

## AAMVA Regional News

January 25, 2013

### Tidbits

This is the last edition of Regional News that I will edit. Starting with the February 1 issue, Claire O'Brien in our Communications Department at AAMVA HQ will take over. I have enjoyed bringing you Regional News since its inception and am confident it is in terrific hands. From this point forward, please send any items you wish to see included in Regional News to Claire at [cobrien@aamva.org](mailto:cobrien@aamva.org). Thanks much and keep on reading! *Sheila*

### Region I News

#### **Bill Would Toughen Rules for Phoning While Driving** *(Maryland)*

A Baltimore County delegate is proposing legislation that would allow police to pull over cellphone users even if they were committing no other offense. Violators would receive one point on their driver's license and a fine of up to \$500, but first-time offenders could have their citations thrown out if they prove to the court that they've purchased a hands-free device. Those using hands-free devices would be exempt from the law. It's currently illegal to use a hand-held phone while driving, but because it isn't considered a primary offense, police can only penalize drivers if they are pulled over for another violation. About 1.2 million car crashes each year involve drivers using cellphones. A study found that more than 6% of Maryland drivers used hand-held phones. There are more than 4 million licensed drivers in the state. [Read the full story at Gazette.net.](#)

#### **On The Move — MVA Announces New Services for Vets** *(Maryland)*

The Motor Vehicle Administration unveiled new services last week that proponents hope will make it easier for veterans to get jobs. The changes make it easier for veterans to obtain a commercial driver's license. If an applicant drove military vehicles for two years or more, was discharged honorably and has a good driving record, he or she will no longer be required to take the drivers skills test to get a commercial license.-- Veteran status will now be indicated on licenses and identification cards to help returned soldiers identify themselves more easily in order to take advantage of veteran's services and benefits. [Read the full story at FrederickNewsPost.com.](#)

#### **Fakes Drive Switch to New Licenses** *(New York)*

Google "counterfeit New York driver's license," and your Internet search will reveal a choice of shifty vendors eager to sell you one. Change "New York" to "Virginia" in your search, and you get not even one hit. Officials at the DMV want New York to be more like Virginia — at least in that respect — by switching to new licenses that, so far, no one has been able to successfully tamper with or duplicate. The new ones will include high-resolution black-and-white photographs etched deep into polycarbonate. A second "ghost" image will be visible from either side of the card. Birth dates and other identifying information will be laser-etched into the card, making it virtually impossible to scratch off or alter the data. Drivers under age 21 will get a license with the information arranged vertically, which will be replaced by a horizontal one when they reach legal drinking age. That is intended to make it impossible to alter a birth date and claim it's an adult card. While a switch away from color may seem a step back in time, officials in New York and Virginia say the new licenses are more secure. When New York's licenses were last updated, in 2005, they were considered state of the art. Now fake New York licenses are readily available on the Internet and elsewhere. The laminate material the cards are made of and the security inks used to create them, once hard to find, are now readily available online. Last year, the state confiscated 1,400 fake licenses. With

a fake state driver's license in hand, a person can get a copy of a birth certificate. If they can get their hands on a fraudulent birth certificate with that driver's license, they can get a Social Security card and then a U.S. passport/ Because methods and means to produce fake licenses have improved, New York needs to update again to thwart counterfeiters. DMV is awaiting approval from the state comptroller's office of the contract with CBN Secure Technologies, which that state uses for its licenses. All the licenses will be produced at the DMV offices in Albany, as they are now. The new licenses will be issued as existing ones expire, though a driver can request one of the more secure IDs. DMV hopes to start producing them this year. The new ones will cost \$2.20 each to make, up from \$1.39 for the current ones, but that cost will not be passed onto consumers. So far, not a single person has successfully replicated the federal or Virginia IDs, according to DMV officials from both New York and Virginia.

[Read the full story in the Times Union.](#)

### **Cuomo Wants Fewer Plea Bargains and Higher Fees For Speeding Tickets (New York)**

Hundreds of thousands of speeding drivers who have plea-bargained out of expensive traffic tickets in New York may not get off so easily next time. Gov. Cuomo wants to crack down on the reckless drivers by making it more difficult for them to plead to lesser violations when they exceed the speed limit by 20 mph or more.

The governor also wants an \$80 surcharge on traffic violations that result in plea bargains. "This is all about making our roads safer by creating a deterrent and making it harder to plead down," a Cuomo administration official said. State figures show 536,000 tickets — including nearly 311,000 for speeding and reckless driving — were plea-bargained in 2010, the most recent figures available. Local courts often allow drivers charged with speeding to plead to parking violations, which spares drivers from points and allows the city or town to keep the entire fine. Cuomo's proposal — a part of his proposed \$142.6 billion budget — would prevent drivers who exceed the speed limit by 20 miles per hour from pleading guilty to anything less than a moving violation. Plea bargains cost the state nearly \$58 million a year in lost surcharges, according to the administration. Cuomo's proposal — which also includes a new \$50 minimum penalty for texting or talking on a cellphone while driving — would generate up to \$25 million a year for the state. [Read the full story in the NY Daily News.](#)

### **NYPD Testing Technology That Would Detect Concealed Weapons on Citizens**

The NYPD says it is testing a new device that would allow officers to detect if citizens are carrying a weapon without having to pat them down. The device, which resembles body scanners used at airports, reads body energy to find out whether someone is concealing a weapon. The "T-Ray Machine" reads terahertz radiation, which is natural energy emitted by humans and inanimate objects. The radiation can penetrate many objects, including clothing. [Read the full story at FoxNews.com.](#)

### **Lawmaker Wants to Ban Pets from Drivers' Laps (Rhode Island)**

A lawmaker in Rhode Island wants to pass a law to stop motorists from driving with dogs in their laps. Rep. Peter Palumbo is introducing legislation that would allow police to issue \$85 tickets to motorists who allow their pet to sit in their lap while driving. He says the practice poses a danger to themselves, their pet and other drivers. Palumbo says he loves dogs "as much as anyone" but common sense must prevail when it comes to road safety. Palumbo says Hawaii already has a similar law. His legislation has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee for review. [Read the full story in the Providence Journal.](#)

### **Vermont Bill Targets License Plate Readers**

Lawmakers are considering limiting the amount of time that police in Vermont can store information compiled by automatic license plate readers that have the ability to gather troves of information about the whereabouts of vehicles. Sen. Tim Ashe has introduced a bill that would require police to delete electronic data collected by automatic license plate readers after six months. Information from the devices, which can scan thousands of

license plates per hour, is currently stored in a law enforcement database for four years. More than 30 law enforcement agencies across the state have deployed the readers in recent years, with much of the money to buy them coming from grants. Ashe said that six months is the average length of time for the judicial system to handle a traffic court case and potential appeals. Police say the electronic plate readers are an efficient tool that can help them identify and apprehend criminals and retroactively gather evidence on criminal suspects. New Hampshire passed a law that all but forbade law enforcement from using the plate readers. There are exemptions, however, for monitoring bridges and other infrastructure. It is unclear how Vermont law enforcement will react to the bill. [Read the full story at Vnews.com.](#)

### **Vermont Lawmakers Debate Driver's Licenses for Undocumented Workers**

Vermont legislators are debating the pros and cons of issuing driver's licenses to the state's undocumented workers. Rep. Mollie Burke and Sen. Peg Flory presented results from their access study to the House Agriculture Committee Wednesday. The study committee unanimously concluded that Vermont's dairy industry cannot function without migrant workers, many of whom are here illegally. The study committee also agreed that some form of identification does need to be made available, but Flory contends full licensure is a step too far. "I did not support that and still don't, although I would have no objection to a driving privilege type card," said Flory. The committee suggested loosening proof of residency requirements to make it possible for undocumented workers to get licenses. They would still need to pass written and driving tests. [Read the full story at WCAX.com.](#)

## **Region II News**

### **Man Sues after Georgia Rejects GAYGUY License Plate**

An Atlanta man is suing the Department of Driver Services, contending that his rights were violated when the state rejected his application for vanity plates making reference to his sexual orientation. James Cyrus Gilbert maintains in the lawsuit that state officials rejected his application for the tags 4GAYLIB, GAYPWR and GAYGUY. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reports that all three vanity plates are on the list of vanity plates banned by the state, although the state has approved plates expressing some political or religious expressions. Gilbert said he wasn't asking for a plate that was vulgar or "over the top." [Read the full story at CBSNews.com.](#)

### **Statement Regarding Prestige License Plate Litigation (Georgia DDS)**

The Department of Driver Services (DDS) plays no role in the issuance of prestige license plates. Since July 1, 2005, jurisdiction over motor vehicle registration including the review of content proposed for prestige license plates has fallen within the purview of the Department of Revenue as a result of the implementation of House Bill 501.

### **North Carolina DMV Reviewing Legal Advice over Licenses**

The DMV is still examining the state attorney general's advice to issue driver's licenses to illegal immigrants qualifying for federal work papers under an Obama administration program. A DMV spokeswoman said it will take a few days to review last week's opinion from Attorney General Roy Cooper's office. Federal officials began in the summer accepting applications from immigrants brought to the U.S. as minors without authorization to receive work papers. The DMV commissioner told his office in September to stop issuing licenses pending legal advice. DMV says 13 people with work papers had been mistakenly issued licenses. Dozens of young Latinos marched Tuesday morning in Raleigh and urged DOT Secretary Tony Tata to resume issuing licenses. [Read the full story at NBC-17.](#)

### **South Carolina DMV Hosts Driver Suspension Eligibility Week**

The DMV has announced an upcoming Driver Suspension Eligibility Week for drivers with certain license suspensions from March 11- 15, 2013. During Driver Suspension Eligibility Week, South Carolina drivers who have lost their driving privileges for suspensions included in the program may be able to reduce or clear the remaining time of their suspension. The program will assist the following types of suspended drivers: underage drivers suspended for excessive points, those suspended for operating an unlicensed taxi or vehicle, drivers suspended for operating an uninsured vehicle that they did not own, those suspended for operating or allowing operation of an uninsured vehicle, and drivers suspended for driving under suspension, excluding alcohol or drug related convictions. To qualify for the program, drivers must meet all of the conditions of their suspensions. All fees must be paid and SR-22 insurance must be filed, if required. If a driver has more than one suspension, DMV will recalculate the suspension time. Drivers with suspensions not covered by the program will still need to serve that suspension. Drivers who have a clear record may apply for a driver's license. Depending on the type of suspension, they may be required to take the vision, knowledge and road skills tests before getting a new driver's license. [Read the DMV press release.](#)

### **Drivers Can Renew Tennessee Licenses at Kiosks**

The state is opening self-service kiosks that will allow drivers to renew or replace their driver licenses and state identification cards that will hopefully reduce lines and wait times. The kiosks will be installed at places like AAA offices or local government offices to cut down on wait times at driver centers. [Read the full story at Wate.com.](#)

### **Tennessee to Begin Issuing Secure Driver's Licenses**

Three Tennessee counties will begin issuing secure driver's licenses this spring. The new process for licenses is being piloted at the Hamilton County Clerk's office, as well as two driver service centers in Sumner and Robertson counties. It will involve checking the identity of people who apply for or renew their licenses, and means people will leave with a paper interim license while their photo is run through a database and checked against 12 million other images. A plastic laminated copy of their driver's licenses will be mailed to their address. The added safety measure will help crack down on fraud and identity theft. [Read the full story at NewsChannel5.com.](#)

### **Proposal to Allow Combo Concealed Handgun, Driver's Licenses (Texas)**

Concealed handgun licenses in Texas are almost as popular licenses to drive. [House Bill 158](#) would give Concealed Handgun License carriers the option to combine both licenses into one. "If a person who has a concealed handgun wants to put that identification on their driver's license, then they can put that on there," said the bill's author, Rep. Van Taylor. Taylor said the dual license would come in handy during a traffic stop. "Currently under state law, when a person is pulled over by a police officer, they are required to provide their CHL and their driver's license if they're driving, and this would allow it to be one simple piece of paper or one card," he said. The bill would not make a dual license mandatory. But some concealed handgun license carriers are a little gun shy about the bill. "Every time they use their driver's license for identification purposes -- or writing a check, credit cards or even if you do a product return at some merchants -- it's going to be available there, so they're going to know their status as a CHL carrier, so some people don't want to have that on their driver's license," said an individual opposed to the bill. "Some people are going to want to stay quiet about CHL status, and some would like to have it openly discernible to everyone." Taylor said the dual license could cost carriers up to \$20, but the cost is ultimately up to the state of Texas. [Read the full story at NBCDFW.com.](#)

### **Driving Toward Better Government - In Texas**

The state government in Austin has brought innovation to auto licensing, opening six DPS "Mega Centers" across the state. These Texas-sized behemoths each span 24,000 square feet and incorporate as many as 30 stations

capable of handling more than 1,000 transactions daily. Facing lengthening lines and increasingly irate drivers, legislators in 2011 allocated \$63 million for these Mega Centers and the 250-plus employees to operate them. Reviews so far have been favorable. [Read the full story in UT San Diego.](#)

### **West Virginia Switching to Digitized License Plates January 21, 2013**

West Virginia expects to save at least \$600,000 a year by switching to flat license plates that are digitally printed rather than embossed. DMV officials say the new plates are cheaper to produce and more legible than the state's existing embossed plates. They're also more environmentally friendly because they don't have to be painted. The state also is dropping its use of a number or first letter system to identify the expiration month. Instead, a plate's decal will indicate the expiration month. The decal's color will indicate the year. Embossed plates must be ordered in quantities of 10,000 to 15,000 at a time to be economical. Plates printed digitally can be produced one at a time. The new plates will slightly reduce the DMV's mailing cost because they are on a thinner sheet of aluminum that weighs less than the embossed plates. License plates are made by West Virginia Correctional Industries at Mount Olive Correctional Complex. [Read the full story in The Herald-Dispatch.](#)

## **Region III News**

### **Bill Would Aid Motorcyclists at Stoplights (Indiana)**

A lawmaker who's a motorcycle enthusiast wants to give motorcyclists the right to go through red lights after stopping at Indiana intersections in some situations. Rep. Tim Brown said he's co-sponsoring the bill because many stoplights are magnetically triggered and motorcycles sometimes don't trigger them, leaving motorcyclists held captive. The bill would apply to operators of motorcycles, motorized bicycles, motor scooters and bicycles. Under the bill, motorcyclists could proceed through a red light if they come to a complete stop for two minutes and make sure it is safe to proceed, essentially treating the red light as if it were a stop sign. Brown is not sure how much support the measure will get at the Statehouse. [Read the full story in The Courier Journal.](#)

### **DOT Reverses License Decision (Iowa)**

Almost 5,000 young immigrants in Iowa allowed to stay and work in the U.S. under presidential order will be eligible to apply for a state-issued driver's license after all, the Iowa DOT announced Wednesday. The agency determined late last month that state law prohibited it from issuing licenses to people granted "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival Status." But DOT Director Paul Trombino said new guidance from federal officials prompted him to reconsider. Trombino cited a statement issued Friday by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services saying those granted deferred action status are "authorized by the Department of Homeland Security to be present in the United States and considered to be lawfully present during their deferred action" period. "Our role is to execute the law. We have consistently done that. We have not changed. The federal government has changed," Trombino said. Trombino said his agency's policy reversal was the result of a decision made in consultation with Gov. Terry Branstad's office and AG Tom Miller's office. Under Iowa law, a driver's license or state identification card can only be issued to a foreign national authorized to be present in the U.S. Therefore, based on the changed guidance from federal officials, DOT now has the legal authority under current Iowa law to issue the licenses. [Read the full story in the Des Moines Register.](#)

### **Court Rules Drunk Driving on Segway Legal in Minnesota**

A man arrested for DWI while operating a Segway has successfully fought the charges. Mark Greenman, a 48-year-old attorney, argued that the Segway should be exempt from Minnesota's DWI laws under the grounds that it is a "personal mobility device" and not a "motor vehicle". A district judge ruled in his favor last year and Tuesday an appeals court upheld that ruling. The city attorney of Medina, Steve Tallen, argued against Greenman and his

Segway. He still believes the Segway should be considered a motor vehicle and subject to the state's DWI laws. Medina's city council will decide whether to further appeal this case to the Minnesota Supreme Court. [Read the full story at KARE11.com.](#)

#### **Bill Oks Online Renewal of Driver's License (South Dakota)**

South Dakota motorists could start renewing their driver's licenses by mail or online this summer under a measure unanimously approved Thursday by the Senate. SB45 now goes to the House for consideration. Drivers would be allowed to use the alternative option for every other renewal. That typically would be once every 10 years. The change is intended as a convenience. Cindy Gerber, director of driver licensing, said a driver using the new approach would need to submit an approved vision-exam statement and two documents proving current address. She said non-driver identification cards also would be covered by the proposed changes. For people seeking name changes on their licenses, they would need do it in person, so that the new signatures can be shown on the licenses. The shift meets the governor's goal to have more people online rather than standing in line. [Read the full story in the Rapid City Journal.](#)

### **Region IV News**

#### **CHP Launches Teen Distracted Driving Safety Campaign (California)**

In an effort save lives, the California Highway Patrol, along with Impact Teen Drivers, will be conducting a year-long teen distracted driving traffic safety campaign through September 2013. Distracted driving is a serious safety concern for all drivers throughout California, especially teen drivers. According to CHP, 80% of vehicle crashes involve some kind of driver distraction, with talking on the cell phone or texting being the main source of distraction. The 12-month, grant-funded Teen Distracted Drivers Education and Enforcement II campaign consists of an education component, as well as distracted driver enforcement operations to be conducted throughout the state. [Read the full story in the Palo Alto Patch.](#)

#### **Drivers License Compromise? Governor Says No (New Mexico)**

It's been tried for three different sessions without success. Gov. Susana Martinez wants lawmakers to repeal a state law that allows illegal immigrants to get driver's licenses. Last year's attempt cleared the House but died in the Senate mainly because of concerns from Senate Democrats. This year that obstacle remains. Sen. Jacob Candelaria says his big issue has to do with public safety. "I think it's the fact that we'd have many people driving on our roads who don't have insurance, who don't have a valid identification," Candelaria said. So with a possible repeal's biggest hurdle still out there, would the governor be open to compromise? An idea floating around is a bill yet to be introduced that would give illegal immigrants driver's permits going forward but not full licenses. The governor says, right now, she's sticking to her guns and not compromising. Repealing the law is her No. 1 priority. Senate Minority Leader Stuart Ingle says his members will push for a full repeal too and he believes the governor's idea could get enough votes if it made it to a floor vote. However, he acknowledges that other options might have to be considered. Democratic leaders say compromise is the only way forward. In the House there are two driver's license proposals, both from Republicans. A repeal in line with the governor's proposal goes a step further and would require the Motor Vehicle Division to cancel driver's licenses previously issued to illegal immigrants starting no later than Jan. 1, 2014. Another bill falls in line with what the governor would like lawmakers to pass. [Read the full story at KRQE.com.](#)

#### **Oregon Supreme Court OK's Police Check of License Plates**

If you drive by police and an officer is running a license-plate check on your car — without you being aware of it — the Oregon Supreme Court has decided that's OK. But the public will never know why the court decided that way,

because the justices split in an unusual 3-3 tie earlier this month. So by default, the court upheld a 2010 Court of Appeals decision that the practice does not violate state constitutional guarantees against unreasonable searches and seizures. The case began on Aug. 31, 2007, after two Jackson County sheriff's deputies on patrol observed Buck Wade Davis in his pickup truck in a grocery parking lot outside Medford. A check of the truck's license plate by one deputy turned up that the owner's license was suspended. A second check against jail booking photos confirmed that the driver was the owner — and the deputies arrested Davis. Davis sought to suppress the evidence on grounds that it was an unreasonable search and an unlawful exercise of police discretion. But the judge denied the motion, and Davis filed a conditional guilty plea in Jackson County Circuit Court, and appealed the case. The Court of Appeals said the constitutional ban against unreasonable searches "has never been applied to require police officers to articulate and adhere to criteria for every discretionary patrol activity that might occur in the ordinary course of a day." [Read the full story in the Statesman Journal.](#)

***Did you know . . .***

- *Count the number of cricket chirps in 14 seconds. Add 40. The total will equal the air temperature in F. within one degree.*
- *If spiders leave their webs expect a storm. If they work when it is raining, expect a short storm.*
- *Rainbows...if green in color, rain will continue; if red is the dominant color, look for wind and rain; if blue is strong, the air is clearing; if the rainbow is broken in 2-3 places, look for rainy weather for 2-3 days.*
- *You can estimate how many miles away a storm is by counting the number of seconds between the flash of lightning and the clap of thunder. Divide the number of seconds by five to get the distance in miles. The lightning is seen before the thunder is heard because light travels faster than sound.*
- *Highest recorded temperature: 134F in Death Valley CA. Lowest recorded temperature: -128.6F in Vostok Antarctica. Most snow per year: 1,224.5' at Mt. Rainer WA (1971=72). Most lightening on average: Kampala Uganda (280 thunderstorm days per year on annual average)*