

Regional News – March 1, 2013

Tidbits

Message from Neil Schuster, President & CEO

As you probably know by now, Fred Porter will retire from AAMVA this week after an exceptional career as an AAMVA staff member and former administrator. On March 1, Patrice Aasmo will assume the role of Director, Member Support Regions I & II. Patrice can be reached at paasmo@aamva.org or 571-435-2861. You may also know that during his transition to retirement Fred recently underwent surgery to remove a brain tumor. Thankfully, the surgery removed more than 99% of the tumor. The next step is for Fred, along with his wife Betty, to temporarily relocate to Houston for approximately 6 weeks so he can undergo treatment at MD Anderson. He will undergo radiology treatments Monday - Friday beginning Monday the 25th for a total of 30 - 33 treatments. Fred and Betty have rented an apartment at the Amalfi Apartments at Hermann Park in Houston about a mile from MD Anderson Cancer Center. Apparently it is right beside Hermann Park golf and the docs have even cleared him to play! Fred and Betty have expressed their most sincere appreciation for the thoughts and well wishes from his friends throughout the AAMVA community. Please continue to send positive energy and keep Fred in your thoughts.

2013 Standing Committee Vacancies

Each of AAMVA's three standing committees have vacancies beginning September 2013. If you are interested in applying for membership, please download the Committee Member Application.

- The Driver Standing Committee is seeking an information technology representative and a public affairs and consumer education (PACE) representative from any of AAMVA's four regions.
- The Enforcement Standing Committee is seeking two law enforcement representatives - one from Region I and one from Region III. These applicants must be sworn law enforcement officers.
- The Vehicle Standing Committee is seeking an information technology representative and a public affairs and consumer education (PACE) representative from any of AAMVA's four regions. The Vehicle Standing Committee is also seeking a vehicle representative from Region III.

All terms are for two years beginning September 2013 and ending August 2015. Download the [Committee Member Application](#). Applications must be received by **August 1, 2013**. If you have questions, please contact Dianne Graham, director, Member & Conference Services via email dgraham@aamva.org or phone (703) 908-8267. For more information, see <http://www.aamva.org/Committees-and-Working-Groups/>.

Region I News

DMV Website Sees 50-Percent Increase in Viewers Over Two-Year Period as Site Improves Services (Connecticut)

In the last two years DMV has recorded a 50-percent increase - from 4.2 million to 6.2 million - of annual visits to its website (<http://www.ct.gov/dmv>) as the agency improves the design, information and services offered. In the last two years DMV posted more forms to download and created more online services for customers. It also has streamlined its website design as part of a continuous evaluation to make information easier to find and understand. Statistics show more people are going online, using a variety of devices and using the web more often as a first step in seeking information. "Our online presence is important. We are striving every day to improve as more people use the web and as more people go to our site before visiting a DMV or AAA office," said DMV Commissioner Melody A. Currey. More than 100 forms (once only available by mail or in a DMV office) can now be printed to use immediately. Among online services now available are: learner's permit scheduling for the knowledge

test, business license renewals for dealers, repairers and recyclers, online canceling of lost or stolen license plates, online registration renewal, infraction ticket processing, vehicle registration checks, and look-ups of available vanity plate combinations.

[Read the full article at http://www.ct.gov/.](http://www.ct.gov/)

Driver's Licenses for Illegals Spark Another Debate (Maryland)

A year after giving many of Maryland's illegal immigrants the right to in-state college tuition, some state lawmakers want to give them improved access to driver's licenses in a move that supporters say could have fiscal benefits and would bring residents in the state illegally out of the shadows. A bill in this year's General Assembly effectively would repeal the state's 2009 law that bars new driver's licenses for illegal immigrants and others who are unable to document their citizenship. Maryland would join a handful of states that allow licenses for undocumented immigrants. Supporters of the plan say that immigrants often have no choice but to drive because of family and work obligations, and that denying them licenses does more harm than good by putting more unlicensed and uninsured motorists on the road.

[Read the full article in the Washington Times.](#)

Maryland Lawmakers Go after Unpaid Tolls

Maryland officials have renewed their push to revise the state's toll-collection policy--a move they say is necessary to pursue millions of dollars in unpaid tolls. The Maryland Transportation Authority is seeking stricter penalties for drivers who have toll citations mailed to them but don't pay up, and a House subcommittee is expected to act on the proposal Tuesday. These toll violators have cost the state nearly \$7 million in uncollected revenue over the past five years, according to Harold Bartlett, the authority's executive secretary. Overall, the state has collected \$1.5 billion in tolls during that time, according to Bartlett. [Read the full article on gazette.net.](#)

Hell on Wheels: Can Electric Bikes Ever Go Legal? (New York)

They are as familiar a part of the New York cityscape as hot-dog vendors and yellow cabs: deliverymen riding electric bikes, zooming down bike lanes, slaloming through traffic, sometimes riding on the sidewalk or the wrong way down a one-way street. Regardless of their relative respect for traffic laws, they all have one thing in common: every single one of their bikes are illegal to operate in New York. Last month, the city started enforcing a new set of safety standards for commercial cyclists mandating they follow traffic rules and wear certain safety equipment furnished by their employers. Among the Department of Transportation's new Rules for Commercial bicycling is this special note: "Electric bicycles are not capable of being registered by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles and therefore their operation is prohibited in New York City." In Albany, legislation to change that has been kicking around for years. In 2013, advocates think it will finally succeed. To the bikes' detractors, including members of New York's City Council, that would be bad news. Two council members are pushing to increase penalties for riding the bikes, which are legal under federal law but state and city law view them as motor vehicles that are illegal to use on public streets. [Read the full article in New York Magazine.](#)

Region II News

Mississippi Considers More Driver's License Offices

Amanda Bumpous says if you want to get your driver's license, you should pack a lunch. First, she lives in Tate County which has no driver's license office, so she drives to DeSoto which is about a 30 minute drive. And then Bumpous says there's the wait, "I came in here last Monday to get my permit and it was pretty crowded I had to wait an hour. It can be worse than that. It can be 2 or 3 hours sitting here." Mississippi lawmakers want that to change. A bill making its way through the legislature would open a

driver's license office in every county at least one day a month. The bill already passed the House and almost all lawmakers seem to support it. [Read the full article at wreg.com.](#)

NCDMV Launches Expanded Service Hours to Improve Customer Service, Reduce Wait Times

In an effort to improve customer service and reduce wait times for North Carolina drivers, the NC Division of Motor Vehicles will begin phasing in expanded hours, including Saturday hours, at driver license offices across the state. The new schedules start Saturday, March 2, in Greenville, North Raleigh and West Charlotte and are part of the first phase of a statewide rollout. "Improving customer service, giving citizens more access, and providing better interactions with government are top priorities for us and for the Governor," said NC Department of Transportation Secretary Tony Tata. "We know North Carolinians have busy schedules. The extended hours will make it easier and more convenient for drivers to conduct business at the DMV." *Read more at*

<https://apps.ncdot.gov/newsreleases/details.aspx?r=7794>

Motorcycle Helmet Could Become Optional for Adult Riders in Tennessee

Older motorcyclists would have the option of riding without a helmet under a bill Tennessee lawmakers plan to take up this week. The legislation, dubbed the "Motorcyclist Liberty Restoration Act," would allow riders 21 and older to ride without a helmet. The bill goes before key House and Senate committees starting this week. Currently, Tennessee is one of 19 states nationwide, including most southern states, that require a helmet for all motorcycle riders. Twenty-eight states require helmets for only younger riders. Iowa, Illinois and New Hampshire have no helmet laws, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. [Read the full article in the Tennessean.](#)

Craddick Introduces Bill to Ban Texting While Driving to Texas House Transportation Committee

Calling it "the big bipartisan bill of the session," former House Speaker Tom Craddick, a Midland Republican, laid out his proposed ban on texting while driving to the House Transportation Committee on Tuesday. "You're infringing on my rights, to be truthful, when you're texting and driving, on my right to be safe on the road," Craddick said, flanked by House State Affairs Byron Cook, R-Corsicana, and Rep. Eddie Lucio III, D-Brownsville, who have signed on as authors to his bill, HB 63. The legislation would ban texting while driving and wouldn't include hands-free devices or GPS usage. Texas already bans the use of wireless devices by underage drivers, as do four other states. Texas, Mississippi and Oklahoma also ban texting by school bus drivers. [Read the full article in the Dallas News.](#)

2 New Specialty License Plates for Virginians

Virginians will soon have two new options for specialty license plates: one for fans of the Washington Nationals baseball team, and the other sporting the words "Peace Begins at Home."

The specialty plates, approved by the General Assembly during its just-concluded session, would fund charitable causes. Two identical proposals - House Bill 1387, introduced by Delegate Michael J. Weibert, R-Marshall, and Senate Bill 837, by Sen. George L. Barker, D-Alexandria - allow the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles to offer license plates supporting the Washington Nationals baseball team. The plates will cost \$25 above normal registration fees. After the first 1,000 plates have been sold, \$15 of the \$25 will go to the Washington Nationals Dream Foundation. The foundation's goals are to improve the lives of children in the community based on three principles: education, health and recreation. [Read the full article in the Potomac Local News.](#)

Region III News

Iowa Lawmakers Again Consider Raising Fuel Tax

While education spending and property tax cuts have been the focus so far in Iowa's legislative session, some think lawmakers might also take action this year on the perennial proposal of raising the fuel tax. Iowa's fuel tax -- now 22 cents per gallon for gasoline including all fees -- hasn't been raised since 1989. A commission appointed by Gov. Terry Branstad in 2011 recommended an increase of 8 to 10 cents to boost funding for the state's substantial network of bridges and roads, many of which are considered deteriorating or deficient. Proposals to raise the tax have come up repeatedly, and an effort to increase it by 10 cents failed in the Legislature last year. But Rep. Joshua Byrnes, R-Osage, who chairs the House transportation committee, said he thinks similar legislation would have a stronger chance this time around. [Read the full article in the Muscatine Journal.](#)

Bilingual Licence Plates coming to Manitoba Roads

A new bilingual licence plate will soon be available to Manitobans. Premier Greg Selinger unveiled the new design for the optional plates at a press conference Tuesday morning. Provincial officials gathered at the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre in St. Boniface to make the announcement and were joined by representatives from the Festival du Voyageur. Selinger said the plates were "something we've worked on for quite a while to put it in place," adding the plates are an important part of recognizing Manitoba's cultural heritage. [Read the full article on cbc.ca.](#)

Nebraska Drivers Can Now Apply for an Ignition Interlock Permit Online

The Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) announced that the online driver's license services at ClickDMV.ne.gov have been expanded to include obtaining an Ignition Interlock Permit. Nebraska drivers that have been charged with driving under the influence are able to apply for an Ignition Interlock Permit (IIP) through the DMV. In order to be authorized for the IIP, applicants must first determine if they are eligible by contacting the DMV office, and then the Ignition Interlock device must be installed on the vehicle and an application submitted to the DMV along with proof of device installation. Prior to the release of this new service, citizens who had gone through these steps then still had to find a way to visit their county licensing station in person. Now, they are able to obtain the permit online. [Read the full article in the Herald Online.](#)

'Best Fracking State In The Union': North Dakotans Pitch New License Plate Slogans

North Dakota's legislature is considering a proposal to authorize the first changes to the state's license plate in two decades. North Dakotans are volunteering some humorous ideas for the plate's new slogan. [Listen to the story at npr.org.](#)

House Bill Proposes Boosting State Speed Limit To 70(Ohio)

Some lawmakers want to increase the speed limit of the state's most traveled roads. House Bill 68 proposes pushing the speed limit from 65 miles per hour to 70 mph on highways outside of major cities and towns. Drivers who 10TV News spoke with said that the Buckeye State sometimes has the nickname of "Slow-Hio," because all the state's interstates, except for the Ohio Turnpike, have speeds that are lower than neighboring states, such as Michigan.

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

Region IV News

New California License Plate with Farming Theme to Hit Roads

Iowa is known for its corn. Wisconsin for cheese. Texas, cattle. But California is the nation's leading farm state, something city dwellers don't always remember when they think about where their food comes from. Now, a new reminder is about to hit the streets. Starting next month, a commemorative

"California Agriculture" license plate will begin appearing on vehicles across the Golden State. The plate, featuring a yellow sunburst rising over a pastoral green field of row crops with the words "Food, fiber, fuel, flora," is California's first new specialty license plate in 11 years. [Read the full article in the San Jose Mercury News.](#)

'Too Stoned to Drive' Bill Passes First Test in Colorado House Committee

A bill defining how high is too high to be behind the wheel of a car has cleared the initial hurdle after it was passed unanimously by the House Judiciary Committee on Tuesday. House Bill 1114, sponsored by House Minority Leader Mark Waller, R-Colorado Springs, and state Rep. Rhonda Fields, D-Aurora, sets the legal limit for driving under the influence of marijuana at 5 nanograms of active THC per milliliter of blood. The bill advances to the House Appropriations Committee. [Read the full article in the Denver Post.](#)

DMV to Unveils Live Webcams (Hawaii)

If you've been dreading renewing your driver's license or getting a state ID card - some good news, you can now preview how long the lines are before heading to the DMV. Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell announced a series of new initiatives designed to dramatically reduce wait times at the Kalihi Kapalama City Square DMV this morning. The first - live webcams in all five O'ahu DMV locations that show what lines look like in real time. "You can come in look at the line and if it doesn't look long you can say: 'Let's go down and get our state ID or our driver's license now' or: 'Wow, the line is really long. Forget it we'll try another day,'" said Mayor Caldwell, while demonstrating how the cameras are used. Checking the live feed is easy, just log on to www.honolulu.gov and click on "DMV/State ID service line cameras" from your computer or smartphone. [Read the full article on hawaiinewsnow.com.](#)

Measure to Rid Teen Drivers of Cell Phones Goes Forward (Idaho)

The House Transportation Committee debated a bill Tuesday that would restrict cell phone use for some teen drivers. However, the idea was met with some opposition from House representatives. House bill 155 would prohibit teen drivers from using a cell phone during the six-month supervised instruction permit. Just last year, the legislature passed a law that banned texting while driving and during Tuesday's afternoon transportation hearing, lawmakers voiced concern over the two bills looking too similar. [Read the full article on ktvb.com](#)

Bill Could Lead to Highway Speeds Up to 85 mph (Nevada)

Tired of creeping along Nevada highways at 70 mph? So is state Sen. Don Gustavson. On Monday, Gustavson introduced Senate Bill 191, which would allow the state Department of Transportation to increase the maximum speed limit in Nevada to 85 mph where the agency determines that speed is safe. "Some legislators have expressed to me what a long lonely drive it is from Las Vegas to the state Capitol," the Republican from Sparks said. "Passage of this legislation could make them less lonely." [Read the full article in the Las Vegas Review Journal.](#)

New Mexico House Committee Again Blocks Driver's License Bill Favored by Governor

Democrats on the House labor committee on Tuesday night blocked another bill that would repeal the 2003 law allowing illegal immigrants to obtain New Mexico driver's licenses. The vote was 5-4 along party lines. The sponsor, Republican Rep. Paul Pacheco of Albuquerque, said afterward he did not know if he would appeal to the full House of Representatives to hear his license bill. Pacheco said he considered it unfair that one committee could "hold a bill hostage." He said 37 of the 70 members of the House of Representatives had signed onto his bill, which he called a compromise. [Read the full article in the Current Argus.](#)

House Approves Proposal to Increase Sanctions Against Drunken Drivers in New Mexico

The House has unanimously approved a proposal toughening penalties against drunken driving in New Mexico. The legislation will establish new standards for drunken drivers to meet before they can get their licenses fully restored and stop using an ignition interlock, which are intended to prevent vehicles from operating if the driver has been drinking. Drivers must blow into the devices before starting their vehicles, and then randomly after that. Another provision allows judges to require drunken drivers sentenced to house arrest to use a breath alcohol analyzing device in their home to determine whether they remain sober. The measure also will add mandatory prison time to the basic sentence of drunken driving offenders with previous felonies. The legislation cleared the House on Wednesday and goes to the Senate for consideration. [Read the full article in the Daily Journal.](#)

'Keep Right' Driving Law Proposed for Oregon

Frustrated by slow drivers who don't stay to the right, a state lawmaker has proposed a bill that would make it illegal to drive in the left lane of interstate highways unless passing another vehicle. "If you're not passing, stay out of the left lane," said Sen. Ginny Burdick (D-Portland), the measure's sponsor. "It's really not that hard." Burdick, who commutes to the Capitol daily, testified in support of the bill Monday before the Senate Business and Transportation Committee. She said the measure would improve traffic flow by clearing the left lane for drivers to safely overtake vehicles that are on the right. The law would not apply when traffic is heavily congested. Under the bill, drivers could face penalties of up to \$1,000. But Burdick says the proposal's primary purpose is to educate drivers, not penalize them. [Read the full article in the Register Guard.](#)

Utah Bill to Toughen Seat Belt Law Crashes in Committee

A bill designed to toughen enforcement of seat belt laws crashed in a House committee Tuesday. The House Transportation Committee voted 2-5 against HB283. While the committee had virtually no debate on it after hearing testimony, such bills have failed for years because of concern that they infringe on personal liberty. Its sponsor, Rep. Lee Perry, R-Perry, a Utah Highway Patrol officer, told the committee that such arguments are faulty. "With that same logic, one could argue that all traffic signs and barriers set to keep the careless from falling to their death should be pulled down on the theory that each individual has the moral right to choose how close to the edge they will go," he said. [Read the full article in the Salt Lake Tribune.](#)

Committee Approves Bill to Limit Access to License Plate Data (Utah)

A Utah senator wants to limit access to data collected through license plate scanners traditionally used by law enforcement. Sen. Todd Weiler, R-Woods Cross, presented legislation on Wednesday to the Senate Transportation Committee that would limit law enforcement's access to scanned information to only nine months and private companies access to the data for seven days. Weiler explained the data could essentially reveal much of a person's movement throughout a day. That means the government may have in a database where a person traveled throughout the day if they had their license plate scanned by law enforcement in the various places they traveled. Weiler said police agencies typically use the scanning data to locate stolen vehicles and enforce parking laws, but he was concerned the data could be used for more.

[Read more in the Daily Herald.](#)

House Votes to Ban Cell Phone Use by Teen Drivers (Utah)

Making a call that teenagers may not want to hear, the House voted Monday to ban motorists younger than 18 from using cell phones while driving - although adults could continue to do so legally. Rep.

Francis Gibson, R-Mapleton, suggested that lawmakers call it the "Do as I say, not do what I do" bill. The House voted 48-22 to pass HB103, and sent it to the Senate. The bill's sponsor, Rep. Lee Perry, R-Perry, a Highway Patrol officer, said it is akin to other restrictions placed on young drivers going through graduated license procedures - including, for a time, not allowing passengers in their car besides parents, and not permitting driving between midnight and 5 a.m. [Read the full article in the Salt Lake Tribune.](#)

DOT to Start Collecting Delinquent Tolls via DMV (Washington)

After losing millions of dollars to toll violators, the state DOT is cracking down on drivers who refuse to pay. Driver who use the 520 and Tacoma Narrows bridges just ignored nearly a quarter million penalty notices for non-payment, blowing off nearly \$10 million in penalties. These are just those pay-by-mail users who get a toll bill after the bridge camera snaps a shot of their license plate. Now, the DOT is trying to collect the delinquent tolls and \$40 penalty through the DMV. [Read the full article on komonews.com](#)

Did You Know...

- *The word 'March' comes from the Roman 'Martius'.*
- *March was originally the first month of the Roman calendar and was named after Mars, the god of war.*
- *The Anglo-Saxons called the month Hlyd monath which means Stormy month, or Hraed monath which means Rugged month.*
- *The first St. Patrick's Day Parade was held in New York City on March 17th, 1762.*
- *The flower for the month of March is the daffodil which is also referred to as the jonquil. Since daffodils are one of the first flowers to bloom in spring, they are considered to be a symbol of rebirth.*
- *Daylight Savings Time begins on the second Sunday in March. Don't forget to "spring forward" by setting your clocks ahead one hour.*
- *Paper money was issued on March 10, 1862 in the U.S. for the first time*
- *An act of Congress created the first United States National Park (Yellowstone) on March 1, 1872.*
- *The Star Spangled Banner was made the United States National Anthem on March 3, 1931.*