

Regional News – March 15, 2013

Tidbits

2013 Workshop & Law Institute Wrap-Up

AAMVA's 2013 Workshop & Law Institute has concluded, but it's provided a wealth of information and knowledge for attendees to bring back to the office. Thank you to all who attended, participated and were a part of another successful working meeting. A special thank you goes out to all the Workshop exhibitors and sponsors. We look forward to seeing you all again soon at regional conferences and the AIC in Scottsdale this August. Materials from the Workshop are available on the [Downloads Page](#). Take a look at this video to get a taste of our two days in Atlanta!



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 Emissions Test Notice Gets Brighter Look (Connecticut)

The state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is using a newly-designed postcard to remind vehicle owners that an emissions test is due. The postcard uses the bright, contrasting colors of white, red and black. The DMV recently began sending out the small white cards that look similar to other mailings from the agency. It has black letters and shows a red box and banner that notes it's time for a test, which is needed every two years. It replaces a yellow-and-black design used for the last two years. In

addition, some text on the post card has been revised to make test-related information easier to find and read. [Read the full article in the Shelton Herald.](#)

More Maine AAA Branches to Offer License, ID Renewal and Replacement

AAA members in southern and coastal parts of the state soon will be able to renew and replace their motor vehicle license and state identification cards at their local branches. Beginning March 13, area residents of Ellsworth, Brunswick, Auburn, South Portland and Biddeford will be able to use these services at their local AAA branches, according to a AAA press release.

The Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles began partnering with AAA Northern New England to offer basic renewal and replacement options at select branch offices last year, according to AAA's website.

Representatives from the bureau and AAA will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the program at 10 a.m. on Wednesday at the Bangor AAA branch, located at 339 Griffin Road. Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap will attend the event. [Read the full article in the Bangor Daily News.](#)

MVA Now Offers Better Temporary Tag for New Vehicles (Maryland)

Vehicle dealerships in Maryland now have a new way to issue temporary tags for vehicles they sell. Philip Dacey, director of external affairs for the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, said Tuesday that cardboard or paper tags are out and tamper-proof fiber tags are in. Dacey said the new tags are inscribed on a special paper with a laser jet printer most dealerships already own. "It feels like plastic. You can't tear it," he said. It bears a reflective tape with the MVA logo. He said dealerships would be able to obtain the software from one of two state-approved vendors.

He called the updated tags "a pretty neat solution to a problem." [Read the full article in the Cecil Daily.](#)

Maryland Panel Considers Driver's Licenses for Illegal Immigrants

Two bills that would allow illegal immigrants to possess Maryland driver's licenses drew galleries packed with Latinos on Wednesday, though the measure was met with hostility from some committee members. A bill from Prince George's County Democrat Del. Jolene Ivey would repeal a 2009 Maryland law that outlawed driver's licenses for illegal immigrants, a move made to comply with the federal Real ID Act. The 2009 law let illegal immigrants keep their driver's licenses until July 1, 2015. Ivey's bill would allow them to keep, reapply and apply for licenses in Maryland, though they wouldn't be valid for federal purposes, such as ID at an airport or federal building. [Read the full article the Washington Examiner.](#)

Christie Administration Assists Returning Veterans Seeking Commercial Driver's Licenses (New Jersey)

Veterans with military driving experience who have recently returned from service may receive help in obtaining a commercial driver's license (CDL) under a waiver program announced today by New Jersey Motor Vehicle (MVC) Chairman and Chief Administrator Raymond P. Martinez and Brigadier General Michael L. Cunniff, Adjutant General of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA). Soldiers who were on active or reserve duty within the last 90 days will now be able to utilize their documented military driving experience of at least two years to apply for the waiver, which exempts them from the skill (road) portion of CDL testing. "With returning veterans eager and ready to rejoin New Jersey's workforce, it's essential that we provide assistance to ease their transition and to aid them in taking full advantage of employment opportunities," said Martinez. [Read the full article at state.nj.us](#)

Red-Light Camera Company to Pay \$4.2 million to New Jersey Motorists

State motorists who feel they were wrongly ticketed by a red light camera may be eligible for a refund, according to a preliminary settlement filed today. The Associated Press reports that the Arizona-based American Traffic Solutions will set up a \$4.2 million fund to pay plaintiffs in a suit that alleges motorists

tagged by the company's cameras were not given ample time to apply the brakes, according to a preliminary settlement filed today. The company isn't admitting any wrongdoing or liability. [Read the full article in the Star-Ledger.](#)

License Changes for New York DMV

New York state drivers will soon be able to renew their drivers licenses without setting foot inside a DMV, and licenses will be printed in black and white. Plans to renew licenses online were put on hold last year because of safety concerns with the elimination of the eye exam portion. An eye exam is required for license renewal, but now drivers have more options of where they can go to take the test. DMV Commissioner Barbara Fiala says the eye exams can soon be completed at a several locations, and the DMV is creating a complete vision registry for the public to access. Fiala says these changes are meant to make it easier on drivers when it comes time to renew their license. [Read the full article on wbnq.com.](#)

Senate Panel to OK Drivers Licenses for Undocumented Workers (Vermont)

After a two-year lobbying effort by migrant farm workers and their supporters, a Senate panel is expected to approve a bill Friday that for the first time authorizes the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue driver ID cards to Vermont residents who are in the U.S. illegally. The Senate Transportation Committee held a hearing on the issue Thursday. Migrant workers filled the hearing room. Key witnesses -- including the Commissioners of Public Safety and the DMV -- all testified in support of their cause. A special legislative study committee last fall also recommended expanding driver privileges to migrant workers. [Read the full article at wptz.com](#)

Region II News

State Granting Driver's Licenses for Immigrants Under Obama Rule (Alabama)

The state of Alabama says it will allow hundreds of immigrants to take driver license tests under a new Obama administration rule. While the state has fought the administration over immigration laws, it says it will honor certifications granted under the program called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. A state trooper spokesman, Sgt. Steven Jarrett, says certain offices will begin issuing licenses under the program on Friday. The state says 631 people have been approved for certification in Alabama, and as many as 1,500 could be. [Read the full article on waaytv.com.](#)

DHSMV Warns Customers About Imitation Websites (Florida)

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles warns the public about deceptive websites that pretend to be the official DHSMV website to lure people into paying unnecessary fees. Some official-looking websites require their customers to pay a surcharge for their assistance, while others advertise non-government services and provide outdated or inaccurate information. DHSMV does not require a surcharge for any of its websites -- www.GoRenew.com and www.flhsmv.gov. The Department posts its fees for various services on www.flhsmv.gov. In addition to posing as the official website, the owners or creators of the misleading websites have paid a fee to search engine companies to ensure their links appear at the top of the webpage when Internet users search for driver license or vehicle registration information. When customers go to the websites, they are asked for a name, contact information and credit card information, and then are charged just to get to DHSMV's websites. [Read the full article at flhsmv.gov.](#)

Florida Repeals Law Requiring International Driving Permit for Foreigners

Legislators in Florida have approved a bill repealing a law from last year that requires foreigners visiting

the state to have international driving permits. The bill passed unanimously in the Florida House on Wednesday and now goes to the Senate, where it is expected to pass as well.

Under the law that quietly took effect in January, foreign drivers who didn't have the \$25 permit that translates license information into English could have been charged with driving without a license. Florida officials had said the law was passed so police weren't faced with foreign licence documents in languages they couldn't understand. [Read the full article on mcleans.ca.](#)

Study Finds Lack of Safety Restraint in a Semi-Truck Increases Risk of Injury Regardless of Seating Position (Kentucky)

Semi-truck drivers and sleeper berth passengers who were not using safety restraints, significantly increased the odds of injuries in moving collisions compared to those semi-truck occupants who were using occupant safety restraints, according to a recent study by the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC) at the University of Kentucky College of Public Health. The study reviewed 708 semi-truck collisions that included a passenger in the sleeper berth in Kentucky between 2000 and 2010. This study was undertaken to determine if passengers in the sleeper berth were at higher risk of injury in a semi-truck collision compared to semi-truck drivers. [Read the full article on medicalxpress.com.](#)

DMV Offers Amnesty to Some Suspended Drivers (South Carolina)

This week is Driver Suspension Eligibility Week in South Carolina, when drivers who have lost their licenses for suspensions included in the program may be able to reduce or clear the remaining time for their suspension. To qualify, you have to meet all of the conditions of your suspension, pay all fees and file SR-22 insurance. Drug and alcohol related convictions do not qualify. Drivers who have a clear record can apply for a drivers license. The amnesty program will be March 11-15 at your local Department of Motor Vehicles office. [Read the full article at http://www.carolinalive.com/.](http://www.carolinalive.com/)

TxDOT Launches Safety Campaign Aimed at Reducing Truck Accidents

The Texas oil boom has brought with it increased truck traffic and an increase in accidents, prompting the Texas Dept. of Transportation (TxDOT) to launch a "Be Safe, Drive Smart" campaign aimed at reminding drivers to be extra careful when driving around trucks in energy work zones. New life in the oil and gas industry means more heavy trucks on the roads, said Carol Rawson, traffic operations division director TxDOT at a press conference last week, and that means that passenger vehicle drivers - as well as truck drivers - need to be even more careful to stay safe. Dept. of Public Safety Maj. Michael Bradberry said that the revival of the oil and gas industry has led to spikes in the numbers of accidents on U.S. 67 and U.S. 377, Texas 171 and many of the farm-to-market and county roads in the area. He said region-wide accidents rose by 24% last year, according to a Weatherford Democrat report. [Read the full article in Fleet Owner.](#)

Virginia Veteran Headed to Court Wednesday Over Controversial License Plate

An Iraq war veteran and his attorney are headed to court Wednesday to argue that the DMV is violating his free-speech rights by attempting to cancel his personalized license plate. Sean Bujno's plate reads "ICUHAJI," which can be read to say, "I see you, Haji." Some Arab-Americans object to that phrase. Bujno's attorney says the use of the word "Haji" is not intended as a slur. He says it simply refers to someone who has made a pilgrimage to Mecca, or the hajj. Bujno expanded the meaning to include soldiers who have served in Iraq, his attorney told The Virginian-Pilot last month. [Read the full article on nbcwashington.com.](#)

West Virginia University Researchers Weigh in on Distracted Driving

Two West Virginia University researchers say laws and education efforts dealing with cell phone use while driving aren't having much effect. Jeffrey Coben and Motao Zhu report their conclusions in the latest issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association. Coben is interim dean of the WVU School of Public Health. In the report entitled "Keeping an Eye on Distracted Driving," the researchers say cell phone use while driving was estimated to cause over 300,000 total injuries annually, including 2,600 fatalities. The numbers increased 22 percent between 2005 and 2009. The problem is expected to worsen in coming years, despite efforts to curtail [distracted driving](#). [Read the full article in Claims Journal.](#)

Region III News

[Proposed Hand-Held Ban Puts Distracted Driving Back in the Hot Seat \(Illinois\)](#)

Could this be the year a hand-held cellphone ban goes viral in Illinois? I won't hold my breath ... but I will track the progress of a House bill prohibiting drivers from yakking on hand-held phones. The measure cleared the House two weeks ago with a 64-46 vote, and now Sen. John Mulroe will carry the torch in the Senate. Currently, there are a smorgasbord of laws across Illinois. The state bans texting while driving and forbids motorists from using cellphones while in school or construction zones. Teenage motorists are prohibited from talking on all phones, as are bus drivers. Meanwhile, Chicago and some other municipalities outlaw driving and talking on hand-held phones. [Read the full article the Daily Herald.](#)

[Senate Committee Approves New Rules for Specialty License Plates \(Indiana\)](#)

A Senate committee has approved new restrictions for specialty license plates. The Senate's transportation committee unanimously approved the changes with a 7-0 vote Tuesday. House Bill 1279 would create a panel to review nonprofit groups and universities that want their own specialty plates. The bill now heads to the full Senate. Approved specialty plates will also have to meet certain sales and reporting criteria. Groups approved for specialty plates would have to sell at least 500 a year and have a financial review once a decade. The measure also caps the total number of specialty plates at 150. The state currently offers about 100 such plates. The House approved the proposal last month. A year ago, lawmakers made a similar push that ended in controversy over a plate from a gay youth advocacy group. [Read the full article on fox59.com.](#)

[House Committee Approves Bill Allowing Driver's Licenses for Illegal Immigrants \(Minnesota\)](#)

A Minnesota House committee Wednesday evening approved a bill allowing illegal immigrants to get drivers licenses. Latino supporters of the bill packed the House Transportation Policy Committee hearing room and applauded the vote. The measure needed to pass out of a policy committee this week in order to stay alive this session. State law currently requires that driver's license applicants be citizens or have legal status. Lawmakers imposed the requirement in the wake of 9/11, amid security concerns. The bill would remove the requirement that driver's license applicants show proof of citizenship or other documentation that they are in the US legally. The measure would also allow identification issued by another country to be acceptable proof of identity. Critics said those in the country illegally should not be able to be issued state IDs, but Democratic supporters praised the measure as important for public safety. [Read the full article on Minnesota Public Radio.](#)

[Missouri Driver's Licenses, ID Cards Get New Look](#)

People who went to the Rolla License Office Wednesday to get a new driver's license or nondriver identification card or went there to renew these cards noticed a new process in place. These same individuals also will notice a new look to their licenses and ID cards once they receive them in the mail

instead of waiting for them to be made at the office. Back in December of last year, the Missouri Department of Revenue (DOR) began the process of changing the way these cards and licenses are issued at all of the state's 182 license offices as well as changing their format. The rollout should be complete across the state in April. [Read the full article in the Rolla Daily News.](#)

Ohio Legislation Seeks to Scrap Steel License Plate Mandate

Ohio lawmakers want to scrap a rusty policy that requires all license plates be made from steel. A provision in Sub House Bill 51, which sits in the Senate Finance Committee, would allow the use of steel, aluminum, plastic or other suitable materials to fabricate license plates. "I believe we are the only state in the union that mandates steel license plates," said William O'Gorman, legislative aide to Finance Committee Chair Sen. Gayle Manning. "A lot of people said that the steel plates rust and that aluminum would make a lot more sense." [Read the full article in the Plain Dealer.](#)

Ohio Senate Passes Bill that Hikes Speed Limit to 70 mph, Allows \$1.5 Billion in Turnpike Bonds

Ohioans could soon be driving faster on interstates. And they'll be paying higher tolls on the Ohio Turnpike, to finance sorely needed road projects mostly in northern Ohio. The Ohio Senate voted 27-6 to approve a two-year, \$7.6 billion transportation budget bill Wednesday that lifts the speed limit to 70 mph from 65 mph on rural stretches of interstate. The omnibus bill allows Gov. John Kasich to move ahead with plans to issue up to \$1.5 billion in bonds through the Ohio Turnpike, closing the growing gap between Ohio's road-project wish list and available gas-tax money. [Read the full article in the Plain Dealer.](#)

New Patrol Hot Line Brings in More Tips (Ohio)

The State Highway Patrol says its increased efforts to crack down on drug trafficking and other crimes are paying off with more calls to its revamped hot line and greater use of its criminal-intelligence unit, which follows up on tips and helps other law-enforcement agencies. The state launched an easier-to-dial hot line, 677, to replace the old 1-877-7-PATROL about a year ago, encouraging travelers to call not only when they need help or see an impaired driver, but also to report tips on crimes such as drug activity and human trafficking. The patrol says it's getting more than 4,000 calls per month statewide, and while it doesn't keep statistics on the topics of those calls, it has begun trying to track how many come through the hot line.

[Read the full article in the Columbus Dispatch.](#)

Customers Have High Satisfaction with Wisconsin DOT

Wisconsin residents value the state's multimodal transportation system and have a high level of satisfaction with the job being done by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), according to a statewide customer satisfaction survey. "We've made it a priority to provide accountability and transparency in how well the department is performing through our MAPSS Performance Improvement Program and other efforts," said WisDOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb. "There's no better way to measure our success in meeting expectations than to get direct feedback from customers. We're pleased to find customer satisfaction is at a high level." [Read the full article at dot.wisconsin.gov.](#)

Region IV News

Arizona Bill Targets Hard-to-Read License Plates; Only Future Tags Affected

Law enforcement can't see the numbers on Arizona license plates for the trees. And the elk. And the sports logos. A bill moving through the state Legislature intends to clear up the picture by minimizing

the clutter, as colorful and creative as it might be, on future Arizona specialty license plates. Instead of allowing the entire plate to be designed by a specialty sponsor, Senate Bill 1206 would require a standardized plate with a 3-inch-square area dedicated to showcasing the group's design and logo. The bill's sponsor, Sen. Steve Farley, D-Tucson, said the proposal would give law enforcement a clearer view of plate numbers, something police officers have said is a problem with many of the 33 specialty plates currently on the road. "If trained officers are having trouble identifying license plates, then casual observers will have problems," Farley told the House Transportation Committee. But the bill also would allow groups to continue to seek specialty plates promoting their group or cause. The plates have been popular fundraisers for everything from wildlife conservation to saving children. [Read the full article in the Arizona Republic.](#)

Bill to Allow Children Under 7 to Ride Off-Road Motorcycles Passes Oregon Senate

Talk about your jarring juxtapositions. A week after the Oregon House approved a bill that would forbid anyone under 18 years old from using a tanning booth -- citing health concerns -- the Senate on Tuesday voted 22-7 to allow children under the age of 7 to ride off-road motorcycles on public land. Motorcycles and dirt bikes are considered among the more dangerous pastimes, with deaths and injuries reported every year. But supporters of the change said it's up to parents, not the state to decide what's safe for their kids. [Read the full article in the Oregonian.](#)

Oregon Senate Votes to Ban Smoking in Car with Kids

Adults who smoke in a car with a child could face hundreds of dollars in fines under a bill approved Wednesday in the Oregon Senate. If the House gives its approval and Gov. John Kitzhaber signs the bill, Oregon would join four other states with similar measures. Violators would face a maximum fine of \$250 for a first offense and \$500 for subsequent offenses. The Senate's 19-10 vote Wednesday did not follow party lines. Proponents said secondhand smoke is harmful, and minors shouldn't be subjected to health hazards because of their parents' decision to smoke. They say smoke can be trapped inside a vehicle and pool in the back seat where children often sit. [Read more in the Argus Observer.](#)

Government Tells SGI to Cap Motorcycle Insurance Increase at 15%

The Saskatchewan government has applied the brakes to a huge insurance rate increase for motorcycle riders. Last month, Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) asked the rate review panel to remove the cap for increases to motorcycle premiums, saying it was not fair to have vehicle owners subsidize rates for the group. In some cases, insurance would have jumped over 70 per cent. The government has stepped in and told SGI to cap motorcycle increases at 15 per cent. [Read the full article in Global Saskatoon.](#)

Utah Teen Driver Cellphone Ban Resurrected, Passed

A day after apparently killing it, the Utah Senate resurrected and passed a bill Wednesday to ban motorists younger than 18 from using cellphones while driving. It would still allow adults to use them legally. Senators voted 17-12 to pass HB103, a day after they rejected it on an 11-13 vote. It now goes to Gov. Gary Herbert for his signature. Sponsoring Sen. Lyle Hillyard, R-Logan, said some of his supporters were absent during the earlier vote. With the second-day debate sounding nearly identical to the first - but with a different outcome - Senate President Wayne Niederhauser said, "It's a little bit like 'Groundhog Day,' " a movie where the same day keeps repeating, but a little differently each time. [Read the full article in the Salt Lake Tribune.](#)

State House Votes to Ban License Plate Flippers (Washington)

The Washington state House has passed a measure to make it illegal to use license plate flipper technology that enables switching between two license plates while driving. The measure passed Saturday would also ban manufacturing license plate flippers in the state. The James Bond-style contraptions make it easier for vehicles to avoid being identified by toll cameras and police. Republican Rep. Larry Haler of Richland is the bill sponsor. He said law enforcement views the devices as an officer safety risk. Selling or using a license plate flipper would under the bill be a gross misdemeanor punishable by up to 364 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine. Officers could also impound vehicles with the devices installed. Passed by an 87-11 vote, the bill heads next to the Senate.

[Read the full article at komonews.com.](http://www.komonews.com)

Did You Know...

- *St. Patrick's Day is observed on March 17 because that is the feast day of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. It is believed that he died on March 17 in the year 461 AD. It is also a worldwide celebration of Irish culture and history. St. Patrick's Day is a national holiday in Ireland, and a provincial holiday in the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador*
- *In Chicago, the Chicago River is dyed green with a special dye that only lasts a few hours. There has been a St. Patrick's Day parade in Boston, Massachusetts since 1737. Montreal is home to Canada's longest running St. Patrick's Day parade, which began in 1824.*
- *34 million Americans have Irish ancestry, according to the 2003 US Census. That's almost nine times the population of Ireland, which has 4.1 million people.*
- *The harp is the symbol of Ireland. The color green is also commonly associated with Ireland, also known as "the Emerald Isle."*
- *The Irish flag is green, white and orange. The green symbolizes the people of the south, and orange, the people of the north. White represents the peace that brings them together as a nation.*
- *The name "leprechaun" has several origins. It could be from the Irish Gaelic word "leipreachan," which means "a kind of aqueous sprite." Or, it could be from "leath bhrogan," which means "shoemaker."*
- *According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the highest number of leaves found on a clover is 14!*
- *One estimate suggests that there are about 10 000 regular three-leaf clovers for every lucky four-leaf clover.*
- *Legend says that each leaf of the clover means something: the first is for hope, the second for faith, the third for love and the fourth for luck.*