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**May
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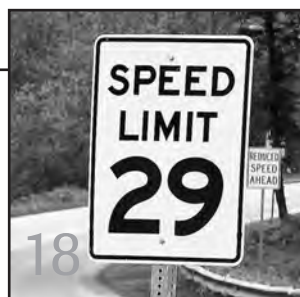
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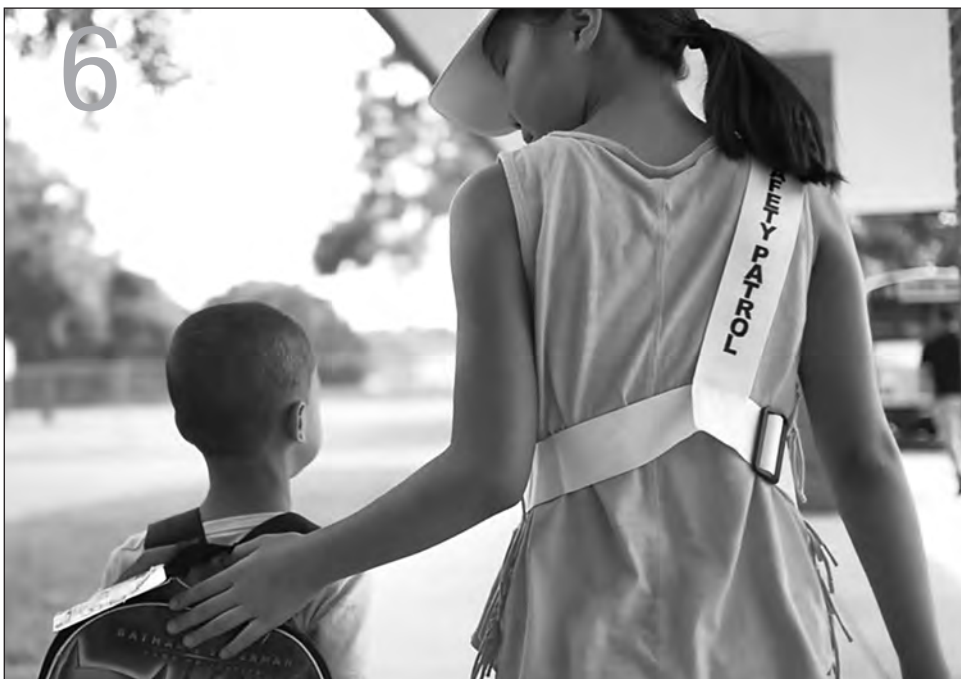
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Cover

Different as this school year may be, it still boasts 679,000 AAA School Safety Patrollers in 35,000 schools in the United States. Still going strong after 100 years, this community program teaches safety and leadership skills to ensure our youngest generations are making smart decisions. More on page 6.

NOTICE - SPECIAL OFFICE HOURS:

Our office will be closed for the following observances - *Monday, May 31 Memorial Day; Monday, July 5 Independence Day (Observed)*

On The Go

MAY-JUNE 2021

Volume 99 Number 3

Published bi-monthly by AAA Reading-Berks,
A not-for-profit organization.



www.AAA.com

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COVID-19 Green Phase Hours

Monday - Friday - 9 am-5 pm

License/Notary M-F 9 am-4:30 pm

Closed Saturday and Sunday

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President's Note

Peter J. Armstrong
President/CEO

“Without significant investment, the situation will only worsen.”

Our Nation's Roadways: Mediocre Grade Not an Option

Infrastructure is not a Democratic or Republican issue. Regardless of political leanings, we all use and depend on a healthy nationwide transportation system. However, the dilemma over how to pay for it has been bantered about between both sides of the aisle for decades. State officials have testified about the real needs on the ground and the shortfall of funds. Some talk about how a thoughtful and modest increase in the federal gas tax, even just to match inflation, would provide an immediate stimulus to the Highway Trust Fund. This would help rebuild transportation in America, while giving our government more time to address long-term funding solutions to meet future transportation needs.

The last several U.S. Presidents - regardless of party affiliation - have acknowledged how important a healthy infrastructure is to our nation's commerce.

On January 30, 2018, President Trump highlighted the importance of a sound road and rail network system during his State of the Union Address, even though there was no specifically stated strategy to achieve his campaign promise of a largescale investment - \$1 trillion total over 10 years - into our nation's infrastructure. His February 4, 2020 State of the Union Address specifically called on Congress to pass a highway reauthorization bill.

More recently, President Biden, VP Harris and House members met March 4, 2021 to discuss infrastructure spending, vowing to make transportation infrastructure improvements a priority.

While politicians cry out “let's do something!”, our roadways and bridges crumble and our rail system falls into desperate disrepair.

The latest American Society of Civil Engineers report card shows that something does need to be done - now - to avoid severe consequences to our economy and the safety of motorists that will result from the further neglect of our road and rail systems.

The annual report card gives our roads a “D” and our bridges a “C”, and found 46,154 U.S. bridges in a structurally deficient condition. This situation will not go away; ignoring the problem is not an option. We already have a backlog of road and bridge repairs totalling more than \$7B. You can view the report card at infrastructurereportcard.org.

Roadways and bridges across the country need to be rebuilt and rehabbed. Without significant investment, the situation will only worsen. We need to seriously address the state of transportation infrastructure in our country now because the safety and mobility of our citizens and the future of our economy depends on it.

The next surface transportation reauthorization must provide immediate and long term funding solutions, while also prioritizing the rebuilding of aging infrastructure. Congress and the administration also need to take this opportunity to lay the physical and regulatory groundwork for the nation's future transportation system that will include the widespread deployment of alternative fuel vehicles and infrastructure, connected and automated vehicles, and solutions for increased urban congestion.

Now is the time for our elected officials to come together and show leadership by addressing the funding shortfall and providing a sustainable system for infrastructure maintenance and improvements. Our organization will continue to advocate for increased investment to improve safety and modernize the nation's transportation infrastructure.

Berks History Road Ramble

The Berks History Center (BHC) invites you, your family and friends to participate in their 2021 Road Ramble on Saturday, May 15, 2021! The Road Ramble is a self-guided driving tour that allows the BHC to return to its past when Mystery Road Rambles were held in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

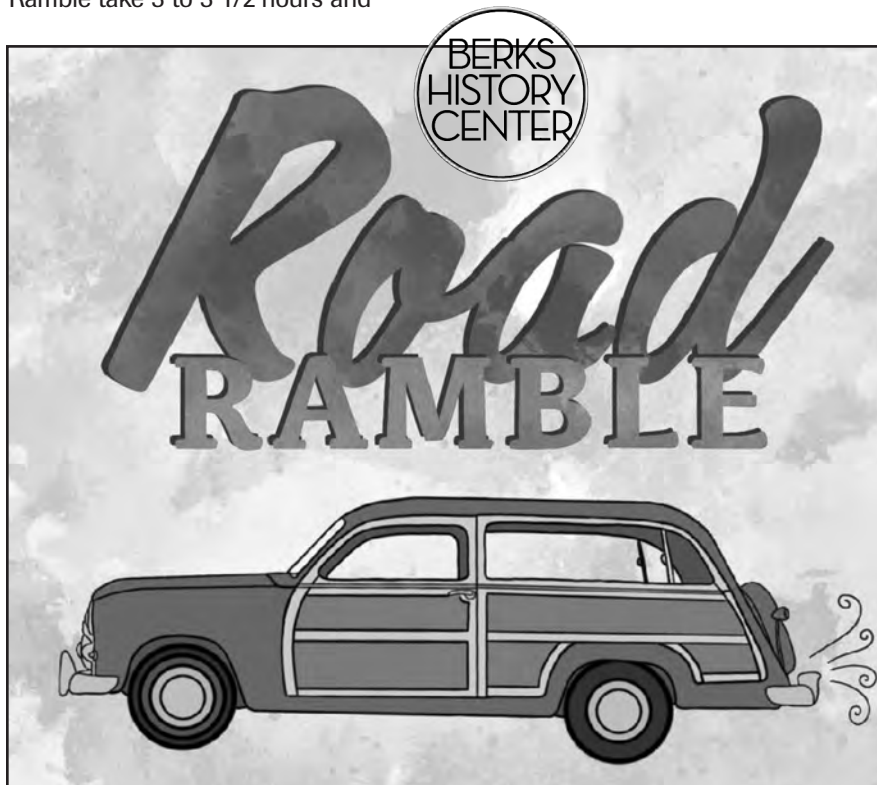


Starting at the Berks History Center, 940 Centre Avenue, Reading, participants can ramble along Route 422 through Eastern Berks County including historic Oley Valley and Boyertown. The BHC 2021 Road Ramble take 3 to 3 1/2 hours and

covers more than 70 miles.

The BHC will provide a packet to registered participants that will include a Road Ramble Tour Booklet, a Navigator's Guide, contest information, and a narrative CD or USB and a **Berks History Center 2021 Road Ramble Participant** bumper sticker. Historical contributions cover the history of the Berks History Center, Centre Park & Widow Finney, Hopewell Furnace, Birdsboro, Old Morlatton Village, Boyertown and the Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles, the Oley Valley, Daniel Boone Homestead and much more. Tickets are \$35 per car for BHC members and \$45 per car for non-members.

For ticket information, contact the Berks History Center at (610) 375-4375 Wednesdays through Saturdays from 9am-3pm or online at www.berkshistory.org/event/berks-history-2021-road-ramble/.



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Club Update

A New Way to Expo

For nearly 25 years, AAA has brought to Berks County the area's largest travel and vacation planning expo. The venues might have changed here and there, but never the top quality and variety of travel industry vendors and offerings.

Upwards of 1,200 annually took advantage of the opportunity to talk with representatives of all aspects of the travel industry: rail, air, cruise, attractions, vehicle rental, destinations, accommodations and more. Visitors made good use of special booking incentives and attended special presentations by vendors such as Royal Caribbean International, Princess Cruises, Amtrak, Rocky Mountaineer, AAA Member Choice Vacations and others.

It was a whole new scene for this year's expo in February. In the interest of public safety, we elected to try a virtual expo, with great results.

Instead of only having one day of information, we extended the event to include four days of virtual travel presentations. More than two hundred people signed up to attend Zoom travel talks by Oceania Cruises, Viking Cruises, Holland America Line, Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises, CIE Tours Ireland, Visit Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Disney, Chesapeake CVB, Pleasant Holidays and AmaWaterways.

And, of course, we gave out door prizes. This year's winner of our Grand Door Prize of a \$500 AAA Travel Gift Certificate is Denise Calcagno of Sinking Spring. We look forward to assisting Denise as she plans on how to best spend her winnings on a great getaway. Congratulations, Denise!

We look forward to another successful AAA Travel and Vacation Expo in February 2022! One way or the other...



Congratulations to the winner of this year's AAA Travel and Vacation Expo Grand Prize, Denise Calcagno. Denise has won a \$500 AAA Travel Gift Certificate. Hope you use it to go somewhere fun, Denise!

AAA Members Save More. [AAA.com/searchfordiscounts](https://www.aaa.com/searchfordiscounts)

A large advertisement for the AAA Summer Kick-Off Event. The background is a black and white photo of three people jumping off a boat. The text is overlaid on the right side. At the top right are logos for Shell, Fuel Rewards, and AAA Discounts & Rewards. Below these is the text "Summer Kick-Off Event" flanked by stars. The main offer is "Save 30¢/gal" in large bold letters, followed by "on your first fill-up at Shell". Below this, in smaller text, it says "when you join the Fuel Rewards® program from 5/1/21 to 5/31/21 and complete your first transaction within 30 days of joining." At the bottom, it says "Restrictions apply. See AAA.com/shell for full terms."

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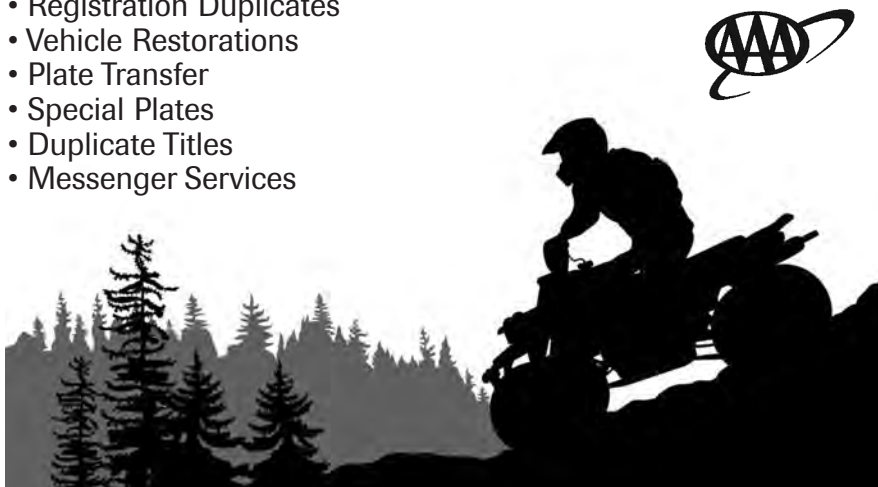
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For more information, please contact the License and Notary Department at 610-374-4531, option 3.



AAA School Safety Patrol Program continues to build on its legacy of safety, leadership



a century of service

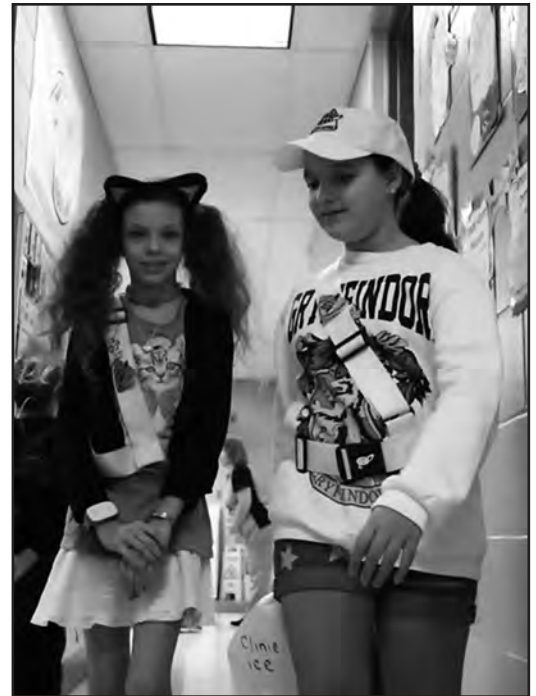
The belt color may have changed quite dramatically over the 100 years of the AAA School Safety Patrol Program — from white to neon orange to today's fluorescent green called 'Lectric Lime — but the mission remains the same: To provide a safer environment and leadership opportunities for millions of schoolchildren.

What began as a small, boys-only initiative in 1920, the program is proudly celebrating its centennial anniversary in 2020 with 679,000 Patrollers in 35,000 schools, making it the world's largest safety program. Today, these brave young leaders dedicate their time before and after school each day, working with teachers, supervisors, adult crossing guards and law enforcement to ensure the safety of their classmates.

"AAA School Safety Patrol plays an important role in helping young pedestrians learn and fulfill responsibilities regarding traffic safety," said AAA Traffic Safety Advocacy and Community Impact Manager Rhonda

Shah. "Millions of American children have honorably served their classmates since the program began in the early 1920s, and interest in the program has spread around the world."

The AAA model has been adopted in at least 30 other countries, including England, France, Germany, the Netherlands and New Zealand. The program has been praised by national and international safety and education groups for reducing deaths and injuries among 5-to-14-year-olds, the age group most at risk for pedestrian injury.



AAA provides an array of equipment and educational material to Patrollers, including the reflective 'Lectric Lime fluorescent belts, patrol badges and training resources. The program also teaches lifelong lessons of good citizenship, leadership and responsibility, as evident in the fact that past Patrollers have grown up to be U.S. presidents or vice presidents (Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton and Joe Biden), astronauts, governors, members of Congress, Supreme Court justices (William Brennan, Stephen Breyer, Warren Burger, Anthony Kennedy and Clarence Thomas) and Olympic medalists (Eric Heiden, Caitlyn Jenner – formerly Bruce Jenner – and Edwin Moses). Many Patrollers also now serve as educators, executives, physicians and other community leaders throughout the nation.



saved the life of another person in imminent danger.

As the program celebrates its 100th birthday this year, AAA and the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety will also continue their sponsorship with the Charles M. Hayes Advancement Fund, which provides resources to approximately 10 schools per year in helping them advance existing Patrol programs or develop new ones. "AAA values our longstanding sponsorship of the program," Shah said. "In addition to keeping children safe, it helps to build meaningful relationships in communities across the country. As an association that values community investment, the program embodies what AAA stands for."



"AAA clubs across the country commend not only our Patrollers, but also school personnel who administer the program and law enforcement officials who contribute to Patrollers' success in local communities," Shah said. "Hundreds of Patrollers have received recognition for their unwavering commitment to the program and going above and beyond to keep fellow schoolmates safe."

The AAA School Safety Patrol Lifesaving Award is the highest award given to Patrol members. Since 1949, more than 440 lifesaving medals have been presented to Patrollers who, while on duty, have



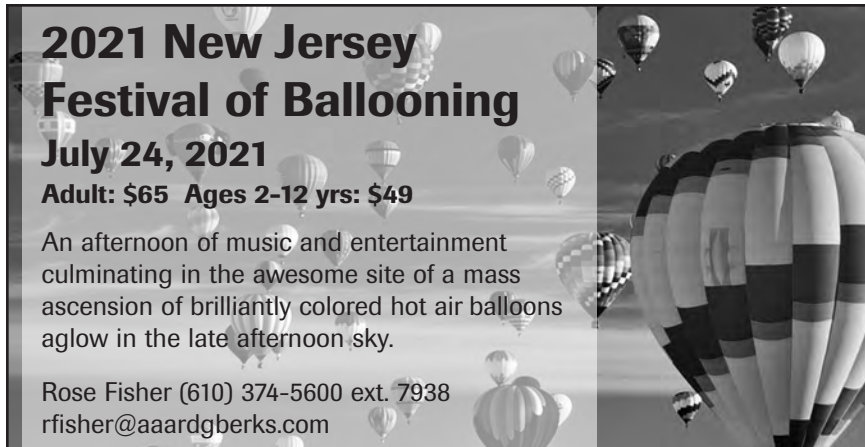


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If You Must Be Traveling On Now

Dear Ask Ed:

I have been working from home for over a year now and, as a result, my car hasn't been driven much in the past 15 months. I am really, *really* ready for a drive-to-vacation to anywhere! What do I need to do to make sure my vehicle is road trip worthy?

**Sincerely,
Ready to Go**

Dear Ready,

If it's any consolation, you're not alone. I've talked to many others recently whose increased wanderlust has outpaced the weather's transition from winter to spring. I hope you have chosen a fun getaway destination where you can recharge your spirit. Recharging your car's battery may be a good place to start to prepare it for a long-distance road trip.

If you're old enough to remember who sang "Free Bird", you probably remember vehicles before they were heavily computerized. Around the late 1970s/early 1980s, high end/performance vehicles began to feature car control systems. Before the beginning of the next decade, all new vehicles had the benefit of computer-controlled sensors - the Controller Area Network or CAN - making the daily driver more efficient but at the same time more complex.

Because the CAN constantly monitors data from the vehicle's sensors and computers, such as the electronic control unit or ECU, it must remain "awake", drawing power from the vehicle's battery without letup.

Can you operate efficiently when you operate efficiently without replacing spent energy? Neither can your car's battery. Human sleep allows our body to release hormones that help repair cells and control the use of energy, ensuring that we can operate efficiently and have energy when we need it. Similarly, starting your car and operating its many accessories – the ones you see and the ones you don't see – requires the generation of electricity. The beginning of this process is when the vehicle's alternator acts as a generator, using an electromagnet turned by a belt linked to the engine to keep the battery powered and your charging system in good shape.

While your vehicle is sitting, even though the process



AskEd@aaardgberks.com

is not obvious, the CAN continues to draw power from the vehicle battery. If you aren't driving the car on a regular basis, the drawn power isn't being replaced and the battery will become discharged. This doesn't mean the battery is ruined, it may just need to be recharged.

When a vehicle sits for an extended period of time, its fluids may begin to chemically break down and components that are meant to be lubricated may have lost that layer of protection. Check the engine oil and coolant for fill level and condition and top off the windshield cleaner fluid. You'll need to be able to stop your car once you get going, so don't forget to check the brake fluid. Depending on how long your car has been sitting, you might also want to check the gas. Degraded gasoline can form a gummy substance that can negatively affect your engine's performance.

Your car's ability to stay on the road depends on good tires. Do a visual check of the tire tread and condition. Tires can leach air through the rubber tire wall over time, so make sure that they all - including your spare - are inflated to the appropriate near-max PSI level.

After you've refreshed your vehicle's operating condition, give it a good wash outside and a houseclean inside and you should be good to go.



Thanks for writing in. Happy motoring!
Ed

Contact Ed with your automotive question either by email at AskEd@aaardgberks.com or by writing to him at AAA Reading-Berks, 920 Van Reed Road, Wyomissing, PA 19610, Attn: Ask Ed.

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a different travel

AAA experts advise working with trusted travel agent, offer tools to help plan a safe and fun getaway



experience

More than one year since the COVID-19 pandemic upended nearly all travel plans, many Americans are eagerly awaiting their next chance to get out once again and explore. Whether planning a trip this summer or dreaming of a trip later on, AAA Travel experts advise would-be travelers that things will look very different than the last time many took a vacation.

What Travelers Can Expect

- **Masks** – Face coverings are required on planes, buses, trains and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within or out of the United States, and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations. Outside of these transportation requirements, states—and some establishments—have mandates and/or restrictions on where and when masks must be worn.

- **Auto** – Road trips to domestic destinations continue to be the preferred way for many to travel, but even these trips require additional planning and preparation. Those who make the decision to travel by car can refer to AAA's COVID-19 Travel Restrictions Map and [TripTik.AAA.com](https://www.aaa.com/TripTik) for the latest state and local travel restrictions, and to identify which rest stops, gas stations, restaurants and hotels are open along their route.

If renting a car, ask what has been done to clean the vehicle. Hertz, for example, has introduced Hertz Gold Standard Clean, an enhanced vehicle disinfectant and sanitization process. For extra peace of mind, use disinfecting wipes to wipe down door handles, steering wheels, shifters and control panels.

- **Hotels** – Prior to any hotel stay, call ahead to ensure your hotel is open and ask what precautions they are taking to protect guests. Ask about social distancing protocols like capacity reductions, hotel staff requirements to wear masks at all times and if all amenities are available, like restaurant dining.

- **Air** – AAA cautions air travelers that in-flight amenities, including food and beverage services, may be limited or unavailable. Some airlines continue to limit flight capacities or block middle seats to allow for social distancing. Due to COVID-19, TSA is allowing one oversized liquid hand sanitizer container, up to 12 ounces per passenger, in carry-on bags, rather than limiting those to 3.4 ounces. Masks are also required at airports and on planes.

- **International Air Travel** – All air passengers coming to the United States, including U.S. citizens, are required to have a negative COVID-19 test result or documentation of

recovery from COVID-19 before they board a flight to the United States. Travelers who don't provide this to their airline will be denied boarding. There are no test requirements for domestic travel at this time.

- **Cruise** – Even with the CDC's no-sail order lifted, many cruise lines have voluntarily extended their suspension of sailing operations further into 2021. Anyone considering a future cruise vacation should talk to the cruise line or a travel agent about the ship's cancellation policy and to understand what you can expect on a cruise when they start sailing again.

Travel agents are more important than ever during a pandemic. They serve as your advocate before, during and after a trip, and can answer questions related to:

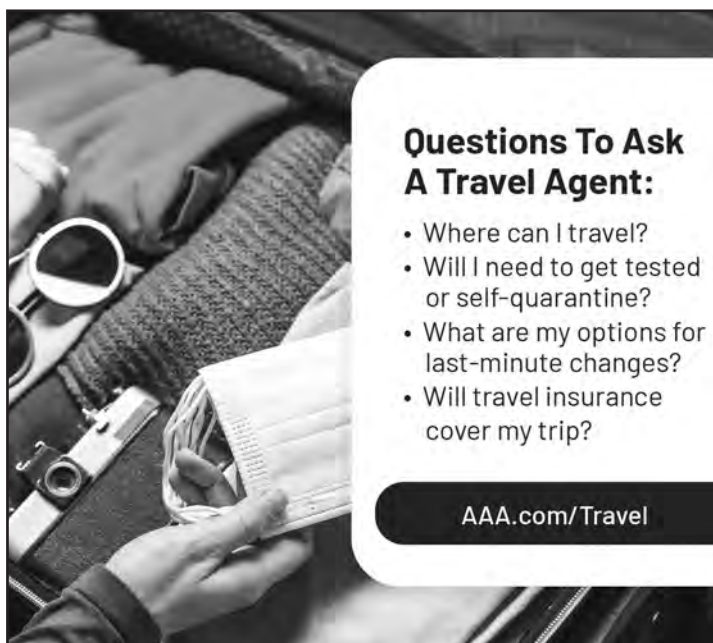
- travel insurance options,
- what destinations and attractions are open both domestically and internationally,
- destination-specific testing and quarantine requirements,
- what to do if you need to make last-minute changes to a trip, and much more.

AAA Resources Guide Travel Planning and Offer Inspiration

In addition to trusted travel agents, travelers have a new resource in the AAA Digital TourBook guides, now available for destinations across the U.S., Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean at TourBook.AAA.com. Available on smartphone, tablet or desktop, the new interactive guides feature detailed destination information, must-see attractions, sample itineraries and more.

All featured hotels and restaurants have earned a AAA Diamond designation by going through rigorous inspections conducted by AAA's team of professional inspectors, based on the latest industry trends and travelers' expectations. Hotels and restaurants must meet AAA's high standards of cleanliness, comfort and hospitality to be part of

the esteemed AAA Diamond Program, then they are assigned a designation of either Approved, Three Diamond, Four Diamond or Five Diamond.



Questions To Ask A Travel Agent:

- Where can I travel?
- Will I need to get tested or self-quarantine?
- What are my options for last-minute changes?
- Will travel insurance cover my trip?

AAA.com/Travel

Travel Restrictions Remain in Place—Plan Ahead

The CDC continues to urge Americans to delay traveling, warning that doing so increases your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19. For those who choose to travel, current guidelines and requirements include the following:

- **Travel Restrictions** – State and local governments may have travel restrictions in place, including testing requirements, stay-at-home orders and quarantine requirements upon arrival. Check the state and local health department where you are, along your route, and where you are going. Prepare to be flexible, as restrictions and policies may change during your trip.

- **COVID-19 Vaccines** – If you are eligible, consider getting vaccinated for COVID-19. The CDC says to wait two weeks after getting your second dose to travel for your body to build protection after vaccination. Even if you've been vaccinated, continue to follow all official travel requirements and guidelines.

- **Testing** – The CDC recommends taking a viral COVID-19 test 1 to 3 days before your trip. Do not travel if you test positive. Keep a copy of your negative test results with you during your trip and make plans to get tested again with a viral test 3 to 5 days after you return. Self-quarantine for a full seven days after trip, even if your test is negative. If you don't get tested, the CDC advises staying home and self-quarantining for 10 days.

Read related articles at newsroom.aaa.com



NEWSROOM

Automotive, Travel, and Traffic Safety Information



New International Air Travel Rules

Before entering the U.S., provide a negative test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 to your airline.

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Heading the Wrong Way Can Be Fatal

Fatal wrong-way driving crashes on our nation's highways are a persistent and devastating threat that is only getting worse. According to the latest data analysis from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, there were 2,008 deaths from wrong-way driving crashes on divided highways between 2015 and 2018, an average of approximately 500 deaths a year. That is up 34% from the 375 deaths annually from 2010 to 2014. Researchers found that the odds of being a wrong-way driver increased with alcohol-impairment, older age, and driving without a passenger.

"Wrong-way crashes on divided highways are often fatal as they are typically head-on collisions," said Dr. David Yang, executive director of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. "And unfortunately, as the data shows, fatalities from these crashes are on the rise."

AAA works with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and other traffic safety organizations to educate drivers on the deadly impact of wrong-way driving. In light of these latest research findings, AAA and the NTSB are urging state transportation agencies to adopt driver-based countermeasures that address these factors, such as alcohol ignition interlocks, strengthened deterrence strategies like sobriety checkpoints, driver refresher courses for older adults and the installation of more-visible signs and signals.

Alcohol-impairment, older age, and driving without a passenger increase risks of wrong-way crashes

Researchers examined eight factors related to these types of crashes, and three stood out – alcohol-impairment, older age, and driving without a passenger. Six in ten wrong-way crashes involved an alcohol-impaired driver. Those with blood alcohol concentrations over the legal limit of 0.08 g/dl (grams per deciLiter) were significantly more likely to be wrong-way drivers than non-alcohol-impaired drivers involved in the same crashes.

Impairment is on the NTSB's MOST WANTED LIST of Transportation Safety Improvements which is the agency's premier advocacy tool. The list identifies the top safety improvements that can prevent crashes, minimize injuries, and save lives. Impairment in transportation is not limited to just alcohol; it also includes impairment by other drugs—legal or illicit.

"Alcohol impairment is, by far, the single most significant factor in the majority of wrong-way driving crashes, which

unfortunately has not changed since the NTSB issued its Wrong-Way Driving special investigation report in 2012," said NTSB Director of the Office of Highway Safety, Dr. Rob Molloy.

An alcohol ignition interlock device prevents a vehicle from starting until the driver provides a breath sample that registers below a pre-set low limit, usually around a BAC of .02. It is the best countermeasure we have to separate drinking from driving.

The data also shows that drivers over age 70 are more at risk of wrong-way driving than their younger counterparts.

Previous Foundation research from the AAA Longitudinal Research on Aging Drivers (LongROAD) project found that older drivers aged 75-79 spent less time on the road and drove fewer miles per trip than younger age groups. And yet, this same age group is over-represented in wrong-way crashes.

A passenger's presence may offer some protection against being a wrong-way driver, as nearly 87% of wrong-way drivers were alone. Passengers may alert drivers that they are entering a one-way road, preventing them from entering the highway in the wrong direction, or alerting them to their error, helping the driver take corrective action before a crash occurs.

How to make a U-Turn on the Rising Wrong-Way Crashes Trend

In addition to alcohol ignition interlock devices and high-visibility enforcement, AAA and the NTSB want state policymakers to consider widely used effective infrastructure countermeasures, such as installing more-visible traffic signs and signals that follow national standards and at proper locations.

Because older drivers are over-represented in wrong-way collisions, AAA and the NTSB also urge states to change their laws to help identify medically at-risk drivers, both physically and cognitively, to keep everyone safely driving as long as possible.

AAA and the NTSB remind drivers to use common sense before getting behind the wheel.

- If you are driving, don't drink. If you are drinking, don't drive. If you consume marijuana or alcohol or use potentially impairing prescription medications, then don't drive. And if you're going to drive, then don't consume these substances.

- Stay alert. Stop driving if you become sleepy because you could fall asleep at any time. Fatigue impacts reaction time and judgment, causing people who are very tired to behave in similar ways to those who are drunk.



Destinations & Diversions

Mothers' Memorial: "Come On Home"

By April E. Frantz, Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office.

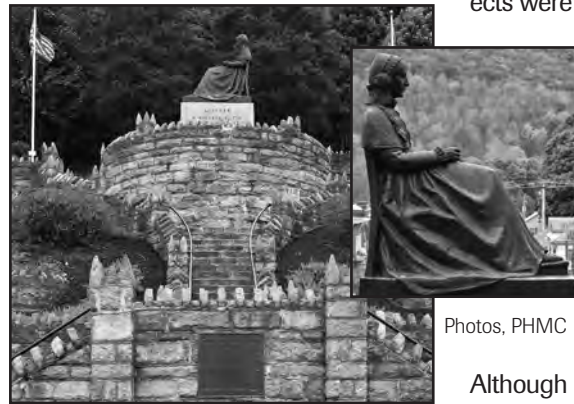
In the late 1800s Ashland and the surrounding area began experiencing a long and steady decline in employment, resulting in the departure of many men in search of jobs elsewhere. In 1901 a small group of remaining and former residents hit upon the idea of hosting an annual reunion where they could reconnect with old friends, the boys of their childhood. This group evolved into the Ashland Boys Association, which coordinated an annual Labor Day reunion for decades. Within just a few years, the reunion was drawing hundreds of attendees and an informal parade was added to the event.

The reunion's call to "come on home" was sent to former residents across the country, and chapters of the Ashland Boys Association were organized in Philadelphia and other places. By 1935 members were considering ways to combine their desire to honor their homeplace with the newly established Works Progress Administration (WPA), a federal New Deal program intended to boost employment and local economies.

Dr. John L. Hoffman, president of both the Ashland Boys Association and the Ashland Borough Council, developed a proposal for a memorial featuring a statue inspired by the iconic 1871 James McNeill Whistler painting of a seated woman, *Arrangement in Gray and Black, No.1: Portrait of the Artist's Mother* (more commonly known as "Whistler's Mother"). The painting had been on tour recently in major American cities and received extensive press coverage, and the image had been the basis for a 1934

U.S. postage stamp celebrating Mother's Day. For Hoffman, Whistler's mother was the perfect symbol for the organization; in their memorial, she would become every mother of Ashland, waiting patiently for her boys to return home.

Ashland's borough manager, Harold Burmeister, drew up the plans for the Mothers' Memorial with help from another Ashland resident, John Maley, and the Ashland Boys Association voted in favor of the proposal at their 1937 reunion. The WPA added it to their project list later that year. The borough provided the land for the memorial, the WPA would supply the labor to terrace the steep site and complete the landscaping and stonework, and the Ashland Boys Association would raise the money to pay for the statue.



New York City artist Emil Siebern designed the statue, and fellow New Yorker Julius Loester, who specialized in bronze work, sculpted the 7-foot-high piece, which sits on a 4-foot granite base in the center of the site. The inscription chosen for the statue's base was inspired by a Samuel Taylor Coleridge poem and reads "A MOTHER IS THE HOLIEST THING ALIVE." The

memorial was dedicated on September 4, 1938, before an estimated 2,500 people. WPA selected the Mothers' Memorial as their outstanding Pennsylvania project for 1938.

WPA focused on civic and community projects, such as post offices, courthouses, reservoirs, stadiums and bandshells. At the time the Mothers' Memorial was approved in 1937, WPA was already active in Ashland with street improvement projects and contributing to the creation of the Willow, Higher Ups and Eureka parks. Ashland projects grew to include the Veterans' Memorial and Hoffman Memorial, the traffic islands in the center of Hoffman Boulevard, and the pump house for the town's water supply. By 1941 WPA had employed as many as 83 men for various Ashland projects, including the Mothers' Memorial. Most WPA projects were directed by local interests,

and many featured native materials integrated with the natural landscape.

The Ashland Boys Association reunions continued until 1976. A community-wide mummers parade, an offshoot of the reunion, continued several decades longer.

Although those popular community events have ended, the Mothers' Memorial remains a physically – and sentimentally – prominent piece of the Ashland streetscape.

Visitors will find the Mother's Memorial statue at the corner of N. Hoffman Blvd. and Chestnut Street, Ashland, PA 17921.

Originally published in *Pennsylvania Heritage*, Spring 2020.

Photos, PHMC

Drivers: Improve Safety Before Tech

Automakers may already hold the key to improving public acceptance of self-driving cars: fine-tuning existing vehicle technology. AAA's annual automated vehicle survey finds that only 22% of people feel manufacturers should focus on developing self-driving vehicles. The majority of drivers (80%) say they want current vehicle safety systems, like automatic emergency braking and lane keeping assistance, to work better and more than half—58%—said they want these systems in their next vehicle. These findings signal that people are open to more sophisticated vehicle technology, which if they provide positive experiences for drivers, will open the road to self-driving vehicle acceptance.



“People are ready to embrace new vehicle technology, especially if it will make driving safer,” said Greg Brannon, AAA's director of automotive engineering and industry relations. “Consumers are clear about what they want and if automakers seize the opportunity to provide a better experience now, it will pave the way for the vehicles of tomorrow.”

Nearly 96% of 2020 vehicle models came equipped with at least one advanced driver assistance system (ADAS) such as automatic emergency braking, blind spot warning or

lane keeping assistance. Consumers who buy new will likely have at least one type of vehicle safety system and in many cases, this could be their first interaction with more advanced vehicle technology. Previous AAA research has found that some systems, particularly those that provide the highest level of automation available to the public, do not always work as expected. These negative experiences could influence driver opinion of future vehicle automation. It also reinforces the need for manufacturers to continue to hone vehicle technology by expanding testing and focusing on including more real-world scenarios encountered by drivers.

Still Lukewarm about Self-Driving Technology

For six years, AAA's annual automated vehicle survey has gauged consumer sentiment regarding emerging vehicle technology, focusing on self-driving cars. While Americans' interest in owning a car with more advanced technology grows, they are still struggling to warm up to the idea of full vehicle automation. AAA's survey found that 14% of drivers would trust riding in a vehicle that drives itself, similar to last year's results. However, 86% either said they would be afraid to ride in a self-driving vehicle (54%) or are unsure about it (32%).

COVID-19 Has Had Little Impact

People's hesitation toward self-driving cars is reflected by how little the pandemic has changed opinion. AAA asked drivers if COVID-19 would

influence their decision to use a self-driving vehicle as an alternative to public transportation or ride-hailing. Only a relatively small number said they would be more likely to opt for a self-driving vehicle, but a larger number said COVID-19 would make no difference in affecting their decision.

Self-driving vehicles are still years away from being available to consumers. However, as testing on public roads expands, drivers will likely interact with various levels of new vehicle technology. The public should also find opportunities to educate themselves on when and how self-driving vehicles will be a part of daily life. A collective effort by both industry and consumers is what it will take to move the needle away from apprehension and closer toward acceptance.

“Transparent, accurate and frequent information from the industries involved in developing self-driving vehicles will ease consumer concerns,” said Brannon.

Methodology

The survey was conducted January 15-17, 2021, using a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population overall. The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Most surveys were completed online; consumers without Internet access were surveyed over the phone.

A total of 1,010 interviews were completed among U.S. adults, 18 years of age or older. The margin of error for the study overall is 4% at the 95% confidence level. Smaller subgroups have larger error margins.

Using self-driving vehicles...	More likely to use	No difference	Less likely to use
As an alternative to public transportation	21%	42%	18%
As an alternative to using a ride-hailing service	19%	41%	19%



What Goes Into Setting Posted Speed Limits?

In 1995, U.S. legislation repealed the 55 mph national maximum speed limit on interstate highways, providing complete freedom for states to set their own speed limits. Since then, states have steadily adjusted their posted speed limits for various reasons. A number of studies have reported that speed limit changes can affect traffic safety, either negatively or positively, depending on how appropriate the new speed limit is for the road, how it is implemented and how the impact of the change is analyzed.

For example, some studies examining crash fatalities on interstates found the 55 mph limit saved lives. However, other studies reported that increasing the speed limit to 65 mph after the repeal reduced statewide fatality rates when measuring system-wide effects (e.g., considering higher compliance with speed limits, reduced speed variances, shifting drivers from more dangerous roads to interstates, etc.).

A study conducted by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety in April 2019 investigated the current practice of setting a speed limit across the nation through a review of the relevant documentation and by surveying traffic professionals. In general, the literature presents five approaches to setting speed limits: 1) statutory speed limits, 2) engineering study, 3) expert system (USLIMITS and USLIMITS2), 4) injury minimization or Safe System approach, and 5) optimum speed limits.

This study investigated the current practice of setting a speed limit across the nation through reviewing relevant documentation. Additionally, traffic professionals were surveyed

online to obtain direct feedback on how current practices and approaches are implemented in their states and local jurisdictions.

The survey consisted of 17 questions about topics including what factors they consider, how they work with those factors to make a decision, and how often they implement speed management measures in conjunction with speed limit changes. The survey was administered in the summer of 2018. One hundred and seventy-five traffic engineers across the 48 continental United States participated representing local (44%) and state (54%) agencies, as well as private consulting firms (2%).

In general, there are five approaches to setting speed limits: 1) statutory speed limits, 2) engineering study, 3) expert system, 4) injury minimization or Safe System approach and 5) optimum speed limits.

The uses of these approaches are thought to range fairly significantly, with the engineering study and expert system being most widely used and injury minimization least used in the United States.

Statutory speed limits refer to the speed limit legislated by states or local jurisdictions. For example, the national maximum speed limit was established at 55 mph nationwide in 1974 during the energy crisis and was repealed in 1995.

The engineering study is often used by states employing the 85th percentile operating speed – “the speed at or below which 85 percent of the motor vehicles travel” – as a base in determining a roadway’s speed limit. Typically, this base speed limit is adjusted, either increased or decreased, based on several factors in

the investigations.

Notwithstanding widespread use of this approach, few jurisdictions use quantitative methods for adjusting the base speed limit and a majority of practitioners rely significantly on subjective engineering judgment to set speed limits.

Road authorities may need to put more effort (beyond posted speed limit signs and markings) toward making roads and the traffic environment safer – to “elicit safe behavior simply by its design”. For example, roads with high volumes of pedestrians and bicyclists can be redesigned with narrow lanes and many curves so that drivers naturally reduce travel speeds (i.e., “self-explaining” or “self-enforcing” road). Another safety design approach that would not compromise mobility could include implementing road safety treatments, such as median separations or guardrails, on high-speed rural roads.

To increase the effectiveness of any speed management countermeasure, it is also important to create a culture of complying with a speed limit through understanding drivers’ perception of speed limits and safety, as several practitioners addressed in the survey. A study conducted by Kanellaidis et al. (1995) reported that in general, drivers who believe that speed limits can reduce crashes were more likely to observe the limits. Kanellaidis et al. also found that speed limit compliance increased as drivers aged but decreased as they gained driving experience and their education level increased.

Read the entire contents of this study at www.aaafoundation.org.

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