

AAA Reading-Berks Member Publication

# *on the go*

**America On Wheels  
Drives Back**

**Family Roadtrip  
to the Smoky  
Mountains**



**September  
October  
2020**

**Bridges in Berks - Kutz's Mill**

**Penn's Cave & Wildlife Park**





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**CLUB**  
Adventures

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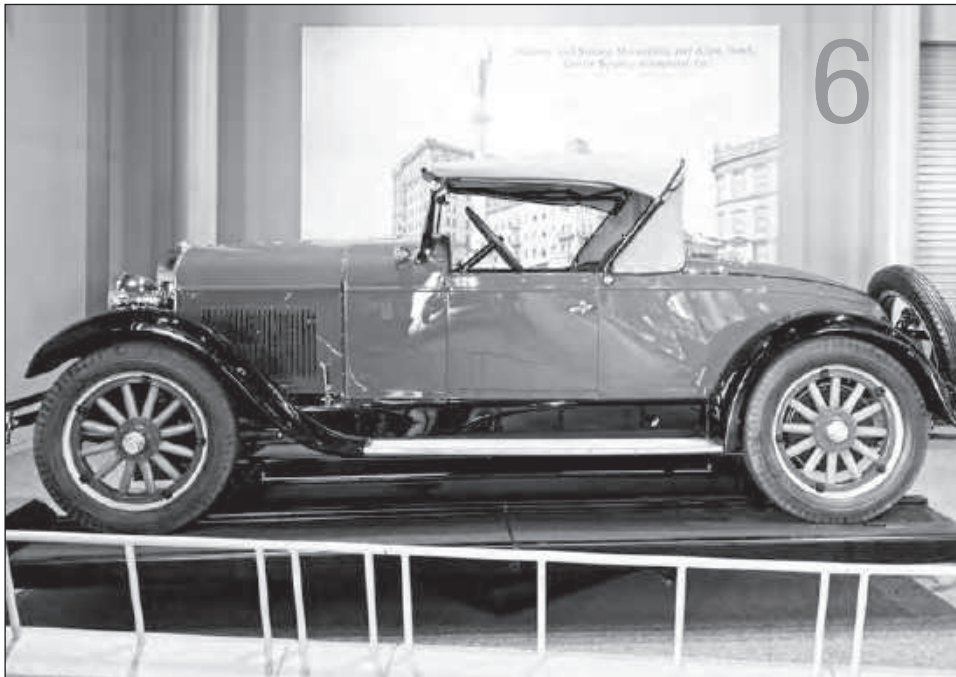
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# Cover

America On Wheels, located at 5 N. Front Street, Allentown, is a museum where visitors can explore over 23,000 square feet of exhibit space dedicated to motor vehicle transportation. While taking every precaution to ensure visitors' safety, AOW has reopened its doors and is now featuring an exhibit all about the Hudson Motor Car. Come check it out! More on page 6.

## On The Go

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# President's Note

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Peter J. Armstrong  
*President/CEO*

“...71% of Americans are  
unaware of Move Over laws...”

## Moving Over for Emergency Responders Saves Lives

Who was Tyler Laudenslager? How about Kenneth and Kevin Ortiz? Do their names sound familiar but you're not sure why? How quickly we forget.

Last July, Kenneth and Kevin were traveling on Rt. 222 in Ontelaunee Township when they stopped to help another motorist with a flat tire. They were struck and killed by a passing vehicle while trying to help the stranded driver.

Weeks later, Tyler responded to a call for emergency roadside assistance on Interstate 78 in Northern Berks County. While outside his service vehicle, he was struck and killed when a car rear-ended another vehicle and lost control.

AAA is in the business of rescuing millions of stranded motorists across the country each year. At the heart of this effort are service technicians and tow truck operators who put their lives at risk each time they respond to a member's call for help.

Sadly, every year about 23 roadside workers and first responders (one every two weeks) loses their life at the roadside and hundreds more are injured while tending to disabled vehicles. Despite being passed in all 50 states, 71 percent of Americans are unaware of Move Over laws that require drivers to reduce their speed and switch lanes to protect these workers (NHTSA).

For the past thirteen years, AAA has been instrumental in passing Move Over laws in all states, including advocating for those laws to cover tow truck drivers and first responders. Additionally, AAA clubs have participated in educational and advocacy initiatives, creating public service announcements and reaching out to state legislative officials.

There is more work to be done. AAA is committed to raising awareness of the Move Over law and the dangers associated with working at the roadside.

These laws require motorists to move over one

lane or slow down when approaching an incident where tow operators, police, firefighters or emergency medical service crews are working at the roadside. Many states have also expanded their laws to cover other vehicles, such as utility and municipal (e.g. sanitation vehicles) fleets, as well as any disabled vehicle on the side of the road.

What can you do to prevent another senseless loss of life? Stay alert as a driver. Don't take/make a phone call - hand held OR hands free. Keep your eyes on the road at all times so you can identify that an emergency vehicle is roadside and you can respond appropriately. Moving over is best, but at least slow down significantly - 10-20 mps less than the posted speed limit - if it's not safe to make a lane change.

Are you a parent? Don't wait until your child is near driving age to start setting a good example. Don't just say. Do.

There are any number of things we might want to be remembered for. We all can ensure that emergency responders are remembered for their heroic deeds and not for a tragic ending.



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# Club Update



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**Out of concern for our members, clients and staff, we have temporarily suspended our in-person classes. Please visit our Web site for updates as they become available. Thank you for your understanding.**

## A Tribute

If you've attended a AAA RoadWise Driver class at AAA Reading-Berks any time after 1999, you probably had her as an instructor at least once. Participants have routinely given her high marks for her ability to enhance the class time with her humor and amusing anecdotes. She has probably forgotten more about driver safety than we'll ever know. And her dedication to her students has been evident from the very start of her career as Driver Education instructor at Oley Valley HS.

We want to thank **Edith Bleichert** for her many years of dedication to helping others stay safe behind the wheel.



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# america on wheels drives back

*With current enthusiasm for road trips and drive-to vacations at an all-time high, why not take in an exhibit that celebrates an American automotive icon, the Hudson*

By Marlene Greenman Heller

Photos by Gary Heller

One of the treasures of the Lehigh Valley, the America On Wheels Museum (AOW) in Allentown is a popular destination for tourists and local visitors alike. So its July reopening following the Covid-19 lockdown was worthy of a celebration.

"It was wonderful to see so many people coming back through our doors at our reopening. While we are sensitive to the need to observe pandemic guidelines, we are also gratified to be able to welcome the community and serve as an educational and communal meeting place once again," Executive Director Linda Merkel said.





Currently on display at the museum is a new exhibit, and the roots of NASCAR are among its entries. *What's In a Name? Creation, Innovation, Acceleration, & Fame* will run through March 2021. The exhibit features cars manufactured between 1911 and 1957, all manufactured by the Hudson Motor Company and the Essex Motor Company. Included is the 1953 Hudson Hornet 4-door sedan that was the first model ever to be featured in a NASCAR race.

All the cars are from the collection of Dr. Robert Blake, a radiologist from Garden City, on Long Island, NY. He has a collection of about 60 Hudsons housed in the restored O. J. Fritz Ford Dealership in Kutztown, PA. Blake is a long-time collector and a friend and supporter of the America On Wheels Museum. According to Merkel, "America On Wheels will periodically honor significant collectors by displaying some of the vehicles from their collections. It is our way of recognizing them for their dedication to preserving and maintaining these rare vehicles for current and future generations to enjoy."

The Hudson Motor Car Company was founded in 1909 by Joseph L. Hudson, a Detroit department store entrepreneur. The company produced automobiles until 1954 and at one point was the third largest automobile manufacturer in the United States. Hudson merged with Nash in 1954 to form the American Motors Corporation (AMC). The last Hudson model was produced in 1957. Chair of the exhibit, Alan Gross, points out that the AOW display "showcases eleven Hudsons from 1911 through 1957."

Younger visitors to the AOW, which is handicap-accessible, can visit the Kids' Car and Restoration area, where they can tinker under the hood of a kid-sized car and get the feel for what makes working on the classics fun.

Visit [www.americaonwheels.org](http://www.americaonwheels.org) for information and special rates for children and seniors.



## Hudson Fun Facts

- The Hudson Motor Car Company was founded on May 25, 1909, in Detroit, MI
- The company was named after an investor and entrepreneur, Joseph L. Hudson, who also founded the Hudson Department Store in Detroit
- The automobile company's focus was to produce a car that could sell for under \$1,000
- More than 4,000 of the Hudson model "Twenty" sold the first year
- Hudson models were the first to feature dual brakes, dashboard warning lights, and the first balanced crankshaft
- In 1929, Hudson was the third largest U.S. car maker, beat only by Ford and Chevrolet
- The last Hudson dealership was Miller Motors in Ypsilanti, MI
- You can see a restored Hudson Dealership sign at its original site on Highway 32 in Chico, CA
- The cartoon character "Doc Hudson" in the Disney/Pixar movie *Cars* is a 1951 Hudson Hornet

# Kutz's Mill Covered Bridge

By Fred J. Moll

Kutz's Mill Covered Bridge was built in 1854 over the Sacony Creek near Kutztown. Kutz's Mill Bridge was named after the mill of the same name which is located next to the bridge. In Berks County it was common practice to name bridges after the nearest landmark, which usually turned out to be a mill. Of the five remaining covered bridges in Berks County today, four of them were originally named after a nearby mill.



Kutz's Mill Bridge is the shortest bridge of the five bridges with a length of 106 feet measured from portal to portal.

In 1959, because the floor system was failing, and because not much was known at that time about preservation, only the wooden truss of the covered bridge was kept. The old wooden floor system was removed and replaced by three steel I-beams and a floor of concrete. Today the covered bridge looks like a normal covered bridge except for the concrete floor. Luckily the idea of using a concrete floor in a covered

bridge did not catch on and future preservation efforts of saving other covered bridges included keeping the wooden floors. One positive aspect of having a concrete floor in a covered bridge is that the bridge can carry the heavier loads of today's traffic such as school busses and emergency vehicles. One negative aspect of a concrete floor is that this is the only covered bridge in Berks County that gets potholes.

Take a ride into the country and visit a different kind of a covered bridge. Kutz's Mill Covered Bridge is located two miles north of Kutztown in Greenwich Township. To reach the bridge from the Reading area, turn left from Main Street in Kutztown onto Constitution Boulevard and follow the road for two miles. Turn right onto Kutz's Mill Road and the bridge is less than one mile ahead.



Photos courtesy Fred J. Moll



## Bridges in Berks





# A Clear Look at Headlight Safety

**Dear Ask Ed,**

**My car's headlights have turned a cloudy yellow, and I've noticed that I can't see as well at night as I used to. My local auto parts store has over-the-counter products. What do you recommend?**

**Earl S.**

Thanks for writing in, Earl. Headlight safety is a topic I've addressed in this column before, but I believe it bears repeating. Adequate visibility under all conditions - to the extent possible - is vital in order to avoid collisions. Some driving hazard variables are beyond our control - weather, road conditions, other drivers' actions, etc. We can improve our odds of avoiding conflicts if we sharpen our driving skills and keep our vehicles in top running order.

When I walk through a parking lot, I can't help but notice the high number of vehicles with cloudy headlights. I'm sure that most people aren't aware of the danger posed by not keeping up with headlight clarity. With 50 percent of crashes occurring at night, AAA urges drivers to check their headlights for signs of deterioration and invest in new headlights or, at a minimum, a restoration service to boost the safety of driving after dark.

According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the average age of registered vehicles in the United States is 11.8 years. Headlight lenses made of polycarbonate, or plastic, begin to yellow and otherwise show signs of deterioration at four to six years. Plastic lenses on automotive headlights deteriorate due primarily to extended exposure to ultraviolet radiation and abrasion by road grit - a sort of sand blasting effect. The yellowing of the headlight lenses results in a noticeable decrease in light output. "Clearly" (pun intended), deteriorated headlights - when the lens is opaque to the degree that you cannot clearly see the bulb - are a safety hazard.

If you cannot store your vehicle inside a garage, under a carport, or otherwise out of the sun, chances are that its headlights are starting to cloud over. What are your options?

The best option would be to purchase Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) Replacement parts, restoring light output to 100 percent. If that expense conflicts with your budget, consider aftermarket replacements. They usually restore light output to between 83 and 90 percent, but they usually fail certain requirements for light intensity and could produce glare for oncoming traffic.

Restoring headlights - the most cost-effective solution - offers less of an improvement in light output than replacement of the cloudy headlights. But, when done well, you will be amazed at the difference pre- to post-restoration. If



you're going to go the restoration route, it is best to have the process performed by a professional rather than trying home remedies or DIY kits. The results are usually better and will last longer.

Remember, we're at that time of year when there is an elevated chance of encountering a deer on the roadway between dusk and dawn. Doing our best to illuminate the road ahead of us via well-maintained headlights will go a long way in reducing the risk of a car/deer collision.

Happy motoring!

Ed

*Contact Ask Ed with your automotive questions:*

*AskEd@aaardgberks.com or write to Ask Ed, AAA, 920 Van Reed Road, Wyomissing, PA 19610.*



## Use Travel Agents to Get Back in the Spirit

Travel gives us so many memories—a family vacation, a romantic getaway, an adventurous road trip—that inspire us to imagine what our next trip will be. One of the best parts of traveling is right in the beginning—browsing captivating articles and vibrant images, sharing travel tips with friends and family, and reflecting on favorite places that you want to revisit one day. The spirit of travel is strong, so even when the next trip seems far away, you can start dreaming and planning.

When you're ready to make your dream a reality, consult one of many experienced AAA Travel Agents. They will be your most trusted advocate and travel planner. AAA research found that more than three-quarters of Americans would consider enlisting the help of a travel agent to plan a vacation.

**I want to thank my travel agent Donna Metcalf for great planning coordination on my river cruise vacation. To make the most of the vacation, I added days before and after the cruise. Donna researched options at both the embarkation and debarkation cities and took care of all the details for city trans passes and day trips. Thoroughly enjoyed seeing Top of the World. I really value the convenience and knowledgeable advice Donna provided when planning my vacation.**

**Dianne Hershey**

The benefits are clear: they're frequent travelers who have "been there, done that," and not only can tell you where to go and when but also how to get the best travel deals. They can check off some of your to-do list boxes, handling everything from passport and international driving permits to complicated itinerary changes. Travel is supposed to be fun, so leave the hard parts to someone else.

Even if you can't travel right now, you'll have plenty of resources at your fingertips to ensure a smooth experience when you're ready to go. AAA Discounts can save you money at home as well as at your destination. The Best in Housekeeping program, which encompasses the top 25 percent of all AAA Diamond properties, highlight clean and well-maintained places to stay, making it easy to book ahead.

**Rose Fisher has booked several cruises for my husband and I and our friends. She always does a great job of taking care of all the details. I know that she is going to get us the best price and keep us informed of any changes that we need to know. She works hard to make sure we have an easy check in, bypassing many of the long waits in line. I like the assurance that if anything goes wrong on a trip, she is only a phone call away to help. On one cruise there was a mix up with cruise credits on our accounts. Rose worked for two days to get it straightened out. We would have lost those credits if we had been on our own because they had basically told us sorry, too bad. I would highly recommend Rose Fisher to anyone planning a trip. She is awesome!**

**Cynthia Line**

AAA has been around for more than a century, so you can feel confident that travel is taken seriously. Travel professionals from travel agents to tow truck drivers are working for you and sharing the latest updates, including border reopenings. AAA Inspectors and Editors offer advice ranging from where to eat to things to see in Travel Tips.

**I want to say a BIG THANK YOU!!! to Stacy Snyder for all your help with organizing our family trip...Due to Covid 19 our trip was cancelled. Me and my wife were worried about our refund and didn't know where to start. Stacy did an outstanding job reassuring us that everything will turn out ok...She did an amazing job to get our refund in a timely manner. I would definitely recommend friends and family to Stacy...Thank you so much Stacy!!!**  
**From the Lopez family**

With a clear picture of your budget, inspirations and must-dos, it'll be easier to feed your spirit of adventure and prepare for your most anticipated getaway. Travel will return some day.

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**Abby [O'Keefe] - Thanks so much for the update! I am so grateful that I don't have to worry about all of this..I hope all of your customers appreciate you as much as I do, and more!! Have a great day!**  
**Benedizioni!**  
**Sondi**

*Actual comments from AAA Reading-Berks members, printed with permission.*



# Danger! Old Child Safety Seats

It's easy to tell when milk expires - yikes! But when something like a car seat is no longer safe, how do you know? Why does it matter?

It's science! Car seats are designed with components that reduce the impact energy transferred to a child's body when a motor vehicle crash occurs. Those components typically are made of plastic and are much like the crumple zones in your vehicle. Given time and exposure to high/low temperature cycles, plastic by nature degrades and becomes brittle, greatly reducing its ability to perform as designed.

How do you know if your seat has expired? Look for the label somewhere on your seat. The location isn't the same for every seat - sometimes it's on the bottom, sometimes it's hidden under the seat cover, other times it is stamped into the plastic on the back of the seat.

Purchasing a new child safety seat will allow you to take advantage of the latest in car seat technology developed since you bought your expired seat.

What to do with the expired seat? If you aren't going to get it recycled, be sure to completely destroy it before putting it out with the trash, including cutting harness straps.



**Make an appointment to have your child's safety seat checked.**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17 10AM-4PM  
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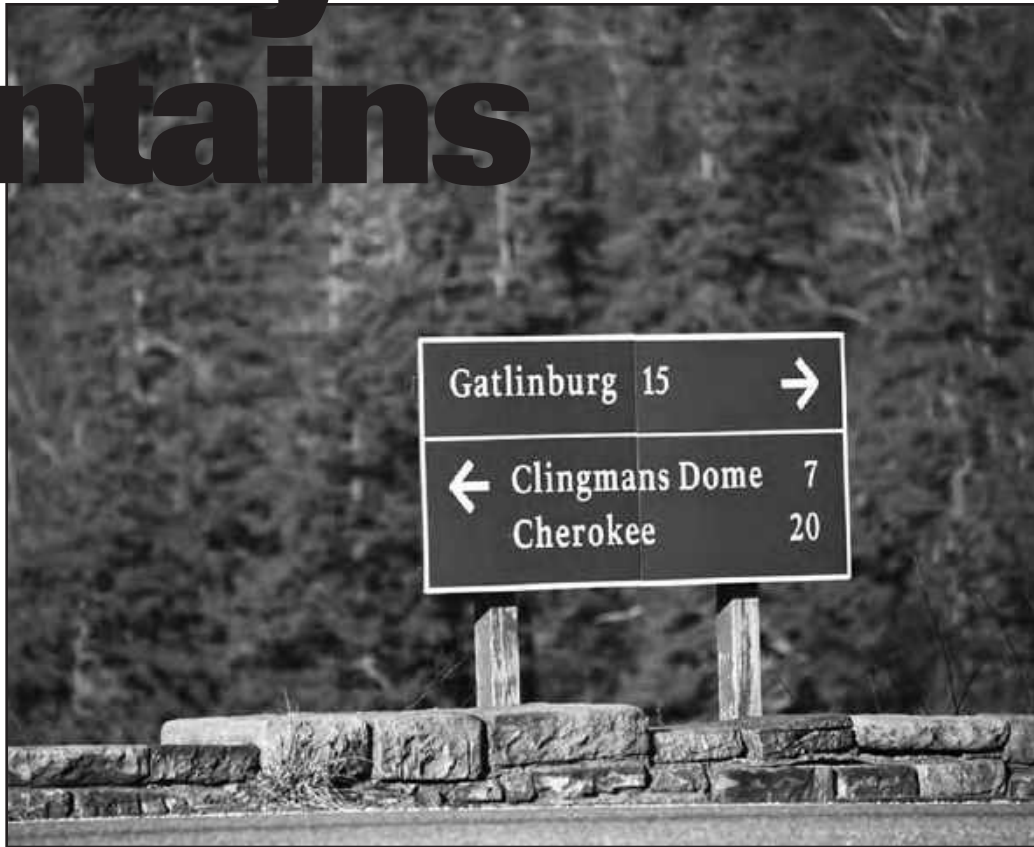
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# family roadtrip to the **smoky** **mountains**

*renting an  
SUV is a great  
way to see  
the wonders  
of this  
treasured  
American  
destination*



Surrounding yourself with natural beauty sounds like the panacea for wanderlust when you're feeling cooped up and wondering what to do. While vacation planning can seem overwhelming these days, there's a way you can get to the sights to see, such as the signature blue haze of the Smoky Mountains, that still allows you to feel like you have the place to yourself: A time-honored road trip. For maximum exhilaration, travel the rugged terrain of North Carolina or Tennessee in a sport utility vehicle, which can handle sharp curves or bumps in the road while leaving room for camping gear or even fellow travelers.

## **SUV Rentals Make Road Trips Fun and Convenient**

Consider renting a vehicle to add to the novelty. Whether you're wanting something for show or simple practicality, Hertz's rentals have never been better, and there are numerous options within the category of SUV, Minivan and 4x4. Along with the usual AAA member perks, such as free additional AAA drivers, a complimen-

tary infant or child booster seat, and reduced fee on GPS, Hertz provides additional options with safety in mind. The Hertz Gold Standard Clean 15-step sanitization process follows CDC guidelines to ensure every vehicle is guaranteed clean, sanitized and ready to go. Add an additional layer of safety by joining the Hertz Gold Plus Rewards program and enjoy an entirely touchless rental process. Visit [AAA.com/Hertz](https://www.aaa.com/Hertz) for details.

Now that Hertz took care of the work—no pre-drive maintenance needed—there's plenty of time to set your road trip up for success. The AAA Gas Cost Calculator will help you plan fueling, while a AAA TourBook will detail fun places to go. (Don't forget to check for any travel regulations or restrictions.)

## **Smoky Mountains Road Trip Itineraries**

Though most destinations in Southeastern Appalachia offer abundant mountain views, you might want to take a multiday drive through the Smoky Mountains, which navigates through mountain communities as well as the natural wonders in Smoky Mountains National Park, one of



the nation's most well-known national parks. Too much of a commitment? Here are a few ideas on where to go when you're in the mood for shorter or last-minute travel.

- A veritable time capsule, **Cades Cove Loop Scenic Road Trip** features 19th-century buildings nestled in the woodlands, where wildlife sightings are not uncommon. The 10.5-mile trip, also encompassing picnic areas and campsites, is terrifically family-friendly.

## “Rich Mountain Road is recommended...for its “less-travelled” reputation...”

- Nearby **Rich Mountain Road** is recommended by Great Smoky Mountains National Park in particular for its “less-traveled” reputation; the one-way, 8-mile gravel road on a dry ridge goes north from Cades Cove over Rich Mountain toward Tuckaleechee Cove and Townsend, Tenn.

(Below) Motorcyclists and driving enthusiasts travel from all over the world to experience the twists and turns of US129/SR 115 through the mountains of eastern Tennessee. The circuitous route includes more than 300 sharp curves in an 11-mile section (nicknamed “The Tail of the Dragon”) before straightening out along the shore of the Little Tennessee River.

- The thrilling 21.5-mile **Tail of the Dragon Scenic Highway** features 300 hairpin turns in an 11-mile portion (aka The Tail of the Dragon). In addition to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the road passes Nantahala National Forest and Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest.

- Longer, though no less beautiful, is the 86.5-mile **Great Smoky Mountains Scenic Expressway**. The tree-lined passage by the Nantahala River is especially colorful in the fall and spring.

With a little preparation, you can find the best road trip in the Smoky Mountains for you. The road ahead beckons, promising awe-inspiring scenery and, above all, adventure.



**Don't forget to take along a AAA TourBook for attraction and accommodation information!**

**Pleasant Holidays.**



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<sup>1</sup>Dream Getaways Hawaii, Mexico and Caribbean Offer: Valid on new bookings made 09/01/2020 – 10/31/2020 for select travel 09/01/2020 – 06/30/2021. Requires roundtrip airfare from the continental U.S. and accommodation of 5 nights or longer at a participating hotel or resort. Discount is per booking and taken at time of booking.

<sup>2</sup>Triple Member Benefit Offer: Valid on qualifying Dream Getaways bookings. Activity voucher does not apply to air/car only booking. For Hawaii, Mexico, and select Caribbean destinations, \$100 value in activity vouchers is combinable with standard Member Benefit activity voucher of \$50, totaling \$150 value in activity vouchers per booking maximum. Valid toward the purchase of a select optional activity. Not valid for hotel direct activity bookings.

<sup>3</sup>Dream Getaways Continental United States Offer: Valid on new bookings made 09/01/2020 – 10/31/2020 for select travel 09/01/2020 – 06/30/2021. Requires roundtrip airfare and accommodation of 2 nights or longer at a participating hotel or resort. Savings is \$50 off 2-3 night stays; \$75 off 4-night stays; \$100 off 5-night stays or longer. Discount is per booking and taken at time of booking.

<sup>4</sup>AAA Member Benefit: \$25 discount does not apply to air/car only bookings. Discount is per booking and taken at time of booking. Advance reservations through AAA Travel required to obtain Member Benefits & savings which may vary based on departure date. Not responsible for errors or omissions. Pleasant Holidays acts only as an agent for cruise & tour providers listed. CST# 1007939-10. Copyright©2020 Pleasant Holidays, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

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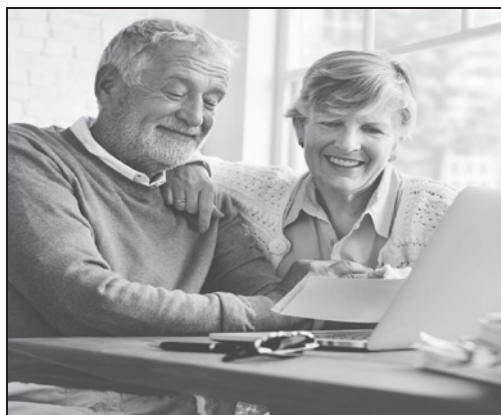
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# In-Car Phone Use - for Safety?

"Why is my phone making that noise? Oh, a police vehicle is approaching- I'd better move to the side of the road to let it go by!"

Some drivers in Michigan are having this exact experience, as they participate in a pilot to provide advance notice of an approaching police vehicle. The system, called a "digital siren," delivers sound-based notices through the Waze app, via



iPhones and Android devices. The goal is to provide drivers with notification up to 30 seconds before a police vehicle approaches.

The earlier a driver knows they should move to the side of the road, the quicker the police vehicle can arrive at its destination. If police do not have to

slow down and wait for drivers to clear the road ahead, police response times can be reduced- always a good outcome. Plus, as collaboration between civilians and police drivers increases, driving risk for everyone goes down.

During the first month of the pilot, police employed the siren system while responding to 300 incidents; nearly 23,000 drivers have received alerts during that time. It may be that drivers will see significant expansion of this type of "Responder-to-Vehicle" (R2V) system- keep your ears open!

More information available at:

<https://www.autoevolution.com/news/dont-be-surprised-if-the-police-send-you-a-phone-notification-to-move-over-141617.html>



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# Destinations & Diversions

## Penn's Cave and Wildlife Park

Tucked away in the heart of scenic Central Pennsylvania, Penn's Cave & Wildlife Park in Centre Hall offers an adventurous escape for the whole family. You'll boat through an underground stalactite-studded, all-water cavern and then venture through a wildlife-filled park. Spend the day exploring the country's only all-water cave and farm-nature-wildlife attraction.

Your day will be filled with wonder as you descend into the otherworldly cavern of Penn's Cave, where you'll glide along the water, fed by underground springs, during the 45-minute guided boat tour. As you begin this experience, where the inside temperature remains 52 degrees year-round, your knowledgeable guide will show you the spectacular natural limestone formations along the way—from stalactites and stalagmites to curtains and cascades—all sculpted from water dripping over the course of thousands of years. These all-water cave tours are offered daily throughout spring, summer, and fall, and on weekends during certain winter months.

Explore nature's best during the 90-minute fully-guided Farm-Nature-Wildlife Tour. With 1,600 acres of preserved lands, the Penn's Cave property offers a scenic retreat that feels a world away. Pass through peaceful grazing pastures, lush forests and wooded mountain trails while you'll learn about

the Penn's Cave Farm, which grows the crops that feed many of the native North American animals that live within the wildlife park. Your knowledgeable guide will share information on agriculture, geography, geology, and biography of the area.

Also offering the Cave Cafe, Prospector Pete's Miners Maze, Gemstone Panning, Visitors Center and large Gift Shop.

Learn more about ticket prices and schedules for your next visit to Penn's Cave & Wildlife Park at [www.pennscave.com](http://www.pennscave.com).





# On The Wing at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary

As the seasons change from vibrant summer to lively fall, Hawk Mountain is the perfect place to witness this stunning transformation in nature. Whether it be the shift in the details of the landscape or the chance to see the captivating fall migration, visitors can always find something unique about this seasonal transition that strengthens their love for the Sanctuary.

One of the most notable events of the season is the Autumn Migration Count, the longest running raptor count in the world. In a single September day, counters can spot thousands of broad-winged hawks. The majority of birds are seen taking flight throughout September, yet the most species diversity is usually sighted in October. By the end of the four-month long raptor count, Hawk Mountain typically records around 18,000 raptors passing through on their southern migration.

Fall also brings with it the striking changes in foliage on the Mountain. This distinct autumn foliage peaks around the end of October and early November, marked by a shift in color of the scenery. Along with the natural changes, autumn also brings new

educational and recreational opportunities to the Sanctuary.

## Education

Hawk Mountain will be hosting an abundance of events throughout the fall that provide entertainment and education for interested learners of all ages. The Autumn Lecture Series will be an entirely free set of events featuring various speakers. Topics will range from conserving and monitoring species such as rattlesnakes to how raptors are reacting to ongoing climate change, amongst other subjects.

From September to December, one Wednesday a month will offer a Homeschool Happenings program. These programs invite homeschooled students to the Mountain for experiential learning about the Appalachian forest ecosystem with various hands-on activities that will take in the swing of autumn.

You don't have to be a student to take advantage of Hawk Mountain's fall activities. Discovery Institute workshops from the end of September to November offer activities such as learning to use charcoal track plate methods to investigate movement of species throughout the Sanctuary, dabbling with pottery to create ceram-

ic leaf plates, and more. Designed for adults and other interested learners, Discovery Institute workshops are run by regional experts to engage attendees with a wide variety of new skills.

## Other Fall Fun

Of course, the arrival of autumn also signifies the start of a holiday- and festivities-filled season! Visit Hawk Mountain to participate in Halloween-themed events such as the Owlween Celebration and Haunted Trails. The Owlween Celebration with Creepy Crawly Creatures on October 31 will consist of pumpkin painting, spooky games, face painting, and even getting to meet one of the raptors you'll get to learn so much about!

Dress up and get in the spirit to trick-or-treat at Hawk Mountain's Haunted Trails. Visitors will get to fill their bags with goodies, meet animals around the Sanctuary, and enjoy games and crafts with live music one week before the beloved holiday, on October 24.

In addition to all the specific seasonal events, Hawk Mountain will also be carrying over their virtual programming, first introduced this summer due to the COVID pandemic. Virtual programs cover a range of topics appealing to young and adult learners and can be enjoyed in the comfort of your home. Up-to-date listings can be found at [hawkmountain.org/virtualprograms](http://hawkmountain.org/virtualprograms).

For more information about any of these upcoming featured fall events, be sure to stay tuned in to Hawk Mountain's website at [hawkmountain.org/events](http://hawkmountain.org/events).

Everyone at Hawk Mountain hopes to welcome visitors of all ages to embrace the excitement of the autumn season and to continue to support global raptor conservation.

*Photo credit Phil Campbell*



# From the PennDOT Newsdesk – Toll Increase

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) has approved a six-percent toll increase for all E-ZPass rates systemwide and for PA Turnpike TOLL BY PLATE rates that had been established before the recent permanent conversion to All-Electronic Tolling (AET) at these locations:

- Beaver Valley Expressway (I-376);
- Delaware River Bridge (NJ border);
- Gateway Toll Plaza (Ohio border);
- Greensburg Bypass (PA Turnpike 66);
- Keyser Ave. and Clarkes Summit Tolls (Northeastern Extension); and
- Southern Beltway (PA Turnpike 576).

The increase – slated to take effect at 12:01 a.m. on Jan. 3, 2021 – will enable the PTC to continue to maintain and operate its system and ensure safe travel for up to 500,000 daily customers.

“The primary driver of the annual toll-rate increases continues to be our quarterly transit payments to PennDOT and the resulting debt service that comes along with the legislatively mandated funding obligation,” said PA Turnpike CEO Mark Compton. “As a result, the PA Turnpike has delivered almost \$7 billion in funding to PennDOT in the last decade, primarily to support mass-transit operations in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.”

Compton said the PTC’s debt-service costs on outstanding Act-44 bond debt are \$440 million annually and growing; this amount must be paid each year even if the Commission seeks, and is granted, deferment of a quarterly Act-44 payment – as it recently did to partially

offset revenue impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **New TOLL BY PLATE Rates Set**

As part of its recent systemwide change in toll operations, the Commission also approved new TOLL BY PLATE rates at toll facilities converted to AET in June. The new rates, which also take effect Jan. 3, 2021, include an average 45% increase over the 2020 cash rate for TOLL BY PLATE motorists to reflect the costs of collections for this tolling method. The new rate will not be applied at the previously mentioned TOLL BY PLATE facilities converted before 2020.

“The new TOLL BY PLATE rate reflects the higher costs the Commission incurs to process the toll and collect payment – a pricing approach used by tolling agencies across the nation to cover the costs of administering AET systems,” Compton explained. “This balanced approach allows us to maintain a lower rate for those choosing a payment method that is less costly to manage, while those who choose a pricier payment option absorb those costs.”

Because of this action, the most common toll for a passenger vehicle will increase from \$1.50 to \$1.60 for

E-ZPass customers and from \$2.50 to \$3.90 for those choosing TOLL BY PLATE. The most common toll for a Class-5 tractor trailer will increase from \$12.20 to \$13 for E-ZPass and from \$17.30 to \$26.60 for PA Turnpike TOLL BY PLATE customers.

With the PA Turnpike TOLL BY PLATE option, high-speed cameras capture license-plate images as vehicles pass by. The registered owner receives an invoice for trips made through the tolling point. Invoices can be paid online, by phone or by mail. Upon receipt of a TOLL BY PLATE invoice, recipients do have an option to open an E-ZPass account and pay the lower rate.

Read more at [www.penndot.gov](http://www.penndot.gov). E-ZPass is available at AAA.

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# ADAS: More Interference Than Assistance

AAA automotive researchers found that over the course of 4,000 miles of real-world driving, vehicles equipped with active driving assistance systems (ADAS) experienced some type of issue every 8 miles, on average. Researchers noted instances of trouble with the systems keeping the vehicles tested in their lane and coming too close to other vehicles or guardrails.

AAA also found that those active driving assistance systems that combine vehicle acceleration with braking and steering often disengage with little notice – almost instantly handing control back to the driver. A dangerous scenario if a driver has become disengaged from the driving task or has become too dependent on the system.

AAA recommends manufacturers increase the scope of testing for active driving assistance systems

and limit their rollout until functionality is improved to provide a more consistent and safer driver experience.

Active driving assistance, classified as Level 2 driving automation on a scale of six (0-5) created by the SAE International, are advanced driver assistance systems that provide the highest level of automated vehicle technology available to the public today. This means for a majority of drivers, their first or only interaction with vehicle automation is through these types of systems, which according to AAA are far from 100% reliable.

“AAA has repeatedly found that active driving assistance systems do not perform consistently, especially in real-world scenarios,” said Greg Brannon, director of automotive engineering and industry relations. “Manufacturers need to work

toward more dependable technology, including improving lane keeping assistance and providing more adequate alerts.”

AAA tested the functionality of active driving assistance systems in real-world conditions and in a closed-course setting to determine how well they responded to common driving scenarios. On public roadways, nearly three-quarters (73%) of errors involved instances of lane departure or erratic lane position. While AAA’s closed-course testing found that the systems performed mostly as expected, they were particularly challenged when approaching a simulated disabled vehicle. When encountering this test scenario, in aggregate, a collision occurred 66% of the time and the average impact speed was 25 mph.

Find more resources including the full report at [newsroom.AAA.com](http://newsroom.AAA.com).

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## End-of-Summer Car Care Tips

It's that time of year again, the end of summer and the beginning of "Oh, where did summer go?"

October is Fall Car Care Month, so here are seven end-of-summer car care tips to keep you and your car safe and happy this fall and winter. Take a weekend afternoon to see if your car needs any of the following maintenance tasks performed.

### Lights

You need lights to see and be seen, especially when rain, snow, and fog reduce visibility. Check that all lights are functional, including marker lights, turn signals, hazard lights, brake lights, reverse lights, taillights, headlights, and fog lights. If not equipped, perhaps now is a good time to think about installing aftermarket fog lights.

### Wipers

A good guideline is to replace wiper blades every six months, but they may wear out sooner. Now is a good time to replace any wiper blades that streak, chatter or don't clear the windshield properly. Don't forget to stock up on winter washer fluid, too.

### Tires

Don't worry about snow tires yet, but check that your summer or all-season tires have at least 4/32 inches of tread depth remaining. Look for abnormal tread wear, which may indicate an alignment or suspension problem. Cooler weather causes tire pressure to drop, so keep the proper inflation to get the most out of your fuel mileage and tread life.

### Battery

Summer heat could have weakened an older battery, and cold weather could finish it. First, look for

corrosion on the battery terminals. This needs to be cleaned or repaired to eliminate resistance between the battery and the rest of the electrical system, such as the starter and blower. Then, have the battery load-tested — replace it if it's too weak for a cold start.

### Air Conditioning

The air conditioning system is essential for defogging your windshield and front windows. Functional or not, have its performance checked by your local Approved Auto Repair or NAPA AutoCare location to ensure year-long operation.

### Fluids and Belts

Check and adjust all fluid levels, including engine oil, engine coolant, power-steering fluid, and transmission fluid. Check and adjust V-belts and serpentine belts and replace them if needed.

### Cooling System

Besides checking for coolant leaks, pay special attention to the pressure cap and the thermostat. True, you can't see the thermostat, but you can watch the temperature gauge or the

OBDII ECT (engine coolant temperature) reading. Whether it's hot or cold outside, the ECT should steadily rise to the thermostat opening temperature, usually 175–200 degrees F. If the ECT can't reach stable temperature, then it could indicate a broken thermostat.

As most weekend warriors will tell you, abrasions, grime and dirt just aren't fun, and dirty, grimy abrasions are the absolute worst. Work gloves keep cuts, abrasions, heat, and dirt at bay, so don't forget to grab a pair. The spandex and elastic back and cuff are comfortable, while the Clarino palms and fingers let you handle the toughest jobs without affecting dexterity.

With these end-of-summer car care tips, your car will be ready for everything winter has to throw at it — just don't put on the snow tires quite yet.

Learn more at <http://knowhow.napaonline.com/nightmare-car-issues-and-how-to-avoid-them/>.





# Dog Park Safety

A dog park is a place where people and their dogs can play together. These places offer dogs an area to play, exercise and socialize with other dogs while their owners enjoy the park-like setting. Dog park size and features vary greatly from location to location, from several hundred square feet in urban areas to several hundred acres in the suburbs and

water available for their dog. Please observe all dog park rules.

Winter, spring, summer, fall, every season brings new reasons to travel with your pet - and enter the next AAA Pet Travel Photo Contest. Winners get a \$100 pet store gift card and entry into the AAA Pet Photo Gallery! Find rules and more at [AAA.com/pettravel/photo-contest](http://AAA.com/pettravel/photo-contest).



**Bear**

**Breed:** Labrador Retriever

**Location:** Blounts Creek, NC

rural locations where adventure travel is more common. It's easy to see why dog parks are so popular when people are searching for things to do this weekend.

## Keeping Your Dog Safe at the Park

Dog owners should remember to always keep their animal leashed until they reach the dog park entrance, to maintain voice control of their animal at all times, to bring their own supply of bags for picking up after their pet (and to be diligent in doing so), and to always have fresh



Enter your favorite picture-perfect pet's travel photo at [AAA.com/pettravel/photo-contest](http://AAA.com/pettravel/photo-contest)

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## Mackinac Island

May 1-8, 2021 \$3,299 per person\*\*

Highlights: Chicago, Millennium Park, Holland's Tulip Time Festival, Mackinac Island, Grand Hotel, Frankenmuth, Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village. Ask about AAA Member Choice Vacations Experiences, Culinary Inclusions, and Must-See Inclusions! AAA Members receive an additional \$50 off per person! Above rate good for bookings made on or before November 2, 2020.

## Spotlight on S. Dakota

May 12-18, 2021 \$2,629 per person\*\*

Highlights: Crazy Horse Memorial, Mount Rushmore, Badlands National Park, Wall Drug, Deadwood, High Plains Heritage Center, Off-Road Jeep Safari at Custer State Park, Devil's Tower National Monument. Ask about AAA Member Choice Vacations Experiences, Culinary Inclusions, and Must-See Inclusions! AAA Members receive an additional \$50 off per person! Above rate good for bookings made on or before November 12, 2020.

## Spotlight on New Orleans

June 6-10, 2021 \$2,339 per person\*\*

Highlights: French Quarter, New Orleans School of Cooking, Beignets at Café Du Monde, Swamp Tour, Dinner at The Court of Two Sisters, Jazz Revue. Professional AAA MCV driver/guide. AAA Members receive an additional \$50 off per person! Book and deposit an air inclusive package by January 6, 2021 to receive \$100 off per person.

\*Rates are per person based on double occupancy. Itinerary is subject to change at anytime without notification and/or compensation. \*\*Rates are per person, double occupancy, and subject to change, based on air inclusive package from PHL. Round trip air from PHL, air taxes and fees/surcharges, hotel transfers included.



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For pricing and details, contact AAA Travel Consultant Donna Metcalf 484-878-2071 or [dmetcalf@aaardgberks.com](mailto:dmetcalf@aaardgberks.com).

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# October is Car Care Month

As the weather cools, now is an ideal time to complete a seasonal vehicle checkup to maintain safety and maximize efficiency.

This is a special offer for AAA Members. Between October 12-23, contact one of these AAA Approved Auto Repair facilities to make an appointment for a free multi-point maintenance check:

- Bill's Emergency Roadside Service 740 Lancaster Avenue, Shillington 610-207-2946
- Dave's Auto Service 925 W. Phila. Ave., Boyertown 610-367-1844
- Dubble's German Motors 2697 Bernville Rd., Reading 610-375-8330
- Dulin's Tire & Service 3151 Centre Ave., Rdg 610-929-5820 & 1530 Lancaster Ave., Shillington 610-775-0375
- Lee Myles Transmissions & Auto Care 914 Fern Ave., Rdg 610-775-3820 & 6720 Perkiomen Ave., Birdsboro 610-685-7815
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