



# Southern Weights & Measures Association

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115th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

October 2008

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## NCWM Members

Please note that the dates listed in the recent NCWM-News Interim Meeting are incorrect. The correct dates are:

January 11-14, 2009

Hilton Daytona Beach Hotel

Dayton Beach, Florida

## JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

### GEORGIA

Well, where should I begin? I guess we are very fortunate that we have not started furlough days at the Dept. of Agriculture. We are holding on with what we have. We are definitely doing more with less. Since Hurricane Ike has hit the Texas coast our gas prices have gone up at an alarming rate. Our governor declared a state of emergency rule that prohibits stations from price gouging the consumer. Our fuel inspectors have been checking bill of laden on gas stations to check for price gouging. We have seen major gas shortages in all parts of the state.

Our High Speed Calibration inspectors Are getting their yearly calibration done on there provers. We are putting the 100 gallon provers on trailers, Instead of having them in the back of the trucks. This will be easier for the inspectors to check the fuel and a better way to level up the prover. We have lost an inspector in the Savannah area, due to him finding a higher paying job in law enforcement. This position will go unfilled until the budget gets better. We have also lost one of our part-time fuel calibration inspectors Neal Rooks, due to lack of funds.

Our L.P. inspectors and Fuel Calibration inspectors have recently had several training sessions on the new E4000 meters, the Midcom Ecount meters. They have had a refresher Course on the LC meters from Steve Smith with Gas Equipment Inc. also.

Our large scale inspectors are busy checking livestock scales, cotton scales, peanut scales, and asphalt scales. We have had some of our small and large scale inspectors that are having problems getting around to checking scales due to health problems.

This is going to cause us a problem later on down the road if we need to use other inspectors to help catch up their areas.

We are having problems getting some of our equipment repaired due to the budget crunch, and everything about spending money is to be approved by our assistant commissioner before the work is done.

At the weights lab Dale Gann has been able to get a Metrologist hired, Quinton Stewart to help him out in the lab. This will help Dale manage the work load and avoid cutting services. In Metro Atlanta where we have a Small scale inspector position that is not able to be filled, the field supervisor, Chuck Royal is checking requests and working on consumer inquiries in the field.

Dale and Kontz have also been working on getting things done on the 3 gallon round robin that is circulating between the labs in SEMAP. We hope to be sending Brian Grace(Metrologist 2) to the Intermediate Training class at NIST in December. We will be sending Quinton Stewart to the Basic Training at NIST in the spring of 2009. With our slumping economy, it seems like the Weights and Measures sector is now more than ever an important part of making sure everything is correct to the buying consumers.

The SWMA meeting will be coming in October and we will be looking forward to meeting all the different states and private industry representatives that will be able to attend this meeting. Rich and Marnie have been working hard to make this year's SWMA a big success. We hope to have accomplished many items on the agenda before next year's NCWM meeting.

We would like to wish our fuel data clerk Heather Bell that works in our Atlanta office best wishes as she gets ready for the arrival of her first baby.

Also we would like to congratulate Antonia Tomlinson from the fuel lab on the birth of her new baby girl. ♣

## Maryland

On July 30, 2008, visitors from the Afghanistan National Standardization Authority (ANSA) toured the Maryland Department of Agriculture's (MDA) Metrology Laboratory. Steve Barry did an outstanding job explaining how the lab functions, supporting industry and the Weights and Measures field staff with certified standards. MDA staff also demonstrated for the group field equipment including LPG provers, VTM provers and rack meter provers.

MDA is pleased to announce that Allison Knisley joined the department on August 13, 2008, as a new Weights and Measures Field Inspector assigned to Frederick and Montgomery counties.

It is important for Weights and Measures inspectors to always think about safety. MDA held a Safety Training School on September 10-11, 2008, for field inspectors. Presentations included: Maryland State Police on Driving Safely, Injured Workers Insurance Fund on Fire Safety, Back Safety, Defensive Driving, Winter Driving and Slips, Trips and Falls, and Maryland Occupational Safety and Health on Petroleum Safety and Propane Safety.

Will Wotthlie and Ken Ramsburg attended the National Conference on Weights and Measures meeting in Burlington, Vermont. Congratulations to Ken Ramsburg for his five year appointment to the National S & T Committee. His knowledge of Handbook 44 will be an asset to the committee.

MDA recently purchased a new half-ton pick up truck with an extended cab to be equipped for inspecting small and medium scales, package inspections and with a slide in test unit for LMD's. In an effort to save gas money, the department also purchased two Ford Rangers for inspectors. These trucks get about 22 MPG compared to our vans which get about 11 MPG.

Because complaints have doubled over the past four months, MDA Field Supervisor Don Mason has assumed the duties of a full time complaint investigator. The department now receives an average of about five complaints per day.

On a regulatory note, MDA has found a few diesel dispensers that have been manipulated by customers. It appears that a few customers have discovered that they can save money by jamming the gears of the dispenser's pulser as a cost saving measure. Not only is this an act of theft, but has caused large minus errors for customers following these perpetrators. MDA has brought this to the attention of management of these facilities and has suggested the facilities install surveillance cameras to monitor their dispensers and to prosecute those individuals guilty of this crime.

The following is a list of Maryland firms that were found in violation of Maryland Weights and Measures Laws and were assessed a civil penalty:

- On June 23, 2008, MDA received \$750 for a civil penalty assessed to Acme #7849, Chestertown, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight (first civil penalty).
- On July 2, 2008, MDA received \$750 for a civil penalty assessed to Phu Xuan Food Mart, Gaithersburg, MD. The civil penalty was assessed short weight (first civil penalty).

- On July 9, 2008, MDA received \$250 for a civil penalty assessed to Cool Save Supermarket, Baltimore, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for price verification (first civil penalty).
- On July 14, 2008, MDA received \$250 for a civil penalty assessed to El Amigo Grocery, Siler Spring, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight (first civil penalty).
- On July 18, 2008, MDA received \$200 for a civil penalty assessed to Africana International Market, Gaithersburg, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight (first civil penalty).
- On August 7, 2008, MDA received \$500 for a civil penalty assessed to Super Fresh #825, Mt. Airy, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight (first civil penalty).
- On August 12, 2008, MDA received \$250 for a civil penalty assessed to McKays Food & Drug, California, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for price verification (first civil penalty).
- On August 12, 2008, MDA received \$1,000 for a civil penalty assessed to Shoppers Food #2656, Wheaton, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight (second civil penalty).
- On August 22, 2008, MDA received \$2,000 for a civil penalty assessed to Giant Food #327, Bethesda, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight (fourth civil penalty).
- On August 25, 2008, MDA received \$1,000 for a civil penalty assessed to Acme #6849, Chestertown, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight (second civil penalty).
- On September 4, 2008, MDA received \$1,000 for a civil penalty assessed to Grand Mart #1, Germantown, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight (second civil penalty).
- On September 11, 2008, MDA received \$250 for a civil penalty assessed to Snow Hill Food Rite, Snow Hill, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for price verification (second civil penalty). †

## NORTH CAROLINA

Our thoughts and prayers are with all those in Texas and other states that are still dealing with the aftermath of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

October will be here soon, and that means the State Fair in NC. The Standards Division has several employees that that work in an official capacity inspecting LP-Gas tanks, inspecting scales and weighing prize winning produce. In addition, we have many employees that staff the division or other booths and help at various events during the 11 days of the fair.

We did get some money this budget year for the planning phase of the new motor fuels and metrology lab complex and will be seeking a consultant for the project shortly. We hope to stay in west Raleigh and may be able to move the administrative staff out there as well. We will still need to come up with con-

struction money in 2009-10, but things are finally moving forward.

### **Standards Lab**

There have been major changes here at the Standards Laboratory. L.F. Eason retired in July after a long career with the State of North Carolina. We appreciate his contributions over the years to both our program and the legal metrology community. Cliff Murray is the interim manager until a permanent replacement is hired.

Many of the present and future activities at the lab are related to the installation of a Sartorius robotic mass comparator at the lab this fall. In August, while attending the NCSL International conference in Orlando, Cliff, Tal, and Van met with representatives from Sartorius, Inc. for a detailed overview and to get answers to any questions regarding their model CCR10-1000 robotic mass comparator. Susan Myrick, our Business and Technology Applications Analyst, is overseeing preparations for ScalesNet 32 software installation and training during the first week of October. The robotic system hardware installation is scheduled for the first two weeks of December. Sharon has taken on the responsibility of modifying the layout of the small mass lab so that current weighing equipment may still be used in addition to the robotic mass comparator. This is no small task since we will have much more equipment in the same amount of space. Once installed a thorough validation of the system must be completed before it can be put into service.

Also during the NCSL International conference Tal, Van, and Cliff obtained valuable information from exhibitors and attended a variety of informative presentations during the technical sessions. Van gave an excellent presentation titled "Proficiency Testing: State Weights & Measures Laboratory Experience over the Last 10 years."

Sharon has been working with metrology engineers at Savannah River National Laboratory on the methodology of quantifying the effects of magnetism in mass standards.

Van and Cliff attended a week of NIST Quality Management Systems training followed by a week of Advanced Mass classroom and hands on training in mid July. While checking on the progress of our 500 lb primary mass standards NIST calibration, they were shown steel that was recovered from the World Trade Center September 11 disaster and is part of an investigation by NIST.

### **Motor Fuels Section**

Marcus Helfrich joined our staff as a Chemist I. While he is assigned to the lab as a chemist, his duties also include working as field inspector in Wake and surrounding counties.

The number of complaints on fuel quality has greatly increased this year. Some of this is attributed to the continued high cost of fuel and more consumer awareness. However, many complaints concerning ethanol blends have been received. We have many more locations selling E10 than in years past and most of our problems have been with phase separation. In most cases, the storage tanks were not cleaned out (bottom water) prior to delivery of this product.

A new inspector position has been approved this budget year. The new territory will be carved out of adjoining territories in the lower mountain section of our state. The new position will allow several inspectors to spend more time working at stations and less time traveling.

### **LP- Gas Section**

We added two new LP-Gas inspection events this year. The Got to be NC Festival in June and the AgJam in September were new NCDA&CS activities. They had food vendors using propane for cooking, so LP-Gas Inspector Randy Renfrow performed safety inspections of those vendors.

Proposed changes to the LP-Gas Regulations were officially published in the North Carolina Register in September. We expect these to go before the Board of Agriculture shortly and may have new regulations in place early next year.

Richard attended training in August in Winston-Salem on anhydrous ammonia safety.

Richard participated in the NPGA TS&S Committee meeting in September in Indianapolis, IN.

The LP-Gas Section received training in September from National Fire Protection Association staff on the LP-Gas Code, the National Fuel Gas Code, and the Fire Safety Analysis Manual. Also present for the LP-Gas Code training were several members of the fire inspection service from around North Carolina and the state fire marshals from NC & SC.

Richard participated in the meetings of the technical committees for LP-Gas and for Utility LP-Gas in Portland, OR, in September. Due to his absence for these meetings, Inspector Wayne Joyce attended the annual convention of the NCPGA at the Homestead in Hot Springs, VA. They had some technical seminars on upcoming code requirements and on inspections.

### **Measurement Section**

The Measurement Section is sad to have to report the loss of Michael Simonof. Mike retired from the Department in October of last year. He died of a massive heart attack on September 13th. Mike was in good health and this comes as a shock to everyone. Mike had reservations about retiring, but was at the office not long ago telling us how much he was loving retirement. He said with as much as he had to do at home, he didn't know how he managed to work before. His wife, Gail, said he worked as long as there was light and loved it. As usual he brought us something when he came. This time it was sweet potatoes. Mike was an outstanding employee and even a better friend. He is going to be missed by us all. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Mike's family.

Jimmy Bowles is back to work after having a knee replaced and doing great. He even came back earlier than the doctors had predicted. Timmy Coward is our newest employee. He was hired in August to fill the position vacated by Denny Hailey in the Morehead City/Beaufort area.

We have been given a new position for a Gas and Oil Inspector in the Vance County area. This inspector will assume G & O inspections in a five county area along the Virginia and North Carolina line. It will relieve the work load on several inspectors in the surrounding areas. This is a position we have been in need of for quite sometime.

As usual prices of gasoline and diesel have kept us busy investigating concerns and complaints, as I am sure has for all of you as well. The recent hurricanes have made things even worse with the problems they have caused. Complaints for "Price gouging" on fuel prices are coming in from all over the state. Thank goodness this falls under the jurisdiction of the Attorney General's Office.

Price scanning errors continue to be a major concern. We have, to date for 2008, received payment on 55 civil penalties for locations exceeding the 2% overcharge error rate. We have collected over \$106,596.00 to date in paid penalties. These monies are given to the school system in the county in which the penalty was issued. †



Allan M. Nelson, 73, died Friday Aug. 15, 2008, at the Hospital of Central Connecticut at New Britain General surrounded by his family. He was the husband of Ann (Turek) Nelson for 41 years.

Born Feb. 2, 1935 in Manchester to the late George E. and Doris (Morway) Nelson he had been a longtime Southington resident. Until his retirement Allen was the Director of the Weights and Measures Division of the Department of Consumer Protection for the State of Connecticut for over 30 years. He attended Southington schools, graduated from the University of Connecticut and served his country in the U. S. Army. He was Chairman of the National Conference of Weights and Measures, held several positions at the First Baptist Church, Southington, was President of the Oak Hill Cemetery Association, and a member of the Polish Falcons, Nest 307. Allan especially loved spending time with his family and fishing at his summer home in Charleston, R.I.

In addition to his beloved wife, Ann, he is survived by his daughter Pamela Thomson and her husband, James of Plantsville; and two sons and their wives, Douglas and Tari Nelson, and Scott and Maria Nelson, all of Southington; and eight grandchildren, Jonathan, Christopher, Melissa, Sara, Kayla, Jessica, Ashley and Ryan. He was predeceased by his first wife, Eleanor (Maigarie) Nelson.

A memorial service was held Sunday, August 24, at 2 p.m. at The First Baptist Church, 581 Meriden Ave., Southington, CT 06489. In lieu of flowers contributions in Allen's memory may be made to the First Baptist Church 581 Meriden Avenue, Southington 06489. Plantsville Memorial Funeral Home 975 S. Main Street, Plantsville, CT 06479 assisted the family with arrangements.

### Contact SWMA

The SWMA Newsletter is published quarterly. Annual dues are \$50. Membership inquiries should be directed to:  
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