

## Regional News From AAMVA – February 15, 2013

### Tidbits

#### Region II and IV Conference Websites Now Available

Looking for information about our Region II and Region IV Annual Conferences coming up this summer? Websites for both regional conferences have been created to answer all your questions. Keep an eye out for our Region I Conference page coming soon!

- Region IV: <http://www.aamva.org/2013-Region-IV-Landing/>
- Region II: <http://www.aamva.org/2013-Region-II-Conference-Home-Page/>

#### Test Maintenance Subcommittee Looking for Members

The Test Maintenance Subcommittee (TMS) is a permanent AAMVA Subcommittee which is directly responsible for developing, maintaining and distributing new and revised model driver's license testing systems (CDL, noncommercial and motorcycle) to the AAMVA Member Jurisdictions. AAMVA is seeking one jurisdictional representative from Region I and one from Region III. Subcommittee applicants must be well versed in all aspects of commercial and noncommercial knowledge skills/drivers test administration; and shall have as part of their job responsibilities, driver licensing test development or administration activities. TMS will meet face to face at least twice a year, as well as via conference call or webinar as the work load requires. Applicants are required to attend and actively participate in all Subcommittee meetings, assist in all Subcommittee activities; and be the liaison between the AAMVA jurisdictions in your Region and the Subcommittee on licensing issues. The selected applicant must be able to serve a four (4) year term. Interested applicants must complete the Test Maintenance Subcommittee Member Application Form and return it via email to Dianne Graham at [committees@aamva.org](mailto:committees@aamva.org) no later than **February 28, 2013**.

#### Administration Change at Maine BMV

Tom Arnold has left the Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles where he most recently served as Director. Dave Lachance, Director of Administrative Services has been named as Acting Bureau Director. Dave joined the BMV about six years ago. We wish you luck Dave in your new gig!

*Do you have a news item you'd like to include in next week's Regional News? Send news tips and articles to Claire O'Brien at [cobrien@aamva.org](mailto:cobrien@aamva.org).*

### Region I News

#### Attorney General And MVC Chief Showcase High-Tech Program "Operation Facial Scrub" To Detect False Driver's Licenses (New Jersey)

Attorney General Jeffrey S. Chiesa and Motor Vehicle Commission Chairman and Chief Administrator Raymond P. Martinez joined today to announce initial results of a new high-tech facial recognition program "Operation Facial Scrub" used to detect individuals who obtained New Jersey driver's licenses using false identities. More than 600 potential criminal cases have

been referred to the Attorney General, who announced a first wave of 38 criminal prosecutions. In December 2011, the Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) embarked on Operation Facial Scrub, one of its most promising fraud prevention initiatives. Utilizing facial recognition technology, the MVC began a full "scrub" of its 19 million photo record database to identify any duplicative photo records that may indicate administrative errors or customer fraud. Throughout 2012, MVC security professionals began to analyze the results of the scrub. To date, more than 600,000 matches have been reviewed and internal action taken when warranted. Of those, approximately 1,800 suspension cases were identified, which required customers to re-verify their identities with the MVC. Administrative suspensions were imposed on 146 individuals for misstatements of identification. The MVC has referred 669 potential criminal cases to the Attorney General's Office. Information on false licenses is also shared via a secure website with 22 state and federal partners so they can pursue other cases of fraud.

[Read the full story at nj.gov.](#)

### **New York State Senate Passes New Drunk Driving Bill**

The New York State Senate passed a new drunk driving law inspired by a local tragedy. It's called "Tiffany's Bill," named after Tiffany Heitkamp, of Syracuse. Heitkamp was killed in an alcohol related boating accident back in 2006. The man operating the boat had a history of drunk driving, but he was only charged as a first time offender. If signed into law, the bill would link all of a person's drunk driving offenses, whether boating, off-roading, driving a car or snowmobiling. The goal is to allow stricter punishment for repeat offenders. The bill now moves to the State Assembly, where it has stalled several times before. [Read the full article at 9wsyr.com.](#)

### **Former PennDOT Employee Sentenced in False ID Case**

Rejecting pleas for immediate release, a Common Pleas Court judge sentenced a former Pennsylvania Department of Transportation driver's license center supervisor to state prison for a scheme to create false IDs for wanted fugitives. "These licenses are golden passes that get you anywhere you want to go," Senior Judge Thomas Gavin said, referring to the IDs that two fugitives had obtained with help from the defendant, Khalif Abdullah Ali. "You used your position of authority to override the system." Ali, 44, was sentenced to 24 to 69 months in state prison on charges of tampering with public records and conspiracy to commit identity theft. Gavin also added a consecutive seven years of probation to the sentence so that Ali will stay under court supervision.

[Read the full story in Mainline Media News.](#)

### **DMV.us.org Adds Holiday Drunk Driving Reports To Their Database (Pennsylvania)**

DMV.us.org has updated their database with drunk driving reports from November and December, company officials said. "Unfortunately, this is the biggest data dump of the year for us," said company spokesman Josh Fraser. "During the holiday season people go to office parties and holiday celebrations and then drive home after having too much to drink. That means more arrests, which means more data for us to upload." Fraser said that they brought on

new staff in January to make sure the additional records were online and available for customers as soon as possible. "If you are looking to hire someone, you need to know if they have a drunk driving charge pending against them," Fraser said. "In many industries that could have a dramatic effect on the company's insurance costs. So, we need to have this information available as soon as possible." Fraser said that in addition to the rush of new records, the company often sees an uptick in then number of searches on the site, which puts a strain on their IT resources. [Read the full article on prweb.com.](#)

### **Top Pennsylvania Court Prohibits Sheriffs to Run DUI Checkpoints**

A split state Supreme Court has ruled that sheriffs and their deputies have no authority to independently set up and conduct suspicionless DUI checkpoints. In Commonwealth v. Marconi, the six-justice court ruled 5-1, affirming a Superior Court decision that held that while sheriffs and their deputies have common-law powers to arrest, they do not have the power to conduct "suspicionless" DUI roadblocks, which have sensitive constitutional implications. Writing for the majority, Justice Thomas G. Saylor said sheriffs and sheriff's deputies do not fall under the Vehicle Code's definition of "police officers." [Read the full article in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.](#)

### **Vermont Legislature Considers Limiting Use of Automated License Plate Readers**

Winooski police Sgt. Mike Cram was patrolling Route 7 during last Friday's snowstorm when the laptop computer in his SUV started flashing and beeping like a slot machine. The automated license-plate reader mounted on the vehicle's roof had just recorded a "hit." An alert on Cram's computer indicated the driver of a red Cadillac heading in the other direction had a suspended license. After confirming the license suspension with dispatch, Cram pulled a quick U-turn and stopped the Cadillac as it was climbing the on-ramp to Interstate 89. It turned out the driver didn't have insurance, either. On the spot, Cram called a towing company and told the driver to call his wife for a ride home. Two weeks ago - before Winooski purchased its automated license-plate reader, or ALPR - Cram would have been oblivious to the driver's infraction. "There's nothing that stands out about the car that says 'stop me,'" Cram says. "He would have driven right past me. And with today's weather, who knows what he would have hit on the interstate."

But Cram didn't miss him. He stopped a potentially dangerous situation with the help of the plate reader - a powerful and controversial technology that's raising privacy concerns as more Vermont police agencies use them in everyday patrols. Two years ago, the scanners were virtually unheard of in Vermont. But thanks to federal Homeland Security grants that cover the cost of each \$24,000 scanner, ALPRs are now in use at more than 30 law-enforcement agencies across the state... But Cram's data - photographs of dozens of license plates with no known violations - also travels back to the VIAC, a multiagency intelligence operation staffed by the state police under the direction of Lt. Mark Lauer. Using scanned plates, the Vermont State Police have built a vast statewide database that can track a vehicle's travel history with a few keystrokes. Law-enforcement officials say the cops only use the big database to catch criminals and find missing persons and that there are numerous safeguards in place to prevent abuse. But the American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont and some lawmakers in Montpelier are not reassured. [Read the full story on 7dvt.com](#)

## Region II News

### **Florida Will Not Enforce Canadian Drivers License Law**

DEVELOPING: The Florida Highway Patrol will not be enforcing the state law requiring Canadian drivers to carry an international driving permit along with their driver's license. For now, only a valid driver's license will be required, according to a press release from the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Thursday afternoon. "(The) requirement may violate the Geneva Convention on Road Traffic (1949), an international treaty to which the United States is a signatory," said the release. "Therefore, the Florida Highway Patrol will defer enforcement of violations of the amended statutory section until a final determination of the alignment of the amendment with the treaty can be made." [Read the full article in the Herald Tribune.](#)

### **US DOT Medical Card submission Now Easier to Provide (Georgia)**

The Department of Driver Services (DDS) has expanded its online services to help commercial drivers (CDL) self-certify their type of commerce as Federal requirements require and, if needed, submit medical certification documentation in a faster and more convenient way. By visiting [www.dds.ga.gov](http://www.dds.ga.gov) and creating an account, CDL customers will have 24/7 access to update and/or transmit documentation whether at home or out on the road. The deadline for Federal compliance is January 30, 2014. "We are happy to initiate this online service for CDL customers who are vital to our state's economy," said DDS Commissioner Rob Mikell. "This enhancement enables CDL customers to access valuable information about their license and make immediate updates and submissions without interrupting their business routine -- even using smartphones and tablets," he added. The deadline for Federal compliance is January 30, 2014. [Read the full story on www.dds.ga.gov.](#)

### **Road Worrier: North Carolina DMV Gears Up to Collect County Car Taxes**

North Carolina's county tax collectors are pretty good at getting us to pay real estate tax bills that can reach thousands of dollars a year, but they have a harder time collecting tax bills of \$100 or \$200 on cars and trucks. This summer, they will hand that chore to the state Division of Motor Vehicles. Car owners will write DMV one check each year to combine two bills they previously covered in separate payments: the DMV car registration renewal fee and the county car property tax. Starting with DMV bills due in July, drivers will be required to pay their county car taxes before they can get their license tag renewal stickers. DMV used the same incentive a few years ago to get more drivers to have their cars inspected: No inspection? No renewal. "This will increase the amount of taxes that counties collect on automobile property taxes," said Rep. Verla Insko of Orange County, who sponsored the 2005 law that ordered the change. "Because you can't get your tag without paying your property tax. They go together." [Read the full article in the News-Observer.](#)

### **Senate Panel Approves Plan to Raise Gasoline Tax (Virginia)**

The Senate will have another chance today to pass legislation to pay for transportation improvements in Virginia, but it does not look much like the plan advanced by the House of

Delegates for Gov. Bob McDonnell. The Senate Finance Committee voted 9-6 on Tuesday to approve a plan proposed by Sen. Frank W. Wagner, R-Virginia Beach, that would raise the state gasoline tax at the pump and at the wholesale level to raise \$4.5 billion over the next five years. The new plan also would give localities across Virginia the option of imposing an additional 1-percent sales tax that in the Richmond area would raise an estimated \$821.7 million over five years, and raise vehicle registration fees to pay for mass transit and rail. [Read the full article in the Richmond Times-Dispatch.](#)

### **Bill Requires License and Helmets for Moped Owners (Virginia)**

Moped operators will need a vehicle license, helmet and goggles under a bill approved Tuesday in a House of Delegates committee. "This bill says that if you have a moped and operate it on the highway, it's going to be treated similar to a motorcycle but not with as many requirements," said Richard Holcomb, commissioner of the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles. "You are going to have to have a helmet, goggles, license plate and title." A state-issued photo ID will be required, but it doesn't have to be a driver's license. Sen. Steve Newman, R-Lynchburg, said amendments stripped out a proposed requirement that moped owners pay a sales tax on the purchase of the vehicles. [Read the full article in the News Advance.](#)

## **Region III News**

### **Indiana House Passes Bill to Limit Number of Specialty License Plates (Indiana)**

A bill that seeks to rein in Indiana's specialty license plate program passed the Indiana House today 92-6. House Bill 1279, which now goes to the Senate for debate, is the end product of a two-year attempt by Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, to limit the numbers of specialty plates and also require more transparency and accountability of how the groups who raise money through them handle their finances. It devolved into controversy last year over an attempt by some lawmakers to use the bill to try to cancel a license plate for the Indiana Youth Group, a support group for gay teens. Soliday dropped the bill that year, but the youth group, as well as the 4-H Foundation and the Indiana Greenways Foundation, eventually lost their plates after lawmakers complained the youth group had offered low-numbered plates to donors in an apparent violation of the contract. This year, though, Soliday has kept the bill focused on the main issue: Accountability and proliferation of specialty plates. [Read the full article in the Indianapolis Star.](#)

### **100 Licenses, IDs Issued After Immigrant Policy (Iowa)**

Within a week of Iowa officials declaring in January that driver's licenses would be issued to young illegal immigrants granted temporary residency, about 100 new licenses and identification cards had been issued, state Department of Transportation officials said. Paul Maciel was among those who lined up after state officials reversed course on Jan. 23 and said they would issue licenses to those who qualify for President Barack Obama's deferred action program, announced last June. [Read the full article in the Press-Citizen.](#)

## **Michigan Develops Autonomous Driving Bill, With an Assist from Google and Support From Governor**

Self-driving vehicles may be coming to a road near you. And sooner than you think. State Sen. Mike Kowall, R-White Lake, is sponsoring a bill that would allow automotive companies and related suppliers to test autonomous vehicles on Michigan roads, provided they are occupied by a human and are outfitted with a manufacturer license plate. California, Nevada and Florida already have similar laws on the books, according to MDOT Director Kirk Steudle, who said that Michigan companies are spending an estimated \$120,000 per automated vehicle to test their new technology in those states. [Read the full article on mlive.com.](#)

## **Privacy Concerns Rise Over Ohio's License Plate Scanners**

The American Civil Liberties Union is questioning the use of license plate scanners. The scanners are crime fighting tools that can help police quickly separate the criminals from the law-abiding citizens. The readers can scan each vehicle that passes by and pulls the information coded in each license plate number. If there is criminal activity attached to the license plate, an officer, deputy or trooper will take action. Depending on the law enforcement agency, the information is stored for minutes, days, or even months. That lack of consistency in the storage of information between departments concerns the ACLU.

[Read the full story on 10tv.com.](#)

## **Region IV News**

### **Negative Billboards Distract Drivers: Researcher (Alberta)**

A University of Alberta researcher wants to put the brakes on billboards with negative words. Michelle Chan, a PhD student in the school's psychology department, put fellow students into a driving simulator and tested their skills behind the wheel. The test was similar to playing a video game in a small, dark closet and asked subjects to drive down a computer-generated road as ads appeared with negative, positive and neutral words. The negative words were the most distracting. Words such as "cancer," "war" and "abuse" caused most of the test drivers to slow down and veer outside their lane. Some drivers also crashed into trees, other vehicles and pedestrians. [Read the full article in the Edmonton Journal.](#)

### **Immigrant Driver's License Bill to Get Hearing (Arizona)**

In a move that surprised even supporters of the effort, a Republican-led House committee has agreed to hold a public hearing today on a bill that would give driver's licenses to young immigrants granted legal status to remain in the country by President Barack Obama. More than half a dozen Democratic lawmakers have introduced bills proposing to give licenses to immigrants granted "deferred action" status. The House Transportation Committee will hear public testimony this morning on Rep. Catherine Miranda's version, House Bill 2032. It is an informational hearing, so no vote is expected. [Read the full article in the Arizona Republic.](#)

### **9 Charged in DMV Driver's License Conspiracy (California)**

A supervisor at the Department of Motor Vehicles office in El Cajon is among nine defendants charged in an alleged bribery conspiracy that resulted in the production of fraudulent driver's licenses for applicants who had failed - or not taken - the required tests. According to a federal complaint unsealed today, Jesse Mario Bryan, 36, supervised DMV officials responsible for conducting driving tests for driver's license applicants who were charged in a criminal indictment last May in a related case. [Read the full article on fox5sandiego.com.](#)

### **[A New Battle Over Unauthorized Immigrant Drivers Licenses \(California\)](#)**

This may be the year California lawmakers permit those here illegally to legally drive - two decades after the privilege was first revoked. "The timing is right. The discussion of issues facing immigrants is very different from even a year ago and public perception is changing dramatically," said Assemblyman Luis Alejo, a Watsonville Democrat who is carrying the legislation to allow unauthorized immigrants to obtain driver's licenses. But critics of relaxed identification standards are not conceding, maintaining lawbreakers should not be rewarded with a license that provides a gateway to board airplanes, enter federal buildings and open bank accounts. [Read the full article on utsandiego.com.](#)

### **[New Assembly Bill Would Ban Hands-Free Texting While Driving \(California\)](#)**

California drivers would be banned from texting with hands-free mobile devices under legislation proposed Tuesday. Assembly Bill 313 was introduced by freshman Assemblyman Jim Frazier, D-Oakley. State law currently prohibits drivers from texting with hand-held devices, but not those that operate on voice commands. AB 313 would delete the existing exception for voice-controlled texting devices. [Read the full article in the Sacramento Bee.](#)

### **[Bill Targets Use of Smart Car Technology for California Teens](#)**

California minors are already banned from using their smart phones behind the wheel, even with a hands-free device. But new legislation introduced in the state Senate last week would expand those rules to include the use of new smart car technology while driving. Senate Bill 194, by Stockton Democrat Cathleen Galgiani, would expand the state's ban on talking on the phone and texting while driving for motorists under 18, prohibiting those drivers from using any "electronic wireless communications device," even if it's hands free. The aim of that change is to make sure drivers with provisional licenses don't use touch-screen or voice-command technologies that have been introduced in new car models. Mercedes-Benz USA, for example, made headlines last month by announcing a new feature that provides Facebook access through a car. Drivers caught breaking the law would face the same fines issued for violating the current hands-free law - \$20 for a first offense and \$50 for subsequent stops. Those rates go up significantly when you factor court fees. [Read the full article in the Sacramento Bee.](#)

### **[California Meets Pre-Order Goal to Begin Pet Lover's License Plate Program](#)**

The California Spay and Neuter License Plate Fund Inc. is proud to announce that the pre-order goal of 7,500 license plates needed to begin the Pet Lover's License Plate program has been met thanks to the support of animal lovers all over the state, including Governor Brown, Pierce Brosnan and Cesar Millan. The Pet Lover's License Plate was created to provide funding for free

and low-cost spay and neuter in an effort to cut down on the number of dogs and cats that end up in shelters each year. Now that the pre-order goal has been met, the California Department of Motor Vehicles has begun the implementation process which will allow California residents to purchase a Pet Lover's License Plate for their registered vehicles through the DMV. [Read the full article in the Fort Mill Times.](#)

### **Google Envisions Self-Driving Cars for the Masses in 3 to 5 Years (California)**

Google Inc. sees self-driving cars being available to consumers in three to five years. Regulators and the insurance industry aren't so sure it can happen that quickly. Software and electronic sensors couldn't fail and would have to anticipate and react like a human. States may have to decide how to license machines rather than people. Insurance companies have to reassess how to assign fault after accidents. Safety standards have to be rewritten to focus on electronics along with mechanics. "The improvement can be such that we can make cars that drive safer than people do," Anthony Levandowski, product manager for Google's self-driving car technology, told a Society of Automotive Engineers meeting in Washington last week. "I can't tell you you'll be able to have a Google car in your garage next year. We expect to release the technology in the next five years. In what form it gets released is still to be determined." [Read the full article on wheels.ca.](#)

### **Bonilla Introduces Legislation to Bring Back Veterans License Plate (California)**

Assemblywoman Susan A. Bonilla (D-Concord) has introduced a bill that will reestablish the "Veterans" license plate that is reserved for Californians who have served in the armed forces. "Several veterans have expressed a desire to be able to purchase a California license plate that belongs to them, that specifically identifies them as a veteran," said Assemblywoman Bonilla. "That is why I am partnering with many veterans organizations to introduce this bill. Not only will it create this distinctive plate to properly recognize their service and sacrifice, but it will increase funding to County Veteran Service Offices to ensure that veterans have access to their guaranteed benefits including employment, retirement, medical and housing assistance." Bonilla's legislation, designated Assembly Bill 244, will reestablish the "Veterans" license plate that was discontinued in 2010 and was replaced by the "Honoring Veterans" plate that can be purchased by any Californian who wishes to support veterans. That plate will still continue to be available if AB 244 is passed. [Read the full article on sfgate.com.](#)

### **Now, DMV Reportedly Halts Major \$210 Million IT Project (California)**

The California Technology Agency's IT Project Tracking web site has for several consecutive months posted ominous project status reports, replete with bright red warning signs indicating serious implementation problems on the DMV's IT Modernization Project. Today the DMV announced that it was apparently halting its \$210 million project. The LATimes Chris Megerian alerted TLTV today that DMV had officially notified the project vendor HP of the contract's termination. TLTV subsequently received a statement from Acting DMV Director Jean Shiimoto which was not as blunt: "We appreciate the work of Hewlett Packard in helping us complete important upgrades to the state's driver license system. Minimal work has begun on the vehicle registration portion, so this is a natural breaking point for the project. We will now

work with the Technology Agency to develop a new plan for finishing the last remaining part of this project." [Read the full article on techleader.tv.](#)

### **Should Motorcyclists Zoom Past Between Lanes? CHP Offers Rules (California)**

The California Highway Patrol has created a set of written guidelines on motorcycle "lane-splitting," the at-times hair-splitting maneuver that allows riders to legally pass vehicles in adjacent lanes by driving between them. While California is the only state in the country that allows lane-splitting, there had not been written guidelines on how to safely execute the polarizing practice that often pits motorcycles against cars and trucks, the Sacramento Bee reported. The guidelines say motorcyclists can ride between two cars if there is room, but only at speeds no more than 10 miles-per-hour faster than the vehicles they're passing. The rules also say that motorcyclists should not attempt the move at full freeway speeds, or in any traffic going faster than 30 mph. [Read the full article on bakersfieldnow.com.](#)

### **Ruling Deals Megaloads a Blow (Idaho)**

A federal judge has ruled that the U.S. Forest Service had the authority two years ago to intervene in Idaho's decision to permit a series of massive shipments of oil refinery equipment along U.S. Highway 12. U.S. District Judge B. Lynn Winmill issued his ruling Thursday in a lawsuit filed by an environmental group that opposed the so-called megaload shipments along the scenic roadway that cuts across northcentral Idaho and into Montana. [Read the full article in the Lewiston Tribune.](#)

### **Compromise Bill for Driver's Licenses Introduced in Senate (New Mexico)**

Senate Republican Leader Stuart Ingle of Portales has introduced a bill that would alter the state's licensing system, ending weeks of speculation about a compromise on changing a law that allows undocumented immigrants to get New Mexico driver's licenses, according to the Santa Fe New Mexican. Senate Bill 521 quickly was endorsed by Gov. Susana Martinez, whose spokesman called it "a very reasonable compromise," according to the New Mexican. Under the bill, the Motor Vehicles Division would create two types of driver's licenses. One class of license would comply with the federal Real ID Act, which requires stringent proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate or passport. The license would be good for up to eight years, according to the New Mexican. [Read the full article on bizjournals.com.](#)

### **Kitzhaber Backs Driver's License Reform for Illegal Immigrants (Oregon)**

Gov. John Kitzhaber said he is confident lawmakers will pass legislation this year that allows illegal immigrants an opportunity to obtain driving privileges in Oregon. "I think this is extraordinarily important," Kitzhaber said, "not only for these individuals, but for significant segments of our economy, particularly here in the (Willamette) Valley and in Southern Oregon. "I am confident that something to address that issue will pass the Legislature, and I will lend it my full support," Kitzhaber said. "The nature of the bill is still in question, but it will be introduced." Under current law, to qualify for an Oregon driver's license, an applicant must show proof of legal presence in the state. The law has resulted in uninsured, unlicensed motorists on the highways, according to Jeff Stone, executive director of the Oregon Association of Nurseries. [Read the full article in the Capital Press.](#)

### **Oregon Bill Could Fine Drivers on Cell Phones Up to \$1,000**

Motorists caught talking on their cell phones or texting while driving would face stiffer fines -- up to \$1,000 -- under a bill that is being considered in the Oregon Legislature. The Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday approved the bill put forth by Senate President Peter Courtney. The Salem Democrat says he would like to see distracted driving treated the same way as drunken driving. The proposed law is intended to make motorists take the existing law more seriously. [Read the full article on ktvb.com.](#)

### **Bill Would Ban Teen Cellphone Use While Driving (Utah)**

For the second year in a row, Utah lawmakers are eyeing legislation that would bar teen drivers from using their cellphones behind the wheel. HB103 would restrict the practice for all people under the age of 18 - except in cases when teens call in medical emergencies, road hazards or criminal acts. Teens would also be allowed to call their parents or legal guardians while driving. "If we're listening to our constituents, this bill should make it through," said the measure's sponsor, Rep. Lee Perry, R-Perry. "They need to learn how to drive before we start throwing distractions in front of them, and that's what I'm concerned with." [Read the full article on ksl.com.](#)

### **Senate Advances 'In God We Trust' License Plate Plan (Utah)**

A bill to put "In God We Trust" on some Utah license plates moved closer to passage Wednesday in the Utah Senate. Sen. Todd Weiler, R-Woods Cross, amended HB34 to remove a requirement for people interested in getting a plate to pay \$25 annually to the Utah Division of Motor Vehicles, with the proceeds of that money going to faith-based groups. Instead, obtaining the proposed plate would cost a one-time fee, as with any other specialty license plate and no cash funneled to private groups. With the amendment, the bill won preliminary approval 23-0. But it will need a final Senate vote. [Read the full article in the Salt Lake Tribune.](#)

### **Wyoming Senate Gives First Approval to Fuel Tax Hike**

A bill to raise state fuel taxes by a dime a gallon received preliminary approval in the Wyoming State Senate on Tuesday. The bill would raise the tax from the existing rate of 14 cents a gallon up to 24 cents for gasoline and diesel. The hike would raise about \$70 million a year, rough two-thirds for the Wyoming Department of Transportation and one-third for local governments. The bill already has passed the House and needs two more votes in the Senate. [Read the full article in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.](#)

### **Did You Know...**

- *The Roman Lupercalia, a celebration of fertility began on February 14th. The date was later borrowed by the early Christians to celebrate a martyr by the name of Valentine.*
- *Ancient Romans believe that birds mated on February 14th.*

- *In the middle Ages, people believed that the first unmarried person of the opposite sex you met on the morning of St. Valentine's Day would become your spouse.*
- *Teachers receive the most Valentine's Day cards, followed by children, mothers, wives, and then, sweethearts. Children between ages 6 to 10 exchange more than 650 million Valentine's cards with teachers, classmates, and family members.*
- *A single perfect red rose framed with baby's breath is named by some florists as a "signature rose," and is the preferred choice for most for giving on Valentine's Day, anniversaries and birthdays.*
- *The red rose was the favorite flower of Venus, the Roman goddess of love.*
- *The oldest surviving love poem till date is written in a clay tablet from the times of the Sumerians, inventors of writing, around 3500 B.C.*