



# Southern Weights & Measures Association

107 th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

October 2006

## JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

### ARKANSAS

Arkansas is anticipating hosting the 2007 Southern Conference on Weights and Measures. We last hosted the event in 1998 in Hot Springs. One thing we learned was that you can't start preparing too soon, so already plans are being made. The tentative site will be near the River Market District which contains a plethora of quirky shops and excellent restaurants, and is in close proximity to the new Clinton Presidential Library.

Weights and Measures personnel find themselves frequently exposed to potential hazards in the workplace, due to the diverse products we are required to check. Brake fluid, cleansers, gasoline, all with known hazardous components and health risks are checked often on a daily basis. To ensure safer working conditions Director Tom Pugh and Safety Chairman Van Gates got together a presentation from the Department of Labor on the (Chemical Right to Know.) This was a very informative two-hour seminar which left all of us a little more conscious of how we can make our jobs just a little safer.

The Arkansas biodiesel program is progressing. We are now in the stage of purchasing the necessary equipment to implement the rules and regulation. ☪

### GEORGIA

We have seen in the past few weeks a slow decline in gas prices; however the consumer complaints still come in. We have lost several key personnel to retirement, or other job opportunities. We have also

lost several key inspectors during this year to retirement and other job opportunities. We have yet to catch up on the hiring to fill these position but look to have these completely filled by the end of October. In our fuel section the retirement of Curt Williams has left a big void to fill. Fortunately Curt has decided to work part-time until someone is hired to fill his position. We have been getting numerous calls about starting up ethanol facilities as well as biodiesel producing facilities in the State. We will have a large biodiesel facility opening up in the South part of the state in the next 6 months to a year. We have started using one of our undercover provers in the field to test some gas pumps unannounced. Sometimes we check pumps randomly and sometimes we check stations with pumps that have been called in by consumers as a complaint. Currently the only person using this prover is our North Ga. Supervisor, Chuck Royal. In our Fuel Program we have received several new trucks and have purchased 3 new slip in units for the inspectors. These vehicles have been badly needed because we have had several trucks break down and were beyond repair and these inspectors have been teaming up with other inspectors until a new truck is assigned to them.

In our Weights Program we have also received some new trucks to replace some of the older ones that were worn out. All of our Weights inspectors as well as our Milk Tank Calibration Team have received new computer tablets with the WinWam software. We have now equipped all of our field inspectors with a tablet and the WinWam software. We hope in a few more months that our Weights inspectors will be going live with the WinWam program.

We have hired several new inspectors in the State both in Fuel and Weights. Gary Gac, Fuel Calibration Inspector in North Ga. Tim Wilson, Fuel Inspector, in South Ga, Mr. Bentley, Fuel Inspector, in Middle Ga. We would like to congratulate Brenda Zachery for being promoted to our new office manager. Also we would like to welcome aboard Jason Hitchcock to our office staff.

It is with sad regret that I have to inform you of the death of one of our lab metrologist, Tirrell Hall. He died from an aneurism in August. He was survived by his wife and three kids. He will be greatly missed and was a fine employee and friend.

Rich Lewis and Marvin Pound attended the NCWM in Chicago this year and really enjoyed all the meeting activities. Our State Metrologist, Dale Gann along with Field Supervisor, Chuck

Royal will be attending the NIST regional meeting in Colorado this October. They hope to gain valuable information to help move our Weights Lab forward in the coming years. †

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

### **Motor Fuels Section**

We are preparing for the state fair. This year, we are displaying a model engine. The engine will have signs that explain how various fuel qualities and motor oil viscosity problems can affect the engine. We also plan to display a 1950's era manual Penske-Martens Closed Cup Flash Point Tester along with an explanation of flash point and its importance.

A new field inspector began her career in Motor Fuels on September 15th. Her name is Christi Woolard, she will be based in Greenville and her territory will include the Northeast part of the state.

Our new High Frequency Reciprocating Rig (HFRR) instrument for lubricity has arrived, although it is not yet in use. We will soon be capable of testing lubricity of diesel fuels. The further reduction of sulfur in diesel fuel has resulted in a decrease of the fuel's lubricating properties. Additives are injected while loading at the terminals to increase the lubricity properties and we will be able to tell if the fuel is meeting this specification.

### **Measurement Section**

The Measurement Section has had quite a few staff changes since our last letter. Several of our guys have been promoted or moved on to other employment. Also due to our increasing workload, we have been approved for two new inspection positions to our section; a Gas & Oil inspector and a Weights & Measures inspector. The Wilmington and Greenville areas have grown to the point that Dual Role Inspections (positions in which the inspector does both retail weights and measures inspections as well as gas and oil dispenser inspections) are no longer feasible. Jimmy Butler and Richard Turner will now be concentrating solely on package, scale and price scanning in these two areas. The two new positions will relieve them of their gas and oil dispenser inspections (Jimmy took the W&M position, so his dual role position is open) as well as reduce the workload in eight other surrounding inspectors' territories. These areas should then be close to getting back to annual inspections in all phases of our inspections.

Mark (Buddy) Dutton has been promoted to a Standards II Retail Weights and Measures Inspector in the Charlotte area and Ronnie Abbott has been added to our staff as a Standards II Retail Weights and Measures inspector in the Raleigh area. We are doing interviews for Buddy's old Standards I Gas and Oil Inspector position as well as the new Wilmington one. By the printing of this newsletter, I hope our selections will have been approved.

There has been an unusual increase in the number of failed price scanning system inspections and the number of civil penalties assessed. Last year, the division assessed 9 civil penalties against stores that had more than 2% overcharges on their 3rd inspection. In 2006 we reduced the inspections from 3 to 2 before a penalty is assessed. This was done to reduce the workload on the inspectors (a 300 scan inspection was dropped which may take 2 inspectors a half a day to complete) and hopefully get out to some different types of retail stores. There have been over 30 penalties assessed so far this year, but we were beginning to see this trend before the change to only two inspections. We are now considering ways to step up inspection (and penalties) for repeat offenders since this problem seems to be on the rise state-wide.

## Standards Lab

Planned and budgeted development around the Standards Laboratory has forced us to return to laboratory planning mode. Three projects will severely impact Echelons I and II mass calibration in the near future. District Drive will be extended around to connect with another main road in the area, turning it from a dead end street to a four-lane thoroughfare around traffic congestion. Next, the NC National Guard will fill the field west of the laboratory with warehouses, heavy vehicle parking areas, a training center, and a museum. Third, the legislature funded a new \$120,000,000 public health laboratory to be built across the street from the lab. Construction of the District Drive extension could start anytime. From prior experience with construction and paving across the street, we know that even with isolated slabs and balance tables, our mass uncertainties will increase significantly during this construction.

We are approaching this issue from two angles. The short term stop gap measure is to pursue purchase of automated, robotic mass comparators that can be programmed to work after hours when construction is not an issue. This will allow us to process the previous night's data, set up for the next night, and focus on work that is not as adversely affected by construction during normal work hours. The long term course of action is the design and construction of a new laboratory. The automated comparators will carry over well into the new laboratory plan, increasing our Echelon I work capacity and allowing us to provide significantly lower uncertainties to our customers. We just hope the legislature will recognize the need (as they did in 1983) and fund the new laboratory for the 2007-09 biennial budget.

If this process is approved, we will be calling on SWMA member jurisdictions that have recently built new labs for advice. What did you do that worked well? What would you change or do differently? Do you have any left over change you could spare for a good cause?!

We'll put together a booth at the NC State Fair to display some of the work of our program. This year we will focus on our motor fuel quality program. As always, we'll have a scale to give people their "weight free!". Over the past forty or so years of offering this service at the State Fair, we've had around

a dozen people who agreed with the scale and were happy with their weight! Even with the wide dissatisfaction (horror?) at what the scale tells them, over 30,000 people step up each year to see their weight (and display it to anybody within sight of the scale display). We think it's the word "Free" that brings them in each year. It's the best deal at the fair!

L.F. and Van are preparing their presentation materials for the upcoming NIST Combined Regional Measurement Assurance Program meeting in Colorado coming up at the end of October. Both are looking forward to seeing old friends and meeting new metrologists from around the country. With this many metrologists in one place at the same time, Colorado may never be the same!

Our congratulations go out to Georgia Harris and her husband Randy. Their little 2,100+ mile six-month romp across the mountains is quite an accomplishment! (I actually think that may be the understatement of the year considering that hiking the entire Appalachian Trail straight through is a feat beyond most of our wildest imaginations!) We're just glad the breadcrumbs were still there on your back trail so you could find your way home. Based on Randy's beard, I don't think it would've taken much to convince him to become a full time mountain man. We also hope Georgia has plenty of time to shower before the Combined RMAP! Again, congratulations. You've joined a very select club of people who have truly lived their dreams.

## LP-Gas Section

Rick Reid joined the staff in July as an LP-Gas calibrator based in Hickory. James Lambert, who had this position prior to Rick, became our bulk plant inspector for the western third of the state.

Richard Fredenburg recently attended a Risk Management program in South Carolina and then the NC Propane Gas Association meeting in Myrtle Beach the next day along with Stephen Benjamin, the division director. †

## TENNESSEE

Autumn has arrived in Tennessee with all of its glorious colors and spectacles. The annual Southern Weights and Measures Association meeting is another sure sign that the seasons are changing. It is obvious that SWMA President Will Wotthlie and his Maryland staff are preparing for this upcoming meeting as is evidenced by the detailed agenda sent to the various members. Tennessee will be represented at this important meeting.

Mr. Daniel Sutton and Mr. Bobby Travillian recently began work with us as Weights and Measures 2 Inspectors. Daniel will be working in the Middle Tennessee Region while Bobby will be working in the West Tennessee Region.

Mr. Val Miller, NIST Office of Weights and Measures, visited with us in August while attending the NCSL International Workshop and Symposium in Nashville. Val spent a significant amount of time working with our Metrologist, Ken Wilmoth, offering valuable insight and suggestions to the basic operation of our metrology laboratory. Val's time and input regarding our laboratory is very much appreciated.

Our inspectors have been extremely busy conducting a variety of specialized and seasonal inspections including terminal fuel meters, cotton gin scales, livestock scales, etc. along with their routine checkweighing, price verification, pump, etc inspections.

Ed Coleman, Petroleum Administrator, has been working with several alternative fuel companies that

have recently begun business in Tennessee. Ed has made it a priority that fuel produced at these establishments has been sampled and analyzed to insure conformity to ASTM specifications.

We recently sent one of our large scale testing units back to the manufacturer to recondition the lift system and weight cart in order that it conforms to NIST Handbook 105-8. We have been very pleased with the operation of this unit and are anxious for its return.

Finally, Tennessee will be hosting the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture (SASDA) meeting in June 2007 with several members of our staff assisting with this project. Commissioners of Agriculture and key staff members from across the south will be meeting in Nashville to discuss various agricultural related regulatory and marketing issues. We look forward to hosting this important meeting and are anticipating a sizeable number of attendees. †

### Contact SWMA

The SWMA Newsletter is published quarterly.  
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SWMA Newsletter

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