



Southern Weights & Measures Association

120th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

April 2010

JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

GEORGIA

The Fuel & Measures Division of the Georgia Department of Agriculture continues to carry on with the business of protecting the consumers, business owners and farmers of this state despite operating under massive budget cuts, travel restrictions, vacant positions, and mandatory furlough days for our employees. Our administration is looking at new and innovated ideas to operate in a leaner and more streamlined way while still offering the same level of protection that our citizens have come to expect.

In our retail fuel inspection program we have pinpointed a couple of areas, "Atlanta and Savannah" which appear to be lagging behind the rest of the state in inspection frequency. These areas have had vacant positions and a higher than normal number of consumer complaints. We have taken several inspectors and grouped them into "taskforce" and sent them into these areas to conduct what we refer to as a "blitz attack". This seems to be working very effectively.

Our heavy scale teams have felt the budget crunch. We recently went from six heavy scale teams to five. In addition to having more area to cover they have also had the added duty of conducting scanner inspection in retail stores. Our small scale inspectors are continuing to deal with the recent increase in the use of gold buying scales. We have also entered into agreements with many of the local law enforcement agencies for our scale inspectors to test their marijuana scales.

We are very pleased to announce that on March 5th a ground breaking ceremony was held in Tifton, GA to kick off the construction of our new laboratory complex. This project has been in the planning stages for years, and is being funded by the sale of bonds. It started with a need for a new Fuel Quality Lab; our old Fuel Lab has become outdated and antiquated. The idea then evolved into an entire new lab complex for the entire Department. Numerous locations all over the state were looked at before the decision was made on building it on the site of an old abandon farmers market in Tifton. Tifton is in south central Georgia right on I-75 and we currently have a seed lab on that location. The new complex will be home to a new Fuel Quality Lab, a new Metrology Lab, a renovated Feed and Seed Lab, and will serve as the South Georgia headquarters for the Department of Agriculture. We are anticipating moving into our new facility sometime in 2011.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to our State Metrologist Dale Gann and his family on recent passing of his father, Mr. Bob Gann. Congratulations go out to scale inspector Ben Rallo on his recent retirement. Ben has served as our Northwest Georgia small scale inspector for the past 10 years and we wish him

much happiness in his retirement years. We also want to congratulate our Division Courier Clyde Young. Clyde will be retiring after serving over 20 years with the Fuel & Measures Division, most of it as a retail fuel inspector. The past couple of years Clyde has served as our statewide courier and he will be greatly missed. 🇺🇸

NORTH CAROLINA

Standards Lab

The first of the year is always a busy time of the year for us. We reserve this time on our schedule to calibrate our working standards to get ready for customer calibrations. This time we were also faced with the challenge of having some HVAC renovations going on at the same time. Because of this process our standard calibrations were delayed several weeks. I am happy to report that by the second week in February we were ready to resume a normal schedule and begin our customer calibrations. I applaud the metrologists (Tal Anderson, Van Hyder, Cliff Murray and Gerald Price) for a job well done.

Because of our newly acquired safety recognition as a NC Star Public Sector Site, we've been asked to participate in the Carolina Star Program Conference. We are assigned to the North Eastern Regional and we had our first meeting March 3, 2010 at Cooper Tools in Apex, North Carolina. This is a great opportunity for us to network with other non government agencies who have committed themselves to the common goal of keeping safety first. The topic we choose to represent twice during this conference is "Taking Safety Home". Cheryl Tew, Janice Long and George Creasy make up our safety team for Standards Laboratory.

Our Grain Moisture section is actively involved in the American Oil Chemistry Society (AOCS) laboratory proficiency program. So far results are inconclusive across the board. Early indications say the wheat crop may be less than desirable due to the damage caused by the excessive rainfall. Again we are going to be optimistic and expect a good wheat harvest.

Motor Fuels Section

The Motor Fuels Section has taken delivery of two more Dodge Sprinters. Once they are converted to lab vans, we will have replaced all but one of the step vans that were used in the past. All of the inspectors are grateful for the change; they have more work space and diesel engines get twice the MPGs than the old step vans (less frequent fill ups!).

Phase separation failures continue to occur as more stations have moved to selling E10. As of February, over 80% of NC Stations we sampled from have converted to E10.

LP-Gas Section

Our LP-Gas Engineer participated in the NPGA Technology, Standards, and Safety Committee meeting in Nashville, TN, in March 2010. The docket that is looking at changing NIST Handbook 44 and/or 105 to allow putting an LP-Gas meter back into service after being calibrated by a master meter is still active. Randy Jennings from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture attended the task force meeting and addressed those present. The committee realizes that it will take an involved effort to draft a change to the procedures to allow calibration with a master meter.

Our LP-Gas Engineer is in the final stages of preparing his input for editing the commentary in the LP-Gas Code Handbook. A new edition of the LP-Gas Code is due out in the late summer of 2010 and the new handbook will follow shortly thereafter.

A new propane motor fuel dispenser is being installed in Asheville, NC. This will be the first opportunity to apply some recently enacted regulations concerning installation of these devices and in performing a calibration on them.

Measurement Section

Winter is finally coming to a close. It has been an unusually wet and cold winter for North Carolina with having either rain, freezing rain, snow or sleet almost every week. Temperatures have been for the most part colder too. Those mild weather breaks we usually get in the winter have been few and far

between. (The golfers are probably going to find that their games are getting rusty.) With these conditions, most of our inspection work has been conducted inside.

We have been well pleased with the results we are finding with our scanning inspections. The number of initial scanning inspections exceeding the 2% overcharge error rate has decreased greatly from last year for this same time period. The overcharge error rate on the return 300 item scanning inspections are much better than what we have been finding in the past. It's down close to a one percent failure rate. It seems our efforts and those of the major companies to train their employees have paid off. Let's hope progress continues.

Between the few breaks in the weather, we have managed to complete our mulch, pine bark and fertilizer inspections. We are again pleased with the results we found with the under fills being a lot less than what we have found in the past. Only a very few lots have been returned to the shipper or have had to be opened and repackaged at locations here in the state where the packaging takes place.

Gas and diesel dispenser inspections are following the normal course of things. We are finding about a 9 percent failure rate as a general rule. A measurement problem is seldom the cause of a failure. Minor leaks, bad anti-drain nozzles, 3 or 4 cent computer jumps or indicator digits burnt out are the norm for failures. The rule of thumb, "When prices go up so do the complaints" is holding true to form. Complaints and requests are keeping us "on the go".

65th Annual Meeting

South Carolina is proud to be hosting the 65th Annual Meeting of the Southern Weights and Measures Association. The meeting will be October 3 - 6, 2010 in Columbia at the Hilton Columbia Center, 924 Senate Street. This hotel is located in the Congaree Vista Area. With over 45 restaurants and bars, 60 artists' galleries and specialty shops, and a diverse mix of businesses and services, the Congaree Vista offers an array of choices all in one convenient location. Plus, the area's proximity to the Congaree River, downtown business district, and University of South Carolina, make it the ideal place to visit, live, work and play. Room rates will be \$93.00 per night plus tax and must be booked by September 1, 2010. Columbia is served by the Columbia Metropolitan Airport (CAE) and only a few miles from the hotel. For more information, please contact SWMA President Derek Underwood, Carol Fulmer or John Stokes @ 803-737-9690 or visit the Hilton web site for booking and additional information. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending this year's SWMA Meeting.

Contact SWMA

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