allow for it," she said. "Michigan law

requires a customer be here legally and the information we have from the federal government...is that [deferred action] does not grant legal status, so under Michigan law we can't issue the licenses. [Read the full story ABC/Univision News](#)

## Region IV News

### **Unlicensed Drivers Pose Threat on California Roads**

A new California DMV study found that suspended/revoked and unlicensed drivers are much more hazardous on the road than validly licensed drivers. The study, entitled *Fatal Crash Rates for Suspended/Revoked and Unlicensed Drivers*, found that compared to licensed drivers, suspended / revoked and unlicensed drivers are nearly three times more likely to cause a fatal crash. The study also found that unlicensed drivers tend to be more hazardous than suspended/revoked drivers. The study used crash data over a 23-year period and looked at two-vehicle fatal crashes where only one driver was at fault. The study found that the at-fault crash risk of suspended/revoked and unlicensed drivers has not decreased over time. Among the Report's Key Findings: Compared to validly licensed drivers, suspended/revoked and unlicensed drivers are 2.60 and 2.73 times more likely to cause a fatal crash relative to their exposure. The largest percentage of suspended/revoked and unlicensed drivers involved in two-vehicle fatal crashes are those aged 20 to 29. For drivers aged 19 or younger in two-vehicle fatal crashes, the percentage who were unlicensed drivers was almost four times higher than the percentage who were suspended or revoked. The actual number of unlicensed drivers in California is unknown because these drivers do not come to the attention of the DMV until they are involved in a crash or convicted of a traffic violation. [Read the DMV press release.](#)

### **California DMV Announces New 2013 Laws**

With 2013 around the corner, the California DMV reminds motorists of several new laws that will ring in the New Year. The following new laws take effect in January.

***Driving Under the Influence.*** Drivers suspected of driving under the influence of drugs will no longer have the option to choose a chemical test of their urine to determine drug content. By requiring a blood test, with a few exceptions, AB 2020 will help law enforcement and prosecutors to better identify and convict persons driving under the influence of drugs. If a blood test is unavailable, then the person is deemed to have given his or her consent to a urine test

***California Legacy License Plates.*** Effective January 1, 2013, DMV will accept applications for a series of three specialized license plates that replicate plates from California's past

***"Buy-Here-Pay-Here" Car Dealers.*** Two new laws are directed at used car dealers that assign less than 90% of their conditional sales and lease contracts to third party lenders; and therefore provide direct financing to car buyers. One of the new laws defines these used car dealers as "buy-here-pay-here" dealers.

**Traffic Violator School.** AB 1888 will allow commercial drivers to attend traffic violator school for violations that take place when operating non-commercial vehicles. The conviction would not count as a point for determining whether a driver is presumed to be a negligent operator unless it was considered a serious violation. The record of the conviction would not be held confidential and would be disclosed to employers, and to insurers for insurance underwriting and rating purposes.

**Autonomous Vehicles.** This new law allows for testing of autonomous vehicles, or self-driving cars, by designees of an autonomous technology manufacturer, provided certain requirements are met.

**Vessel Registration Fees.** An increase in vessel registration fees, as yet to be determined by the Department of Boating and Waterways, will be collected by DMV to fund the implementation and administration of dreissenid mussel monitoring, inspection, and infestation prevention programs in California waterways. The fee may not exceed ten dollars and will not be imposed on vessels operated exclusively in marine waters. [Read the DMV press release.](#)

#### **DMV To Issue Calag' License Plates (California)**

The California DMV is expected to begin issuing California Agriculture ("CalAg") special interest license plates in March. The license plate is sponsored by the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Fees collected for CalAg license plates will support agricultural leadership development, career awareness and training activities. The CalAg license plates cost an additional fee, higher than the normal registration fee. A plate with a random set of six numbers and letters selected by the DMV will cost \$50 (\$40 per year to renew). Personalized plates (with six characters maximum) will cost \$98 (\$78 to renew). The plates can be ordered by completing the special interest license plate application. [Read the full story in the Lake County Record Bee.](#)

#### **Off-Duty CHP Officer Dies in Fairfield Motorcycle Crash**

An off-duty California Highway Patrol officer riding a personal motorcycle was killed in a traffic collision on Friday. A Toyota pickup truck was driving east and attempting to make a left turn into a driveway across the road. But while making the turn, the driver saw a motorcycle coming towards the pickup. The pickup's driver attempted to accelerate to get out of the way of the motorcycle, but did not make it across the highway in time and the motorcycle struck the rear of the truck. The motorcyclist was thrown from the bike and hit the front of a Honda driving on the other side of the road. The motorcyclist was pronounced dead at the scene, and identified as an off-duty CHP officer. *Our condolences to the CHP.* [Read the full story in Mercury News.](#)

#### **More Autonomous Vehicles Headed to Nevada Roads**

The Nevada DMV granted the license for Continental's "highly automated vehicle" - a modified Volkswagen Passat - after the company successfully demonstrated the car's system functions, accident-reporting mechanisms, employee protocol and safety procedures. After the normal barrage of red tape, Continental will get a red license plate to match, complete with an infinity symbol that's specific to autonomous vehicles, informing other drivers and law enforcement officers why the engineer behind the wheel is fiddling with a laptop instead of keeping his hands on the wheel. However, Continental is quick to point out that its automated vehicle - which has already logged 15,000 miles of testing - will always have a person in the driver's seat, and describes its program as an assist system that can be used in a variety of road scenarios. That includes everything from rush-hour traffic to driving at highway speeds, all controlled by a brace of computers receiving information from two short-range radar sensors up front, two in the rear, a long-range radar sensor, and a stereo camera. And according to Continental, all this equipment is already available on the market. Continental aims to have partially automated driving systems - mainly geared toward low-speed, start-and-stop traffic, and accident avoidance - available to its by automaker customers by 2016. And between 2020 and 2025, fully automated driving, even at higher speeds and in more complex driving situations, will be ready for production by 2020 or 2025. [Read the full story at Wired.com.](#)

### **Woman Sentenced In Illegal Driver's License Ring (New Mexico)**

A woman who claims to be a political pawn in the immigration debate has been sentenced to 10 years for forging affidavits that authorities say allowed 44 illegal immigrants to get New Mexico driver's licenses. Ana Hernandez was sentenced Thursday after pleading guilty to 10 of 324 charges in an indictment that named her and 42 others last year. The 46-year-old is accused of signing affidavits that falsely said the applicants lived at her business address. Hernandez's attorney, Scott Mullins, says his client was singled out for overzealous prosecution "and the dangerous inference of immigration politics in the administration of justice." Gov. Susana Martinez has made three unsuccessful attempts to repeal the state law that allows illegal immigrants to get driver's licenses. She has cited Hernandez's case as particularly troubling because she has been charged separately in a heroin trafficking ring. [Read the full story at KOB.com](#)

### **SGI Launches New Mobile App (Saskatchewan)**

Saskatchewan Government Insurance is launching the Safe Ride app, allowing users to access taxis, designated driving companies and bus routes in their community, as well as a personal list of designated drivers. The app is GPS controlled, is supported by the MySask411 database, and will provide users with the appropriate information and options for their specific community. It is currently available on iPhone, Blackberry and Android devices and can be downloaded free from any app store. The No. 1 contributing factor to fatal collisions on Saskatchewan roads continues to be alcohol. Fifty-two people were killed and 619 people were injured in a total of 1,284 alcohol-related collisions across the province in 2011. [Read the full story in the Daily Herald.](#)

### **DOL Continues Expansion of Driver Testing Outside of Offices (Washington)**

On January 1, the Department of Licensing will continue expansion of a new program allowing driver training schools and school district driver training programs across the state to conduct driver knowledge and skills testing for new driver license applicants. "This program continues to operate smoothly, so we are stopping testing in several more offices as of the first of the year," said DOL Director Alan Haight. "There are even more driver training schools that are ready to conduct drive tests, and we have definitely seen an improvement in the wait times for our customers that must come and visit us." The Department of Licensing will continue to offer tests in areas that don't have driver training schools nearby that offer testing. To conduct driver tests, driver training schools must be licensed with the state or be part of a state-certified public school driver training program. They have to apply for the authority to administer driver testing, and are subject to audits and record checks. After passing the tests, customers will go to a licensing office to obtain their license. Customers are still required to pay the driver license application fee to DOL. Driver training schools will set the fee they charge for the tests. The program is the final phase of implementing House Bill 1635, which gives the Department authority to contract with private driver training schools, school districts and motorcycle training schools to conduct some knowledge and skills tests. The bill was passed in an effort to reduce wait times in licensing service offices. [Read the DOL press release.](#)

## **Other News of Interest**

### **Brazil Toughens It Anti-Drunk-Driving Legislation**

Brazil's Senate has approved legislation to toughen punishment of drunk drivers. The Senate's website says the measure approved Tuesday night doubles automatic fines on motorists caught driving under the influence from 958 reais (\$479) to 1,916 reais (\$958). It also allows the use of methods other than breathalyzers to prove drivers are drunk. Photographs, videos, witness testimony and lab tests can also be used. President Dilma Rousseff is expected to sign the measure into law before the end of the year. [Read the full story at WSL.com.](#)

### **South Korea's Mass Pardons of Traffic Offenders Led to More Accidents**

Since 1995, four presidents of South Korea have issued mass pardons to drivers who had lost their licenses because of drunk driving, vehicular homicide, and other violations. About 24.6 million people, more than 10% of the country's population, have

benefited from these populist gestures, but the pardons increased traffic accidents by an average of 4.3% in the subsequent years. Arbitrary and irrelevant pardons can be considered an abuse of clemency power, the researchers suggest. [Click here to read the study.](#) [Read the full story in the Harvard Business Review](#)

## DID YOU KNOW . . .

*Conspiracy theorists claim that Santa's iconic crimson and white ensemble actually originated with a marketing scheme by Coca-Cola in the 1930s, when the company featured a jolly, red-suited Santa Claus in its ads to boost sales during cold winter months. While a similarly outfitted Santa appeared years earlier in newspapers like The Saturday Evening Post, many agree that Coca-Cola may have had a hand in creating the Santa we know today.*



*Thousands of Santa enthusiasts gather each December to pay homage to the big guy at what's called SantaCon. Celebrated in 227 locations in 32 countries, SantaCon was founded in San Francisco in the '90s and continues to be the largest public gathering of people dressed in festive gear and engaged in holiday-related revelry.*

*While the candy cane is a seasonal staple in the U.S. today—1.8 billion canes in traditional peppermint, super sour, and tropical fruit flavors were made for the holidays this year—it has a storied past. The first canes were created in 1670 by a German choirmaster, who gave out all-white sugar sticks—bent like the shape of a shepherd's staff—to keep children in his congregation occupied between hymns. In the U.S., the treat began as a straight, white stick of sugar until the turn of the century. The jury's out on who exactly brought the stripes and shape to America.*

*Between January and September 2011, \$79.7 million worth of artificial Christmas trees were imported from China to the United States. However, real trees still outsell artificial trees 3-to-1. To accommodate the demand, Christmas tree farms in North America planted an estimated 40 million new seedlings in the winter and spring of this year to replace harvested trees and meet future needs.*

*The U.S. produces an estimated 1 million tons of additional waste per week between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. This includes 38,000 miles of decorative ribbon, enough to tie a bow around the entire globe. If each family in the U.S. sent just one less holiday card, then the nation would save 150,000 cubic feet of paper, enough to fill 25,000 wheelbarrows.*

*According to American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, between 2000 and 2010, the most-performed holiday song was "Winter Wonderland," which was written in 1934.*

*Children eager to track Santa Claus on his annual yuletide journey to homes across the world can download a new mobile app from the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). The new app for Windows 8, called NORAD Tracks Santa, is part of a 57-year-long holiday tradition at NORAD of tracking Santa. It will allow children to keep up with him on their mobile devices and joins similar apps for iOS, Android and web apps.*

**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!**