



Southern Weights & Measures Association

99th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

October 2004

Message From the President

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce welcomes the Southern Weights and Measures Association for its 59th Annual Meeting in Gulfport, Mississippi from October 24th-27th. The meeting at the Grand Casino Hotel will be informative and exciting and we look forward to hosting as many of you as can possibly attend. A brief agenda is included for your information.

See you in Gulfport.

Julie

JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

GEORGIA

The state of Georgia, like many other states have noticed a constant rise in the fuel prices to a record high. This factor has caused the number of calls about fuel establishment problems to increase in our office. This increase in the cost of fuel also affects our budget due to the vehicles we use in our inspections thru-out the state. Fortunately, our legislative staffs while in session allotted enough money to run our program. We have taken another 5 percent cut for the fiscal year of 2005 that will put us inline with our budgets predicted growth. We are fortunate that so far we have not had any furloughs or layoffs. We have consolidated territory as inspectors retire or leave for other work areas.

On an upbeat note our Weights Lab metrologist Rich Lewis and Dale Gann attended the SEMAP seminar in Richmond, Virginia back in March of this year and have used this training to its full potential. This meeting was very important to our Lab because it kept them updated on new changes and procedures. Our Weights Lab has just installed a new Environmental Control Unit to help regulate the temperature more accurately for precision testing. The Lab has been able to purchase two new Serphin provers for our L.P. inspectors. These new provers are equipped with a 100 gal. prover and a 20 gallon prover.

In July our Director, Jerry Flanders and Field Supervisor, Marvin Pound attended the NCWM annual meeting in Pittsburgh, PA. and came away with many new items of interest for

our program. They also hope to be attending the SWMC in Gulfport, MS in October to work on several items of interest for our state.

We have been able to fill our two Commercial Fuel Calibration positions that we had open for a period of time. Clyde Young was promoted from Retail Fuel Inspection to take one of the positions. Stephen Garrett has come aboard to fill the other position that was badly needed to keep up with our High Speed pumps and Commercial meters in the state. Also one Retail Fuel position left open has been filled by Billy Robbins a newly hired inspector. John Anderson, a retail fuel inspector, will be retiring at the end of September after 23 years of service with our Dept. We wish John a happy and healthy retirement.

Our Retail Fuel Inspectors have been keeping very busy this year since we have been collecting EPA samples all year long. We are also anticipating the start of some stations by the first of the year to start selling an ethanol blended product in the Metro Atlanta area.

Well after several years of hope and planning we have finally gotten funds allotted to putting our Fuel Inspectors on the computer program WinWam. We have purchased 35 computers with software to cover all our Retail Fuel, Wholesale Fuel, Commercial L.P. inspection, Field Supervisors, and one small weights inspector. Pictured below are fuel inspectors in a training class in Atlanta getting familiar with there new PC tablet that will be used in field inspections. We are very excited about this opportunity to use this technology in our program. ☺



MARYLAND

- We regretfully report the untimely death of Jim Price on August 30, 2004. Jim was with our section for 20 years. Jim worked as a Field Inspector and for the past 7 years, has worked in our Metrology and Type Evaluation Laboratories. Jim was a valuable member of our staff, and we miss him very much.
- The Maryland State Fair was held in Timonium, Maryland, August 27-September 6, 2004. The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) display was an interactive "MDA Village" which showed how MDA affects the lives of Marylanders each day. Our section had on display a cord of firewood, which was given away at the conclusion of the fair, a gasoline dispenser, and a mock-up of an old country store complete with a scale, meat cooler, shelves and barrels filled with commodities packaged by Maryland firms. We also had an electronic medium capacity scale which was used by our staff members to provide those attending the fair with their official "certified" weight.
- Chief Lou Straub has announced his retirement effective September 30, 2004. Lou spent 7 1/2 years with the Prince George's County Maryland Weights and Measures Department, 1 year with the Packers and Stockyard Division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and 22 years with the Maryland Weights and Measures Section. He has been Chief since August 1991.

Lou has served on numerous committees in the NCWM and SWMA during his career. He was Chairman of the SWMA in 1992 and Chairman of the NCWM in 2001.

Lou will be leaving the State of Maryland to become a resident of North Carolina. Lou has assured us that he will remain a loyal Maryland "Terp" fan and will proudly wear his Terp hat and fly his Terp flag in "Tar Heel" country.

- With the retirement of Lou, Program Manager Will Wotthlie has been named "Acting" Chief of the Maryland Weights and Measures Section.
- On September 27, 2004, we had a Staff Meeting at our facility in Annapolis complete with a cookout for lunch. During the meeting, Chief Lou Straub bid farewell to the staff. We wish Lou the best in his "retirement" and future endeavors. The highlight of the meeting was the presentation of Certificates of Appreciation to Lou from the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the State of Maryland. Lou also received as parting gifts from the Weights and Measures staff, a pen, an engraved watch and a monetary gift to use at various golf courses in North Carolina.

Visitors who attended the luncheon for Lou's retirement were Henry Opperman, Tina Butcher and Dick Suiter from NIST, Wes Diggs from Virginia Weights and Measures, and retired former Maryland staff members Dick Shockley and Joan Forsythe.

- The following members of our staff will be presented with Service Awards during a ceremony at MDA Headquarters on October 15, 2004: Shelley Bello-Office Secretary, 15 years; Inspectors-Tom Fagan, Mike Frailer, Ethan Halpern and Ed Santana – 20 years; and Ken Ramsburg-Field Supervisor, 20 years. The average length of service for members of our staff is approximately 19 years.

Recent Civil Penalties and Court Activities

- On August 16, 2004, we received \$300.00 for a civil penalty assessed against Safeway #1129, Dunkirk, Maryland. The civil penalty was assessed due to short weight violations found during test purchases performed at the establishment.
- On August 16, 2004, we received \$250.00 for a civil penalty assessed against Lowe Products Co., Inc., Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The civil penalty was assessed due to short measure violations found during an inspection of mulch packaged by this firm. The mulch was inspected in response to a consumer complaint. ☞

NORTH CAROLINA

First of all, we would like to wish a fond farewell to Winston Sutton. Winston retired (again) at the end of July and is currently attending classes to be a Paralegal. Stephen Benjamin has been appointed as the new Director of Standards Division. Stephen has been with the Division's Motor Fuels Section for almost 13 years, serving as the Program Manager for the last 4 years. He looks forward to learning about the Weights and Measures side of the house and is planning to attend the October meeting in Gulfport, Mississippi.

Motor Fuels Section

Congratulations to Jack Leatherwood on his promotion to Motor Fuels field inspector. Jack was a dual role inspector in the Measurement Section for the area around Waynesville. He will now test fuel quality in the western part of the state, expanding his territory to 17 counties.

Low RVP season has just ended in North Carolina and there was an increase in products being out of specification this year. It appears that deliveries made during the control period were correct, however, due to high inventory prior to those deliveries the resulting fuels failed to meet vapor pressure specifications for the control period. Conversations with several dealers indicated that many had stocked up this spring on premium unleaded gasoline in anticipation of a price increase. That price increase soon went up to over \$2.00 a gallon, more in some areas, dramatically slowing sales and turnover of product. Due to the wide use of blend pumps in many of these areas, the mid-grade unleaded gasoline was often affected as well. The high inventory volumes involved resulted in most having to pump out the product and transfer it to another county where it did meet specifications, then getting a fresh delivery of 7.8 psi fuel before sales could resume.

LP-Gas Section

The LP-Gas Section is now down one inspector. Donald Jackson has recently returned to the propane industry, becoming a branch manager. Donald was a truck driver for this same branch before he joined the Standards Division. We wish him well.

Our LP-Gas Engineer, Richard Fredenburg, participated in the technical committee meetings for the *LP-Gas Code* and the *Utility LP-Gas Plant Code* in Colorado Springs in August. The next step for both of these codes is to receive proposals for changes.

Flooding in the mountains of North Carolina showed us that anchoring of propane tanks is not just a coastal thing. We have been stressing for years that any tank below the 100-year flood level needs to be securely anchored, whether it is near the coast or along a river. Some tanks in the mountains were relocated by the flooding, but we don't know how many or what the official flood level was. Some indications are that the 500-year flood level was approached in some areas.

In September, we had Ted Lemoff, from the National Fire Protection Association, come to lead a seminar about the *LP-Gas Code* for city, county, and state inspectors. We learned about the new format and content of this year's new edition of the code.

Also in September, our new division director, Stephen Benjamin, and Richard Fredenburg went to Myrtle Beach to participate in a seminar on truck safety compliance and the annual meeting of the North Carolina Propane Gas Association.

Measurement Section

The fall of the year has arrived and the Measurement Section is in the midst of testing scales associated with the fall harvest. Tobacco season is coming to an end and we are turning our attention to cotton scales, peanut scales and scales at grain buying locations. This along with our regular duties of gas dispensers, retail scales, scanning inspections and package checking is keeping us pretty busy.

The prices of gasoline and fuel are still contributing to the large number of request and complaints at the gas pumps. As always the consumer is our best source of information to find errors and problems. We take them very seriously and give them top priority.

Bryan Moore has been added to our inspection staff as a Standards I Inspector for the Charlotte area. With his addition, and the return of a couple of inspectors off the injured or sick list, we will be in pretty good shape for the coming year. With the exception of Jack Leatherwood, who has recently transferred to the Motor Fuel Section, we are fully staffed in the Measurement Section.

Standards Section

The Standards Lab is still working with NC State Highway Patrol to develop a defensible wheel load weigher calibration program. L.F. gave a presentation on the concepts of force and mass to the NC SHP officers who will actually test the scales. Cliff and Van will travel to Morehouse in York, PA October 11 - 13, 2004, for training on the use of the Morehouse proving

ring and press that NC SHP is purchasing for our lab. L.F. is working with the NC SHP computer programmers to incorporate control charts and calibration history directly into the weight enforcement system.

We've completed the NIST 100-gallon round robin. Van, Tal, and Bob tested the prover using both volumetric and gravimetric procedures. The prover trailer was supported on four 1000 lb. weights to perform the gravimetric calibration. Unfortunately, our camera was out of film so we didn't get any photos of this set up. We are very happy with the comparison between the volumetric calibrations, gravimetric calibrations, and the NIST accepted value for the prover. We will submit data to increase our gravimetric volume accreditation to 100-gallons with this years NIST recognition and NVLAP accreditation material.

Cliff has been working to get our thermometry program back up to speed. Unfortunately, our equipment has not cooperated fully. We had to send one bath back to Utah for repair and have had various other minor problems. It took a while, but he was finally able to recalibrate our PRT working standards. Cliff has also conducted training for the other metrologists in making a triple point cell and rejoining mercury columns.

We have new Sartorius CC6 (6 g x 0.0001 mg) and Mettler AX106 (111 g x 0.001 mg) mass comparators. So far, we are pleased with their performance. We are just hoping that they last as long as the mass comparators they replaced.

Van is busy preparing for the March 2005 SEMAP meeting. The location is not absolutely nailed down, but we're hoping to show off one of NC's best attractions! More to come - soon!

The Grain Moisture Program just completed its 2004 corn harvest for the 2004-2005 inspection year. We thankfully managed to gather all the corn we require despite the persistent hurricanes. Reports from our field inspectors indicate that corn yields, in the areas of the state not affected by the storms, were good this year. We are pleased with the quality of this year's crop and although suitability testing is not complete at this time we do not anticipate any problems.

Our thoughts are with our friends in Florida. It has been an unbelievably hard month for the sunshine state. We hope all of our W&M friends are well and safe. ☎

TENNESSEE

Where has the summer gone as fall is here already! Fall livestock scale inspections have begun along with those scales used in the cotton gins and compresses across West Tennessee. The tobacco season is rapidly approaching and our inspectors will once again be testing those scales used in conjunction with the auctions and buying stations across Middle and East Tennessee.

We recently received word that Lou Straub, Chief of Maryland Weights and Measures, will be retiring very shortly. Lou has made many significant contributions to both the SWMA and the NCWM over the years that he has been active in weights and measures. We wish Lou the very best in his retirement and hope he remains active in weights and measures in some capacity.

We also received word that Constantine Costoradis, formerly Director of the Kansas Weights and Measures, was recently promoted to Assistant Secretary of Agriculture in Kansas. Congratulations Constantine and remember we all knew you back when....!

Bob Williams recently attended the NIST Vehicle Scale Instructor Seminar in Kansas City hosted by the State of Kansas. Bob stated that Ken Butcher, Rich Harshman, and Juana Williams of NIST along with Terry Davis of the State of Kansas did an excellent job in conducting this seminar. Steve Cook of NIST also was invaluable during this seminar with his vast knowledge of various NTEP requirements. Representatives from a number of states and Mr. Cary Ainsworth of Packers and Stockyards were in attendance and all attendees actively participated in this seminar.

Bob hopes to also be attending the SWMA meeting in Gulfport, MS, in late October. Based on the preliminary mate-

rial forwarded to us by Julie, it will be a very busy and productive meeting with a number of excellent speakers.

Seraphin Measurement Company is currently renovating a number of our LPG and large capacity provers along with manufacturing a new hybrid trailer mounted prover consisting of 3- 5 gal, 1-50 gallon prover, and holding tanks. A purchase order was also recently awarded to Kanawha Scales and Systems, Poca, WV, for a 2005 Freightliner chassis, enclosed bed, weight cart, and weights. Delivery is tentatively set for early 2005.

We would like to welcome Mr. Steve Hollis to our staff as a Weights and Measures Inspector 2 in West Tennessee. Steve will be responsible for retail motor fuel dispenser and small scale inspections, petroleum sampling, checkweighing, and price verification inspections in Southwest Tennessee. ☪

SWMA Newsletter
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