



Driving Freedom

NMA Foundation

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The NMA Foundation is a non-profit group dedicated to finding innovative ways to improve and protect the interests of North American motorists.

The Worst Speed Traps In America

PAGE 7



NMA Foundation

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If your NMA membership expiration date is on (or before) 1/1/08, this is your last issue of

Driving Freedom

PLEASE RENEW NOW
TO AVOID ANY LAPSE!



**Driving
Freedoms**

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Cover
 "Worst Speed Traps"



Move Over, Slow Down, and Crash!
 by James J. Baxter, President, NMA

A common act in our driving culture is to move left, as far as practical and necessary, to give a little extra room to vehicles that are stopped along side the road.

It could be someone changing a tire, a police officer aiding or ticketing a motorist, or a tow truck loading a disabled vehicle. It's just common sense and common courtesy to provide a cushion of space in these situations.

Never content with common sense and common courtesy, the safety kanknobs and ax grinders in the country want perfection. This is now manifested in 44 states as "move over, slow down" laws and is being promoted by AAA, towing companies, police groups, and the usual collection of "safety" organizations. They even have a NASCAR driver (David Ragan) roped into the PR campaign. The big push is to extend the law to just about any roadside vehicle capable of mustering a blinking light.

Personal experience and anecdotes suggest these laws are an unintended disaster.

Traffic is flowing along at 70 mph and a stopped squad car appears. Ultra law abiders veer into the left lane causing mayhem in the passing lane. Those who actually look first see that they can't make the lane change safely, and on go the brakes. The vehicles immediately behind, in which the drivers are now looking at their mirrors or over their shoulders attempting to move left, suddenly are stunned by glaring brake lights. They veer, they brake, they may even take to the shoulder to avoid

rear-ending the car in front of them. Of course the stopped vehicles are on the shoulder, there to greet them. Meanwhile, 50 or 100 vehicles back, speeds suddenly drop 20 mph and the inattentive get the opportunity to meet their fellow travelers, up close and personal.

Given that 44 states have these laws, some for several years, it stands to reason that they might have been evaluated in terms of looking for reduced crashes and injuries related to roadside accidents.

We contacted the AAA, the advertised chief promoter of this campaign, and asked them if they had research or could point us to a study that verified the supposed benefits of these laws. The short answer was "no" they don't have any evidence to support the value of these laws, just the conviction based on the bias of troopers and tow truck drivers, that "move over, slow down" laws are a good idea.

This is a classic "tail wagging the dog" public policy that takes a useful voluntary gesture (showing a little consideration for those stranded or working along the roadside) and turning it into an arbitrary counterproductive law. This ranks right up there with the fad of doubling, or worse, fines for speeding in work zones. The official hype is that motorists are mowing down roadside workers. The truth is that the biggest danger to roadside workers is other roadside workers.

Pray for the day that we motorists can get a little respite from these charlatans! Maybe we should hire a NASCAR driver to plead our case? ■

From The National Motorists Association Blog

<http://www.motorists.org/blog/>

We've recently switched to a blog format for the news section on the NMA website and we encourage you to check it out. The blog will keep you up-to-date on the latest motorist news in an entertaining, easy-to-read format. We generally post new articles to the blog five days a week and you can comment on ongoing stories. You can even subscribe online to get blog updates in your email inbox! Just type www.motorists.org/blog/ into your Internet browser to get started.

Fight Your Speeding Ticket With Simple Math

Many speeding tickets are issued as the result of motorists being clocked with devices that measure how fast a vehicle covers a known distance.

Because some judges and district attorneys are not comfortable with mathematical calculations, it is important for the well-prepared defendant to present mathematical based arguments in the simplest of terms. We will start from the end and work backwards.

A vehicle moving one mile per hour will cover 1.47 feet in one second.

If you wish to determine how far a vehicle will travel at a specific speed, just multiply that speed by 1.47 feet. For example, if a vehicle is traveling 60 mph it will cover 88 feet in one second. Obviously, it will cover 176 feet in two seconds, etc.

If you are trying to determine how many seconds it would take a vehicle to cover a known distance at a specific speed, just divide the distance by the speed and divide the result by 1.47 feet.

This will yield the number of seconds it would take the vehicle to cover a known distance at a known speed.

For example: A vehicle traveling 60 mph will cover 300 feet in 3.4 seconds – 300 divided by 60 divided by 1.47 equals 3.4 seconds. If need be you can verify this calculation by multiplying 3.4 seconds times 88 feet (the distance traveled in one second at 60 mph) and the result brings you back to 300 feet.

If you are challenged on the validity of the 1.47 feet per second figure, you can prove its validity in very simple terms.

1. There are 5280 feet in one mile so a vehicle traveling one mile per hour will cover 5280 feet.

2. There are 60 minutes in one hour so a vehicle traveling one mile per hour will travel 1/60th of that distance in one minute, or 88 feet.

3. There are 60 seconds in one minute so a vehicle traveling at one mile per hour will cover 1/60th of the distance it covered in one minute, or 1.47 feet.

You could also state that there are 3600 seconds in one hour and divide that number into 5280 feet and the result would be the same, 1.47 feet.

Once the court accepts and understands the source of these numbers you can apply them to your defense.

If you receive a VASCAR ticket, you should obtain a description of the distance over which you were clocked, the time it took your vehicle to cover that distance, and the speed you are charged with traveling.

If the citation or incident report claims you covered 300 feet in 4.2 seconds and you are being charged with speeding at 60 mph in a 50 mph zone, you can readily verify the accuracy (or lack thereof in this case) of the speed you were claimed to be traveling.

At 60 mph you would have traveled 370 feet, not 300 feet. However, at 50 mph you would have traveled 309 feet in 4.2 seconds, indicating that you were driving within the speed limit.

Even if the calculations indicated that the error was in the opposite direction, that your speed was underestimated, the speed-reading should not be allowed as evidence against you, thus eliminating the prosecution's principal evidence against you.

In other cases involving radar or pacing, time over distance calculations can prove serious inconsistencies in the officer's testimony.

If the officer testifies that he clocked your vehicle for five seconds and you were going 80 mph, you can prove, by using time over distance calculations, that the officer could not have seen you for more than two seconds, because of a curve or sign, if you had been traveling 80 miles per hour. ■



NMA Washington Report

by Robert Talley, NMA Lobbyist



The National Motorist Association has an agenda that includes protecting driver's freedoms and limiting abuses of authorities granted in the name of protecting the public. That being said, a report on what is happening in Washington cannot be written without discussing the most recent energy related activity in Congress.

Immediately prior to Christmas, Congress passed and the President signed an historic piece of legislation that will impact the design of vehicles for years to come. The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 had two major provisions related to motorists' interests: the first was a mandated increase in the fuel economy of the vehicles we drive; and, the second was a mandate on where the fuel we use comes from.

The Congress has imposed a new law that will require all automobile manufacturers, regardless of size, to meet a national fuel efficiency standard of 35 miles per gallon for light trucks and cars by 2020. Implementation of this mandate will begin in 2011 when the National Highway

Traffic Safety Administration will begin ramping up the current standard to meet the new requirements. This is the first statutory increase in fuel economy standards for passenger vehicles since 1975.

In addition to changing the look of vehicles in the future, Congress also dramatically increased the percentage of biofuels that will be part of our nation's fuel mix. Under the legislation, our nation's biofuel generation must increase to nine billion gallons by the end of next year and be at 36 billion gallons by 2022.

To put this in perspective, in 2006 the nation manufactured five billion gallons of biofuels. There have been concerns raised that this mandate will result in gasoline price variances such as happened in the Midwest as a result of reliance on boutique fuel mixes in the early part of this decade.

In addition to passing legislation to address vehicle design and fuel mix, Congress also wrapped the year up in a frenzy of legislation that included almost \$600 million in funding for enforcement programs on our nation's highways. Among these included

\$125 million to monitor seatbelt use at the state and local level and over \$150 million for High Visibility Enforcement Programs and Alcohol Impaired Driving Countermeasures. All of these numbers reflect an increase over last year's spending.

Our efforts to ensure privacy rights for motorists through the protection of Event Data Recorder information through legislation we supported at introduction, HR 1015, continues to languish as a result of an unfriendly Chairman.

The powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman John Dingell represents a part of the country where automobile interests are paramount and has had the authority to prevent consideration of our legislation. The NMA hopes that the bill sponsor, Congressman Capuano (D-MA) will be able to change the situation in the near term.

In addition to pursuing privacy rights for drivers, we continue to work with Congress in efforts to find creative ways to fight the increased use of photo enforcement as a tool to raise revenue for local jurisdictions. ■

European Union Sacks Daytime Running Lights Mandate

Until recently, the European Union was on a mission to mandate the use of headlights during daylight hours.

This feel-good crusade came to a crashing halt when organizations representing "vulnerable users" (pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists) objected to the mandate while pointing out that individual country experiments with DRL mandates indicated an increase in accidents, injuries and fatalities.

Austria, in particular, has turned 180 degrees, from mandating daytime headlight use to proposals outlawing daytime headlight use. This turnabout was the result of a

12 percent increase in overall accidents and a 40 percent increase in motorcycle accidents, following the daytime headlight mandate.

There has been speculation that the US National Traffic Highway Safety Administration was laying in the weeds, intending to pass its own DRL mandate, and using the expected E.U. mandate as the excuse.

"Harmonization" of vehicle equipment regulations is the current bureaucratic nirvana. This is a worthwhile goal, but not when it's used to institutionalize a bad idea on a global platform. ■

It Always Starts As A Choice...

In Arizona, and several other states including Michigan, Vermont and Washington, legislation has been introduced that would create driver's licenses equipped with radio-frequency identification (RFID) computer chips.

The RFID chip would be voluntary under the proposed legislation, but if the past is any indication, it may not be for long.

Voluntary may not even be the right description of the current legislation because the Department of Homeland security says that those without a Real ID-compliant license will not be able to board aircrafts – even for domestic flights – or enter federal buildings.

You only have to look at the evolution of seat belt laws in the United States to figure out how it's going to go down.

Seat belt legislation started with child-restraint laws, then secondary enforcement, and finally a full-on mandate in the majority of states. Why does this legislative escalation occur? It's simple. The federal government just incentivizes their proposal so that each state, and by extension its citizens, feel like they have no choice but to go along with their program.

With the seat belt laws, it was the removal of transportation funding for states without primary enforcement laws. With expanded ID programs, it's the removal of the ability to travel freely.

Besides being a permit to drive, the RFID driver's license would serve as proof of citizenship, allowing Arizonans to drive or walk across the border without a passport that otherwise will be required next year, and allowing employers to be sure

the person holding it is in this country legally.

This license would allow your information to be tracked through data banks and has a computer chip that can be read by scanners.

Arizona's Governor, Janet Napolitano said, "The chips contain no personal information, just an identification number." She said, "Only someone with access to the state Department of Public Safety database could learn anything more about the holder."

Alessandra Meetze, Executive Director of The Civil Liberties Union says, "That's little comfort even if it is true." Meetze said, "It still would permit anyone with the right electronic equipment to track the movements of individuals."

But hey, at least it's our choice. ■

UK Congestion Charges Backfire

Congestion charges put in place in central London have actually increased the level of congestion, according to a report released last month by London Assembly Conservatives.

London Mayor Ken Livingstone had promoted his congestion charge as the solution to gridlock in the downtown area where, in 2003, traffic crawled at an average rate of 10.6 mph. Now that motorists are paying £8 (US \$16) to enter the area, that figure has dropped to 9.3 mph.

A more accurate measurement of congestion that uses London's network of plate-reading ANPR cameras showed that "excess delay" nearly doubled.

The report explained that much of the congestion within the zone was actually intentional. To discourage drivers from using the streets, Mayor Livingstone took away lanes from general traffic and designated them "bus only" after re-timing traffic lights to disturb the flow of traffic. ■

Give A Ticket, Get A Gift Card

The Dallas County, Texas Sheriff's office was forced to cancel a ticket quota program after it was discovered by local news stations.

The Sheriff's office had planned to give Christmas gift cards with a cash value of \$50 each to the deputies that wrote the most tickets. The program was initiated to encourage the deputies to issue as many tickets as possible to motorists over the holidays.

Union representatives believed the program did not reflect well on the department. Dallas Police Association President Glenn White told KTVT television, "It's basically a quota system because the next day you're going to come to work and want to beat the other guy out so you're going to keep raising the bar."

A department spokesman claimed that the program was perfectly legal because it did not set a "specific number" of tickets to write. ■

Tea and Crumpets Anyone?

By Kevin Wolfe & Laura Kiernan, NMA Vacation Winners

Kevin and Laura were the winners of a recent NMA sweepstakes which sent them on a trip to NMA Member Charles Burnett's one-of-a-kind England estate.



We dove right into our whirlwind road trip with a two hour drive from Heathrow Airport at one in the morning local time. Fortunately, driving on the “wrong” side of the road proved to be an easy switch for us. However, the tight two-way roads and free-range horses did manage to keep us on our toes. Rob, Charles’ personal assistant, greeted us warmly and showed us around the house. We personally loved the black light mural of heaven and hell adorning the dining room ceiling.

On the first day, after recuperating from a bit of jet-lag, we took off driving with no other intention than to relax, head south, and find the ocean. Near the shoreline, we happened upon a long spit that people were walking on.



Intrigued, we decided to join in and wound up at King Henry VIII’s sixteenth century Hurst Castle. The day was then capped with a stop at a pub in Milford-on-the-Sea for our first taste of authentic English bitters.

Over the next couple of days, we made our way out east to Brighton to visit friends at the University of Sussex, making sure to hit as many castles and abbeys as humanly possible along the way. Our favorite was Corfe Castle, which

is a dramatic ruin rising above the Isle of Purbeck in Dorset.

From Brighton, we decided to try a hand at public transit and took the rail and tube to London, seeing the Rosetta Stone and Cleopatra in person at the British Museum. We concluded the night by walking across the Tower Bridge and staying until dusk at Potters Field Park. The next day, we returned to the estate in time for Rob to greet us with a great steak dinner, which was a nice change from the intermittent pub food (not to say that a Plowman’s lunch or bangers and mash do not have their own unique appeal).

Now we were back on the road, heading northwest. Of course, no trip to England would be complete without a stop at Stonehenge, which we hit along the way to Bath.



Once arriving in Bath, we took out our packed lunch and ate along the river Avon. From just walking around the town, it quickly became our favorite spot in the country—college students walk briskly about, business people stopping to relax in the well manicured parks—all surrounded by the architecture of buildings older than any back home in the States.

After taking the tour of the Romans baths, our journey continued to Axminster to meet a cousin. Our day finished at Cinnamon’s Indian restaurant. We must admit, the quality of the Indian food in the English country side easily surpassed what we’ve been able to find in D.C.

Our last adventure started in the English countryside at the site of Lambert’s Castle and ended with clotted cream tea at Montecute Castle. The next day, we said our good-byes and headed back to Heathrow, this time navigating the small roads with ease. We had been in England for a week and still had not made a dent in our England to-do list. Rob kindly offered for us to stay with him if we ever come back to the area. And maybe we will—if not for the ambience and serenity of the countryside, then for the invitation to go riding in Charles’s tank. ■

2007 Worst Speed Trap Cities In All Fifty States**ALABAMA**

Montgomery, Birmingham,
Huntsville, Uniontown

ALASKA

Anchorage, Fairbanks,
Juneau, Seward

ARIZONA

Tucson, Gilbert, Phoenix,
Scottsdale

ARKANSAS

Little Rock, Augusta,
Fayetteville, Parkin

CALIFORNIA

Fresno, Fullerton, Los
Angeles, San Jose

COLORADO

Colorado Springs, Aurora,
Denver, Fort Collins

CONNECTICUT

Enfield, Danbury, Groton,
New Canaan

DELAWARE

Newark, Dover, Felton,
Fenwick Island

FLORIDA

Waldo, Lawtey, Ocala,
Orlando

GEORGIA

Pendergrass, Atlanta,
Duluth, Marietta

HAWAII

Honolulu, Kailua, Kaimuki,
Maui

IDAHO

Boise, Idaho Falls,
Lewiston, Post Falls

ILLINOIS

Naperville, Carol Stream,
New Lenox, Peoria

INDIANA

Indianapolis, Bloomington,
Culver, Fort Wayne

IOWA

Des Moines, Ames, Cedar
Rapids, Davenport

KANSAS

Shawnee, Leawood,
Overland Park, Topeka

KENTUCKY

Louisville, Lexington,
Middlesboro, Owensboro

LOUISIANA

Woodworth, Baton Rouge,
Lake Charles, Metairie

MAINE

Kittery, Augusta, Falmouth,
Portland

MARYLAND

Frederick, Columbia,
Hagerstown, Waldorf

MASSACHUSETTS

Worcester, Lowell, Newton,
Springfield

MICHIGAN

Livonia, Ann Arbor,
Redford, Warren

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis, Bloomington,
Elk River, Plymouth

MISSISSIPPI

Starkville, Jackson,
McComb, Tupelo

MISSOURI

Foristell, Curryville ,
Independence, St. Charles

MONTANA

Missoula, Darby, Havre,
Joliet

NEBRASKA

Omaha, Bellevue, Grand
Island, Lincoln

NEVADA

Las Vegas, Henderson,
Pahrump, Reno

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Manchester, Nashua, New
London, Somersworth

NEW JERSEY

Paramus, Bridgewater, Monroe
Township, North Brunswick

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque, Cuba, Las
Cruces, Rio Rancho

NEW YORK

Brooklyn, Batavia,
Rochester, Staten Island

NORTH CAROLINA

Raleigh, Charlotte,
Greensboro, Wilmington

NORTH DAKOTA

Grand Forks, Fargo,
Thompson, Washburn

OHIO

Columbus, Akron, Canton,
Lindale

OKLAHOMA

Caney, Moffet, Moore,
Kiowa

OREGON

Portland, Beaverton,
Eugene, Springfield

PENNSYLVANIA

Horsham, Feasterville,
Harrisburg, Warrington

RHODE ISLAND

Providence, Johnston,
Pawtucket, Warwick

SOUTH CAROLINA

Greenville, Columbia,
Gaffney, Society Hill

SOUTH DAKOTA

Sioux Falls, Rapid City,
Wagner, Yankton

TENNESSEE

Nashville, Memphis,
Piperton, Smyrna

TEXAS

Houston, Arlington, Austin,
Estelline

UTAH

Sandy, Roy, Salt Lake City,
West Valley City

VERMONT

Wilmington, Barre Town,
Island Pond, Norwich

VIRGINIA

Virginia Beach, Chesapeake,
Emporia, Norfolk

WASHINGTON

Bellingham, Black
Diamond, Ritzville, Seattle,

WEST VIRGINIA

Summersville, Charleston,
Gauley Bridge, Hurricane

WISCONSIN

Rosendale, Appleton,
Milwaukee, Waukesha

WYOMING

Thermopolis, Cheyenne,
Jackson Hole, Rawlins ■

Cities were selected for this list based on a nationwide poll by the NMA and an analysis of postings to the website www.speedtrap.org.

Seven Ways To Shut Down A Speed Trap

1) Appeal to Local Business Owners

With sufficient prodding local businesses can be effective in lobbying for the end of community speed traps. One way to prompt this kind of lobbying is to convince business owners that the local speed trap is costing them money, or is about to cost them money.

This can be done by sending letters to local businesses and the chamber of commerce stating that you (and anyone you can convince) will not be shopping in that community until the use of speed traps is discontinued.

2) Get the Attention of Local Media

Letters should be sent to the local newspapers, radio and TV stations, and to the mayor or any other head of the government that sponsors the speed trap.

The combination of economic sanctions (loss of business) and embarrassment of local officials may generate pressure to eliminate the speed trap, or at least reduce its most abusive characteristics.

3) Buy Advertisements in the Paper

If the media ignores the story, you can still get the word out in other ways. To add a little momentum to your efforts you may want to purchase small ads in surrounding community newspapers that identify the speed trap and demand that things change.

4) Find Other Speed Trap Victims

Ask around the area and find other speed trap victims. The trap has taken money out of their pockets so it won't be hard to convince them to join the effort. If you generate some additional interest and help, the media and local officials will start to take you more seriously.

5) Request a Traffic Engineering Study

If a local village or city is using a state or county highway as a speed trap, you may be able to provoke the state or county officials sufficiently to have them force the end of the speed trap. For example, if the speed limit is severely under-posted, you can request a copy of the traffic engineering study that sanctioned such a low speed limit.

You can use a "public information request" or "freedom of information request" to force the release of this study, if the public agency won't willingly release it.

There are exceptions, but almost all states require a traffic engineering study to support an unusual or abnormally low speed limit.

6) Talk to Your Elected Officials

All elected officials give lip service to the belief that underhanded and exploitative speed enforcement should not be used as a means to extort money from honest responsible citizens. It's fair game to ask them to put substance behind their words.

Here are some approaches you can suggest to your state senator or representative:

- Require that any posted speed limit that differs from the standard speed limit for a given type of road or highway be supported by a legitimate traffic engineering study.
- Establish a limit on the percent of local revenues that any community can generate through traffic fines.
- Require that a large percentage of all traffic fines and related costs be transferred to an unrelated state fund.
- Prohibit the use of electronic speed measurement devices to enforce speed limits that have not been determined through the use of an official traffic engineering study.

- Provide that any motorist charged with a traffic violation has the automatic right for a change of venue to a court of record.
- Prohibit the use of electronic speed measurement devices to clock vehicles within 100 yards of a speed limit sign that reduces the speed limit.

By giving your legislator concrete and realistic suggestions, you will have made it difficult for he or she to just ignore your request. Getting a bill drafted and introduced is still a long way from getting it passed into law, but it sure is a good start in the right direction.

7) Challenge Your Ticket(s) in Court

On a very personal and individual level there is yet another way to challenge and oppose speed traps.

If you're caught in a speed trap, you need to challenge your speeding ticket in court. Just paying the ticket to avoid the hassle will only perpetuate the system by giving the municipality exactly what it wants and expects: your money.

Challenge your ticket in court with the full knowledge that you may have to appeal your conviction to a higher, more legitimate court. This accomplishes a variety of objectives:

1. You force the operators of the speed trap to take their time and money to prosecute you.
2. If you are well-prepared, a competent judge may decide to formally chastise the speed trap operators, especially if they have violated an existing state law.
3. Finally, as a reward for your hard work, there's a good chance the charges against you will be dismissed.

With these seven methods, you can make a real impact in your community. ■

A Closer Look At A Popular Red-Light Camera Study

By Greg Mauz, NMA Texas Activist



Camera promoters everywhere – from a politician in Pennsylvania to an engineer in Lubbock, Texas to the Department of Transportation in California – keep misrepresenting the 2005 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Study as the holy grail of studies proving that red-light ticket cameras reduce crashes and injuries and “saves lives.”

Nothing could be further from the truth. The stated “results” actually show cameras *cause* accidents.

The FHWA is allied with the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) and the National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running – a group consisting of three ticket camera companies.

Page one, of the Executive Summary, begins by repeating the same 15-year-old deception that red light running (violation) crashes are a “major safety problem.”

Red light violation crashes have NEVER been a “major safety problem.” The approximately 900 annual fatalities equate to 2 percent of all traffic fatalities nationwide (43,000 annually). The truth is that there remains no honest need for camera enforcement of any kind.

It should be noted that at least four of the seven cities providing data for this study had integrity problems. Clearly-defined before and after data was not documented. Red light violation crashes “could not be identified separately” and were morphed into the much larger group of right-angle crashes.

Camera promoters love to proclaim that right-angle crashes decreased by 25 percent (24.6 percent) while rear-end crashes increased only 15 percent (14.9 percent). These percentages are not supported by other studies that have recorded 70 percent, or larger, increases in rear-end collisions (Australia, NC, Oxnard and VA).

Camera promoters usually fail to report that rear-end injury crashes rose 24 percent while angle injuries only decreased by 15.7 percent. These figures do not account for expensive, long-term, painful whiplash injuries discovered days after the crash.

Additional findings in this study show that the (no camera) control sites recorded a 8.5 percent decrease in right-angle crashes while rear-enders only increased 1.8 percent. The authors’ attempt to credit this

positive (good) result to a “spillover effect” but admit the theory lacked credibility. The phenomenon is a total fabrication of camera promoters. The plain truth is that doing nothing (control sites) consistently trounces RLTC sites in safety improvements (NC, Oxnard, Winnipeg).

Even worse, severe angle crashes increased after red-light ticket camera programs were instituted in two jurisdictions, while the other five showed no decreases.

How far the standard for success has fallen. Camera promoters’ promises began with red-light ticket cameras “saving countless lives.” Then, cameras were going to “significantly reduce” all signal-related crashes and injuries. Later, it became a trade-off between more “minor” rear-end collisions versus fewer “severe” angle crashes. And now they have to resort to spin-doctoring estimated financial crash costs in a desperate attempt to salvage some positive aspect from a totally failed “safety” program.

In the interest of public safety, all ticket camera programs should be dismantled permanently. ■



News From Around The Country

Florida

A man caught in a Florida Highway Patrol roadblock faced prosecution for driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI) despite evidence he was perfectly sober. Motorist Joseph Errichiello does not drink alcohol, but he has a learning disability that officers at the scene could not distinguish from intoxication.

Massachusetts

Budget shortfalls have forced Massachusetts State Police officials to order troopers to raise an additional \$1.2 million in speeding tickets next year, with half of the amount raised from Boston-area motorists. A collapse in the Boston's Big Dig tunnel drew troopers away from speed trap duty and onto missions designed to ensure construction efforts proceeded safely. According to the Boston Herald, this led to \$600,000 in lost speeding ticket revenue.

New Mexico

A former police captain is suing Albuquerque, New Mexico to force the city to refund speed camera citations that were improperly issued. When three of the city's television stations brought cameras to the administrative hearing where Sonny Leeper was to defend himself, the retired captain was quickly found "not guilty" of speeding. Leeper, who left the Albuquerque Police Department last year, had been accused of driving 42 MPH in a 40 MPH construction zone.

Ohio

Despite the fact that Summit County Sheriff Drew Alexander believes roadblocks are unconstitutional and ineffective in fighting drunk driving, his department will accept \$175,000 in state grants. These grants are usually paid for with federal gas tax dollars, which the state will only offer to law enforcement agencies that agree to set up roadblocks.

Tennessee

A red light camera in Knoxville, Tennessee was riddled with bullets recently. The ticketing device, located at the intersection near Broadway Street and Interstate 640, was struck by three bullets at around 2 am, leaving the camera's lens shattered and incapable of ticketing. WATE-TV reports that police found Clifford E. Clark III, 47, in a minivan near the scene of the incident with a Ruger M77 Mark II .30-06 rifle.

Texas

Officials in Richland Hills were caught shortening the yellow light time from 3.6 seconds to 3.0 seconds in order to increase ticket revenue at the city's only red-light camera enforced intersection. Police Chief Barbara Childress has admitted that she ordered Redflex, the camera manufacturer, to shorten the yellow signal time.

Washington

Officials with the Washington State Patrol set numeric goals that encourage state police officers to issue as many traffic citations as possible. The effect has been a significant increase in the number of tickets written – 50,000 additional tickets between 2005 and 2006.

A Bellevue state patrol sergeant issued a memo ordering troopers to meet the goals, writing: "No matter how many cars you stop, the goal... is 80 percent enforcement (tickets)." Those failing to meet the goal may lose vacation time or receive other sanctions.

Wisconsin

Complaints regarding reckless speeding in downtown Portage, Wisconsin turned out to be unfounded. A number of local residents swore that they routinely saw cars blasting down Cook Street and would light up the phone lines at the local police station to demand action to stop it. The local police chief asked the Columbia County Highway Department to conduct a scientific speed survey. It found, contrary to these perceptions, that motorists traveled at speeds within a few miles per hour of the legal limit.

Virginia

The Joint Commission on Transportation Accountability recently released an interim analysis of the effect of Virginia's abusive driving fees that add taxes of up to \$3000 to various motoring offenses.

The report's figures show that the majority of revenue actually collected will come from speeding offenses that are subject to the new fees (\$22 million). Both driving under the influence of alcohol (\$20 million) and serious driving felonies (\$38,000) will generate less revenue, contrary to the assertion of fee proponents. Another side effect of the fees noted in the report is an expected explosion in the number of unlicensed drivers on the road. ■

As of this printing, this information is current. For more information on this and other motorist news, visit www.motorists.org



Members Write

You requested feedback on “Revolution.” Here is my two cents worth: Yes! I’m 100 percent for real, rational, fair enforcement which will enhance road safety, efficiency, and pleasure.

My problem is that I cannot trust the police and courts to provide it. Regardless of financial concerns, the police and courts, just like the other members of the traditional road safety establishment, are amazingly and alarmingly ignorant about driving.

Since writing *Joyriding* I’ve put great effort into trying to figure out just why people drive as they do and why they are so resistant to the “best” efforts of the traditional road safety establishment to reform them. The roots of the problem are a few basic misunderstandings about the nature of driving which are unquestioningly accepted and shared by virtually all members of the driving continuum, from policy makers to the freshest beginning driver. Those roots must be killed!

While my attempts at communicating with the road safety folks, including the police, have been disheartening and downright baffling, removing the financial incentive, nay the financial imperative, from enforcement is certainly a valid tactic.

I have recently found myself wondering about the futility of the wolf-pack blitzes I encounter on I-57. What good can that nonsense do? Wouldn’t it be much better to spend the money on real education for drivers? Improve everybody’s understanding of driving and everything will make more sense, and work better.

*Kenneth L. Zuber, Director
Joyrides*

I am extremely shocked and disappointed to read Arne Frobom’s ridiculous article that endorses privatization of our roads and congestion pricing.

Privatization does not work. One need look no further than the entities that have already been involved in privatization, entities such as Blackwater and KBR.

Congestion pricing is an asinine idea that supposes that someone stuck in traffic is enjoying the experience. Do we think for a minute that all those people stuck in rush hour traffic, day after day, are there by choice?

Frankly, I am becoming increasingly unhappy with the NMA. We have issue after issue of *Driving Freedoms* devoted to global warming and now I have *Driving Freedoms* advocating this nonsense.

The answer is not harebrained schemes such as privatization and congestion pricing, but using our gasoline taxes for roads. I would like to propose the radical idea that all gasoline tax, highway use tax, and tolls be used for road maintenance and construction. I would like to see an end of diverting these motorist dollars to the current uses such as using law enforcement to raise revenue by ticketing motorists, subsidies to mass transit, congestion pricing scams, pork barrel projects, and pay to play contracts.

*Gary Konecky
Fair Lawn, NJ*

Editor’s Note: The article by Arne Frobom is his analysis of the tolling issue does not reflect the NMA’s position on the issue.

I think Arne missed the bigger picture with his idea of private super highways. While it would be a great leap into modern times to have private speed limits (or none at all) on private roads, the reality of it is that some inane organization would sprout up instantly and lobby the government.

We (taxpayers) have already paid for all the roads, everywhere. We have also chosen the ‘best’ route for our travels, and don’t need to take away any of those routes to shuffle us onto local more crowded, populated (and probably less direct) routes.

Now if Arne was talking about out in the wilderness of Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada or wide open spaces and creating private roads from scratch for “private travel and private speeds,” that would be a different story.

But taking away the best, most direct, safest, most modern, fastest routes for privatizing and then telling those that don’t want to pay (again) for their use, to go “somewhere else”, that is absurd!

To get a “firm grip” on reality, pack a few bags and head across the country from north to south, or east to west, or better yet, head up to Alaska and back, then tell me you want to take away the most heavily traveled direct interstates and privatize them.

I repeat; absurd.

*Roger Roddy
Florida*

Your letters are welcomed and should not exceed 300 words. They may be edited for length or clarity. Full-length articles will also be considered for publication and should not exceed 600 words. Submissions may be emailed to nma@motorists.org or mailed to us.

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