

Regional News – April 5, 2013

Tidbits

Apply Now for the Martha Irwin Award for Lifetime Achievement in Highway Safety

The Martha Irwin Award for Lifetime Achievement in Highway Safety is presented annually to an AAMVA member jurisdiction employee, or other individual whose primary function is directly associated with highway and traffic safety efforts.

Nomination Guidelines:

- AAMVA member jurisdiction employees, or other individuals whose primary function is motor vehicle or highway safety, are eligible.
- Interested jurisdictional members are encouraged to submit nominations to their chief motor vehicle or chief law enforcement administrator who will then submit one nominee per jurisdictional agency to AAMVA Director of Law Enforcement Brian Ursino at bursino@aamva.org.

[Click here for the 2013 Martha Irwin Award nomination form.](#) Nominations must be received by April 30, 2013. For more information, contact [Brian Ursino](#) via email or at 703-350-5103.

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

Advocates Urge Immigrant Driver Licenses (Connecticut)

Supporters of an initiative to allow immigrants who may be in the country illegally to obtain driver's licenses are rallying in Hartford. Democratic Rep. Juan Candelaria of New Haven has called for supporters statewide to gather at the capitol on Wednesday to show lawmakers the need to address the issue during the current legislative session. Candelaria has introduced a bill to the General Assembly that would authorize the issuance of drivers' licenses to immigrants. [Read the full article on wtnh.com](#)

Maryland House Advances Driver's License Measure for Immigrants

The Maryland House of Delegates on Thursday advanced a measure that would allow people with an unlawful immigration status to continue to obtain driver's licenses. If passed, the bill would make the existing driver's license provision for immigrants living in the country without permission permanent and expand the program to include people who have no social security number or whose immigration status

currently prevents them from applying for a license. The Senate has already approved the measure. In 2009, state legislators revised the Motor Vehicle Administration's rules to comply with the federal Real ID law, which required that state-issued identification cards meet certain standards, including that they are issued to people lawfully in the country. [Read the full article in the Washington Post.](#)

[Dr. Mehmet Oz Stars in New York State DMV Public Service Ads Encouraging Organ Donation](#)

A new public service ad campaign starring Dr. Mehmet Oz, host of "The Dr. Oz Show," encourages New Yorkers to enroll in the New York State Donate Life Registry. The state Department of Motor Vehicles' "Go the Extra Mile, Become an Organ Donor" campaign features Dr. Oz in two public service announcements. The ads will run on radio and television throughout the state during the month of April, according to Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office. The governor's office said only 20 percent of New York residents ages 18 and up are enrolled in the state organ donation registry. The national average is 42 percent, according to Cuomo's office. [Read the full article in the Citizen.](#)

[PennDOT Announces Highway Deaths in 2012 Third-Lowest on Record](#)

There were 1,310 people killed in crashes on Pennsylvania roads last year, the third-lowest number on record and 24 more than in 2011. Areas of highway safety, toughened by laws Governor Tom Corbett has signed, also saw reductions in fatalities and crashes. PennDOT data from police reports also shows that there were 124,062 crashes on Pennsylvania roadways in 2012, a decrease from 125,322 in 2011 and fewer than the 144,542 Pennsylvania crashes 15 years ago. "While highway fatalities increased last year, we're encouraged that historically, deaths on our roadways are trending downward. However, our highway safety mission will continue," PennDOT Secretary Barry J. Schoch said. "Each life lost on our highways is someone's relative or loved one, and we keep that in the forefront of our minds when we pursue engineering, education and enforcement tactics aimed at keeping our roads safe." [Read the full article on dot.state.pa.us.](#)

[Senate to Weigh Driver's Licenses \(Vermont\)](#)

The Vermont Senate is expected to take up a bill that would allow immigrant farm workers to get driver's licenses in Vermont. On Wednesday, the Senate is expected to take up the bill, which was approved last week by the Transportation Committee by a vote of 4-1. Vermont dairy farms employ an estimated 1,500 Mexican farmworkers, many of whom are in this country illegally. They say they are isolated in rural areas and have to get rides from their employers or volunteers or sometimes pay for transportation to the grocery store or doctor. The bill would allow them to get driver's licenses provided they have the proper documentation and then take the tests to get a permit, and then a license. [Read the full article in the Times Argus.](#)

[Vermont Legislation Targets Distracted Driving](#)

Motorists who text while driving could pay a stiffer penalty, while the use of a cellphone could be banned in highway construction zones, under bills presented to Vermont House committees Tuesday. Public Safety Commissioner Keith Flynn, the top law enforcement officer in Gov. Peter Shumlin's administration, said he was especially eager to see passage of a ban on electronic distractions in construction zones, at the least cellphones. "In work zones, I think it's a really good idea," Flynn said, adding that sections of road lined with orange barrels, construction machinery, lane changes and helmeted workers present challenges for drivers that should prompt them to put down the cellphone. [Read the full article in the Brattleboro Reformer.](#)

Region II News

Florida Does U-turn on International Driver's License Requirement

After offending thousands of Canadians, causing havoc in local tourism offices and possibly running afoul of the Geneva Convention, Florida lawmakers completed a speedy about-face Tuesday, officially repealing a law requiring foreign tourists to get an International Driving Permit. With a stroke of Gov. Rick Scott's pen, Canadians and other international tourists will no longer have to obtain a special permit before they are allowed to drive in Florida. A little-noticed law passed last year and signed by Scott had created the new requirement. "We love international visitors, and we want to do everything possible to ensure their stay here is an enjoyable one," Scott said before signing HB 7059, the repeal bill. "Florida is committed to being the No. 1 tourist destination in the world." [Read the full article in the Tampa Bay Times.](#)

Texting While Driving Closer to Becoming Illegal in Florida

Legislation banning texting while driving in Florida is heading to the House floor for a vote. It is the most substantial step yet, supporters say, in getting law up to speed with the ever-changing cell phone technology. Alyssa Quirk remembers it like it was yesterday. "I could see him in my rear-view mirror coming and I was like hitting my horn," she said. "I was like 'Dude, look up, look up', and he didn't. He just kept going." That was the day she was rear-ended while driving on U.S. 1. Quirk says the man who hit her car was texting and driving. "I just popped the clutch, put it in neutral and the guy just slammed into the back of me and I kept rolling," she said. She was 8 months pregnant at the time and she escaped unharmed. That is the kind of collision that some lawmakers are now more than ever working to prevent. In Tallahassee, a House panel passed a bill that would create a statewide ban on texting while driving. Such legislation has been filed every year since 2008, but this will be the first time it goes to the House floor. [Read the full article on wptv.com.](#)

North Carolina Considers Returning Driving Privileges to Immigrants Here Illegally

Republican lawmakers in North Carolina are expected next week to propose a sweeping new state law that would grant driving privileges to residents living in the country illegally but also would adopt Arizona-type enforcement measures authorizing police to check the immigration status of people they question for other suspected offenses. Supporters say the proposal, a sign of a more welcoming approach that some states are taking with their unauthorized residents, would make the roads safer and help identify those who had been living hidden in society. The measure also has significant political implications as national Republican leaders have warned the party must expand its appeal to Latinos. It's not an easy task for a Republican-led North Carolina legislature, which must walk a fine line in reaching out to the state's rapidly growing Latino community without antagonizing the party's conservative base. [Read the full article in the Charlotte Observer.](#)

Region III News

Iowa Senate Approves Changes for Specialty License Plates

The state's process for issuing specialty license plates would be revised under a bill approved 50-0 by the Iowa Senate on Tuesday. Senate File 371 provides for license plates containing a space for the placement of an organization's decal. It also allows for the approval of decals to be issued by qualifying organizations. The bill now goes to the Iowa House. Under current law, anyone may submit a request to the Iowa Department of Transportation for the approval of a special license plate with a processed emblem. A minimum of 500 applications are required before the DOT begins issuing the plate. [Read the full article in Des Moines Register.](#)

Legislature Declines to Add More Special License Plates (Minnesota)

Legislative resistance to adding to the already long list of special vehicle license plates has trumped impassioned pleas by Janesville residents seeking a new license plate supporting breast cancer victims. Several Janesville residents, led by John and Dawn Jesse, testified before the Minnesota House Transportation Policy Committee in February about how breast cancer has impacted multiple women in the Waseca County town of about 1,600. And they asked the committee to support legislation to create a new license plate displaying the pink breast cancer ribbon and the words "Minnesota Cares." "These plates, when women see them - the ones who are going through this horrible disease - they can look and say, 'Wow, you know what? People care about me. They care about what's happening to us women,'" said John Jesse, whose mother, sister and wife have all recovered from breast cancer. [Read the full article in the Mankato Free Press.](#)

[Proposal Allows Veterans to Mark Service on IDs, License Plates \(Nebraska\)](#)

As a veteran, Francis "Red" Steele taught his daughter from early on to respect those who serve in the military. As a child, Steele's daughter went to veterans parades with him and saw his involvement with American Legion Post 1 in Omaha. As an adult, she felt her father's pride when one of her sons graduated from basic training in preparation for service with the Nebraska National Guard. Now Steele's daughter - State Sen. Annette Dubas of Fullerton - says she is willing to "go to the mat" for a bill to help and honor Nebraska veterans and active duty military. The proposal would allow veterans to have their status noted on their driver's licenses and state identification cards. It also would allow veterans and active duty military to get special Military Honor license plates. A \$5 fee charged for the plates would support the state veterans cemeteries. [Read the full article on omaha.com.](#)

[Senators Call on BMV to Issue Driver's Licenses to Eligible Immigrants \(Ohio\)](#)

Ohio Senate Democratic Leader Eric H. Kearney (D-Cincinnati) and Senator Charleta B. Tavares (DColumbus) today called on the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles to issue driver's licenses and permits to individuals who've been approved for the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The call for immediate action follows a review of state law conducted by Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine. Last week DeWine sent a letter to the Latino Affairs Commission that stated the following: "It appears that the BMV would have to accept driver's license applications from individuals that fall under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals initiative because they can provide all of the information necessary." Currently, some BMV offices will grant licenses to DACA participants while others will not. So far, the BMV has refused to issue uniform statewide rules to comply with federal guidelines. [Read the full article in the Cincinnati Herald.](#)

Region IV News

[Alaska House Passes Bill Authorizing Temporary Driver Licenses](#)

The Alaska House has passed a measure that would allow the state Department of Motor Vehicles to issue short-term drivers licenses to temporary residents. HB1 passed Monday, 29-7. It will go to the Senate next, with less than two weeks left in the legislative session. The bill allows DMV to issue driver's licenses for less than five years if someone is authorized to stay in the U.S. for less than five years or if the period of authorized stay is indefinite. The department would have to issue a license for the person's length of stay. [Read the full article on ktuu.com.](#)

[DMV Wins International Award For Social Media Outreach \(California\)](#)

The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has been named a 2013 Computerworld Honors Laureate by IDG's Computerworld publication. The annual award program honors visionary applications of information technology promoting positive social, economic and educational change. "We work hard

to help our customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week using cutting edge technology," said DMV Chief Deputy Director, Jean Shiomoto. "As we continue to move forward, the DMV is always looking for ways to improve customer services from our unique smartphone applications to our online services where customers can renew their driver licenses, vehicle registrations and conduct a number of other transactions." The DMV was recognized as a Laureate in the Innovation category. The category recognizes organizations for the design and development of technologies or products that represent advancement in the fields of information technology. The DMV's vast social media efforts using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube is an alternative avenue to communicate directly with customers. [Read the full article on dmv.ca.gov.](#)

Stoned Driving Bill Gets Initial OK in Colorado House

A bill that would make it easier to convict people for driving stoned passed the Colorado House on an initial vote Tuesday. "This is about traffic safety in the state of Colorado," said Rep. Rhonda Fields, an Aurora Democrat who is one of the bill's sponsors. "This bill will send a very strong message that no longer can you get behind the wheel after smoking marijuana." The unrecorded voice vote marked the fourth time in three years the House has endorsed a proposal to crack down on driving under the influence of marijuana. Three previous tries ended when the state Senate voted down the bills by the slimmest of margins. [Read the full article in the Denver Post.](#)

Immigrant Driver's License Bill Introduced in Colorado

The sponsor of a bill allowing illegal immigrants to get Colorado driver's licenses says he has the support of the state's sheriffs. The bill was introduced in the state Senate on Monday. Democratic Sen. Jessie Ulibarri says the County Sheriffs of Colorado said Friday they would support the bill. New Mexico, Washington and Illinois allow driver's licenses for illegal immigrants. Republicans oppose the Colorado bill. [Read the full article on 9news.com.](#)

Colorado State Patrol's New I-70 Trucker's Website Only A Call Away

Truckers driving Colorado's I-70 corridor can now use their mobile phone to dial up the Colorado State Patrol's new website to find out everything from road conditions to where to park safely by going to www.TruckI70.com. "With Colorado's ever changing weather conditions, truckers heading up I-70 between milepost 133 (Dotsero exit) and milepost 259 (Morrison exit) must carry sufficient chains to be in compliance with Colorado's chain laws between September and the end of May," said Captain Tim Keeton, Commander of the Colorado State Patrol (CSP) Motor Carrier Safety Section. "Commercial motor vehicles driving along the I-70 corridor face numerous challenges," Captain Keeton pointed out. "To make it easy and quickly accessible for truckers to find the latest information on road conditions - especially when inclement weather is an issue, we developed the website. The site also provides links for additional information at the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) site." The new www.truckI70.com site provides detailed maps of safe locations as to where to chain up or park, as well as a video on the law and motor carrier safety tips.

Montana MVD Receives Gold Donor Designation Medal of Honor

The State of Montana is being awarded the Gold Donor Designation Medal of Honor by Donate Life America. Over 90% of organ, eye, and tissue registrations in Montana are made at the DOJ, which reflects some of the highest registry numbers in the nation. That success is determined by five key categories including: a 50% or greater donor designation rate; 50% or more of all state residents age 18 or older registered as donors; and, at least 40% each of organ, eye, and tissue donors are authorized through state donor registries. In Montana, 79% of individuals 18 years of age or older, 52% of

recovered organ donors, and 60% of recovered tissue donors were registered. Congratulations to the Montana MVD!

85 mph Speed Limit Approved by Nevada Senate

Get ready to put the pedal to the metal. The state Senate voted 15-6 Wednesday for a bill to allow the Department of Transportation to increase the speed limit to as high as 85 mph on selected highways in Nevada. Sponsoring Sen. Don Gustavson, R-Sparks, said accidents have been reduced in Utah on sections of freeway where the speed limit was raised to 80 mph. Gustavson emphasized higher speeds in Nevada would be allowed only on divided highways with at least four lanes, probably along Interstate 80 between Fernley and Wendover and Interstate 15 between Craig Road and Mesquite. "It's the bill we have all been waiting for," he quipped. But Sen. Debbie Smith, D-Sparks, said motor vehicles generally are driven 5 mph over the limit, and she was concerned about trucks flying by other vehicles at 90 mph. [Read the full article in the Review Journal.](#)

New Law Allows Interlock License for Drunken Drivers Convicted of Vehicular Homicide in New Mexico

Even drunken drivers who kill someone will have a chance to obtain an ignition interlock license in New Mexico. Gov. Susana Martinez stood rock solid against granting driver's licenses to those convicted of the worst roadway crimes until they completed their sentences. Martinez twice vetoed bills that would have allowed drunken drivers who maimed or killed someone to obtain an interlock license before completing probation or parole. This year, the state Legislature approved a stricter bill that met Martinez's specifications, and she signed it Monday. Freshman Sen. Ron Griggs sponsored the bill, which he said was inspired by a Carlsbad case in which a drunken driver caused the death of a close friend. Griggs, R-Alamogordo, said legislators made the bill tough enough this time to meet the governor's standards. [Read the full article in the Las Cruces Sun-News.](#)

Nevadans Hear Utah Legislators' Support for Driver Privilege Card

Nevada legislators heard from Utah legislators about that state's driver privilege card. Nevada's Transportation Committee held a hearing about Senate bill 303, a proposed driver privilege card that would give permission to undocumented residents to drive in the state. Barbara Silva needed a ride to the Grant Sawyer building to attend the hearing that was video-conferenced between Carson City and Las Vegas. She is afraid to drive. "...because the police stopped me and I'm being scared, afraid because I don't have a license for my work," Silva said. She was one of about 100 people who attended the hearing in Las Vegas. They were there to hear from the Utah legislators and to show support for the proposed bill. Utah State Senator Curtis Bramble said a majority of people with the driver privilege card carry car insurance. [Read the full article on mynews3.com.](#)

Nevada Veterans Tax Exemptions Go Online

Starting Monday (April 8), Nevada veterans who claim an annual tax exemption on their vehicle registrations will be able to use that exemption during an online vehicle registration renewal. Up until now, veterans could only renew by mail or in-person. The Department of Motor Vehicles worked with all 17 Nevada county assessors to come up with a system to verify the exemption vouchers that assessors issue. Veterans in 15 of the 17 Nevada counties may use the system now. Clark County exemptions will not be available until later this year due to installation of a new computer system. Douglas County exemptions will be available online in the next few weeks. *For more information, visit www.dmvnv.com.*

Undocumented Residents Could Obtain 4-year Driver's Licenses Under Oregon Senate Bill

Undocumented Oregon residents would be able to obtain four-year driver's licenses under a bill set to be introduced today in the Oregon Senate. The "short-term licenses or permits" would be available to undocumented residents who have lived in Oregon at least a year and who meet all other requirements to obtain a driver's license, except for proof of legal presence. Applicants would need to provide proof of identity and date of birth, such as an unexpired valid passport from their country of origin or an unexpired consular identification document. The bill sets license costs tentatively at \$74, with subsequent renewals to cost \$54. Standard eight-year licenses currently cost \$60, renewals \$40. [Read the full article in the Oregonian.](#)

Hang Up: New Law Bars Utah Teens From Cellphone Use While Driving

Drivers younger than 18 will be prohibited from talking on their cellphones while they're behind the wheel, under legislation that Gov. Gary Herbert has signed. "Teen drivers don't need anything else to distract them. They have enough on their own, just learning the process," said Rep. Lee Perry, R-Perry, a Utah Highway Patrol trooper and sponsor of HB103. Perry said he hopes that teen-age drivers who learn not to talk on their phone would continue that habit into adulthood, and there ultimately will be fewer drivers talking on the phone when they drive. "I'm not throwing the teens under the bus more than anybody else," when it comes to cellphone use, Perry said. "Teens just haven't had the experience of driving, so this is just one more distraction they don't need." The legislation takes effect May 14. [Read the full article in the Salt Lake Tribune.](#)

Bill Would End License Plate Replacement Every Seven Years (Washington)

A Senate committee is considering a proposal that would put an end to replacing license plates every seven years. Under the measure, plates would be replaced only when a vehicle changes hands. Those opposing Senate Bill 5890 say it contains provisions which would result in new or higher fees on thousands of vehicle-related transactions every year. The Senate Transportation Committee is considering the measure. [Read the full article on kqmi.com.](#)

Other News

Want to Drive Safely? Listen to Elton John, Aerosmith or S Club 7

Among the top ten safest songs to drive to are Come Away With Me by Norah Jones, I Don't Want to Miss a Thing by Aerosmith and Tiny Dancer by Elton John. Each of the songs have an optimum tempo of a song for safe driving, mimicing the human heartbeat at around 60 to 80 beats per minute. The Scientist by Coldplay and Justin Timberlake's Cry Me a River also appeared in the top 10. The study, conducted at London Metropolitan University, also revealed the type of songs that cause motorists to drive dangerously. Unsurprisingly, music that is noisy, upbeat and increases a driver's heart rate can be a deadly mix. [Read the full article in the Telegraph.](#)

Self-Driving Cars by 2025

The not-so-distant future of driving will be first increasingly semi-autonomous and then fully automated, as technology to build self-driving cars gains traction, promising both safer driving and lighter-weight vehicles that save on gas. The development of advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) will first see some seemingly innocuous changes in the way we drive -- from autonomous driving in traffic jams, parking and lane-changing assistance on highways and pedestrian detection cameras to predictive emergency braking. Essentially, the first semi-autonomous steps will free up hands to so a bit of illegal texting on mobile phones and keep us alert to avoid traffic accidents. [Read the full article in the Huffington Post.](#)

Did You Know...

- *While the origins of April Fools' Day are sketchy at best, one of the more popular theories dates back to the 16th century. Prior to 1582, the new year began on April 1. When the new year was moved to Jan. 1 in 1582, there were some people who hadn't heard or didn't believe the change in the date, so they continued to celebrate New Year's Day on April 1. These "April fools" were often ridiculed by being sent on "fools errands" or were made the butt of other practical jokes.*
- *The Scottish love April Fools' Day. In fact they love it so much, they celebrate it for two days. In Scotland they call it "hunting the gowk" (the cuckoo), and if you are tricked, you are an "April gowk." To really get "behind" the holiday, the second day, called "Taily Day," is devoted to pranks involving the back side of the body. The "butt" of these jokes may often have a "kick me" sign placed on their back.*
- *There's something fishy going on in France. Kids fool their friends by taping a paper fish to their backs. When the victim discovers the fish, the prankster yells "Poisson d'Avril!" (April Fish!)*
- *In Portugal, April Fools' Day is actually celebrated on the Sunday and Monday before Lent. The big trick there? Throwing flour at your friend's face.*
- *In Poland everyone takes part in April Fools' Day activities, including the media and sometimes public institutions. All serious activities are completely avoided for the day. A favorite joke? Pouring water on people.*
- *According to this CareerBuilder.com survey, 32 percent of workers say they have either initiated or been on the receiving end of an April Fools' Day prank at work.*
- *In certain areas of Belgium, children lock out their parents or teachers and only let them in if they promise to give them sweets.*
- *Depending on where you live in England, instead of a "fool" you could be called a "noodle," "noddy," "gobby" or "gob."*
- *April Fools' Day goes beyond just switching out the sugar bowl with salt. Check out this list of the Top 100 April Fools' Day Hoaxes. They include the Swiss Spaghetti Harvest, the baseball pitching phenom Sidd Finch and the Left-Handed Whopper.*
- *Mark Twain appeared to be a big fan of "fools." Some of his pinings on fools include: "It's better to keep your mouth shut and be thought a fool than to open it and leave no doubt" and "Let us be thankful for the fools. But for them the rest of us could not succeed" and "The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year."*