



# Southern Weights & Measures Association

126th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

October 2011

## JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

### GEORGIA

We at the Georgia Department of Agriculture's Fuel & Measures Division are currently occupied with several issues. Most notably, we recently held a public hearing for the purpose of making changes to our fuel advertising regulations. The new regulations will call for only cash/credit prices to be displayed on the main highway signs. Any additional discounts must be advertised on ancillary signs in the form of cents per gallon discount rather than price per gallon.

Our new lab complex in Tifton, Georgia is nearing total completion. We recently hosted NIST Weights & Measures Chief Carol Hockert at the new lab. She was given a tour of the Metrology Lab as well as our new Fuel Lab. Our grand opening ceremony will be October 12 and will be attended by Governor Nathan Deal, Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black and other dignitaries.

No, the picture below is not Max Gray's van from the 60's, it's our new Mobile Fuel Lab and it is up and running. It will be operating in the Metro Atlanta area and will be manned by Fuel Chemist Larry Potts.

Director Rich Lewis and Assistant Director Marvin Pound will be attending the Southern Weights & Measures Association annual conference in Norfolk, Virginia. Rich will be serving on the L&R Committee and we are excited to announce that Marvin will be chairing the PDC Committee. Rich will also be serving on the national L&R Committee starting next year.

Also during October we will have booths at the Georgia State Fair in Perry, GA, the Sunbelt Expo in Moultrie, GA, and the Georgia Convenience Store Association Trade Show in Macon, GA. These booths will give us the opportunity to showcase and promote what we do in Fuel & Measures. The Sunbelt Expo is the largest agricultural trade show in the southeast.



Our North Georgia Supervisor, Chuck Royal, has accepted a position in the Administration Division of the Department. We are pleased to announce that Steve Brannon, L.P. Gas Inspector, will assume the position of Supervisor. Scale Inspector Mike Norris will replace Steve as our L.P. Gas Inspector. †

## MARYLAND

Since the last newsletter, Maryland's three new inspectors have been fully trained and are now testing and inspecting devices on their own. With this additional manpower, we anticipate a shorter turn-around time for inspections. This additional manpower has also allowed us to test most propane delivery trucks and home heating oil trucks before the start of this heating season. Despite this new staffing, we are trying to fill a currently vacant position and will try to fill another one when a seasoned inspector retires in November.

Besides device inspections, Maryland Weights and Measures staff continues package testing and price verification activities. The following enforcement actions have been taken against violators:

- On July 14, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) received \$250 for a civil penalty assessed for price verification to Advanced Auto Parts #2294, Churchton, MD 20733.
- On July 14, MDA received \$500 for a civil penalty assessed for price verification to Office Depot, Clinton, MD 20735.
- On July 26, MDA received \$500 for a civil penalty assessed for short weight to Safeway #107, Greenbelt, MD 20770.
- On July 29, MDA received \$ 750 for a civil penalty assessed for short weight to Giant Food # 313, Germantown, MD 20874.
- On August 1, MDA received \$250 for a civil penalty assessed for short weight to Latino Market, Gaithersburg, MD 20877
- On August 2, MDA received \$1,000 for a civil penalty assessed for short weight to Weis Market #129, Damascus, MD 20872.

- On August 4, MDA received \$500 for a civil penalty assessed for price verification to Staples #1169, Easton, MD 21601.
- On August 4, MDA received \$500 for a civil penalty assessed for short weight to Bestway Supermarket, Hyattsville, MD 20783.
- On August 4, MDA received \$500 for a civil penalty assessed for price verification to CVS #1468, Silver Spring, MD 20901.
- On August 4, MDA received \$500 for a civil penalty assessed for price verification to CVS #1445, Rockville, MD 20850.
- On August 9, MDA received \$250 for a civil penalty assessed for price verification to CVS #4411, Baltimore, MD 21215.
- On August 15, MDA received \$500 for a civil penalty assessed for short weight to Greenbelt Consumer's CO-OP, Greenbelt, MD 20770.
- On September 1, MDA received \$250 for a civil penalty assessed for price verification to Advanced Auto Parts #9066, Silver Spring, MD 20904. †

## NORTH CAROLINA

Fall is just around the corner, "State Fair Time" as we call it. The Mountain State Fair was in early September. Gerald Brown and his staff have teamed with the Marketing Division again this year and I understand they had a great looking booth. They have won blue ribbons the last two years. Those guys always put a lot of time in preparing and staffing our booth and they deserve the recognition.

We are preparing for the NC State Fair scheduled for October 13 – 23, 2010. The theme for this year is "Love A Fair." We will have our annual standards booth set up to give customers their weight for free. We will feature our LP Gas section and the impact they have on consumer services. We will also display some of the historic standards that have been issued to NC over the years, such as our volume set from 1842. Division employees staff our booth and several others throughout the fair, but the time commitment is well worth it.

### **Standards Laboratory**

Robert Rogers will be our new quality manager, replacing Cliff Murray. He will begin October 3, 2011 and will be attending NIST training in mid October. He comes to us from Froehling and Robertson, Inc where he served as their quality assurance auditor for the last 7 ½ years.

During October 3 – 11, we will be making our annual 5 gallon test measure run. We begin our journey from Greensboro, traveling as far west as Fletcher, making stops in Charlotte and Greenville, before ending in Lumberton for our annual. Metrologists Van Hyder and Ashley Lessard will calibrate over 400 test measures during this 7 day process. This will be Ashley's first year experiencing this opportunity to work out in the field.

The Grain Moisture section just completed its corn harvest. Despite a spotty season and a hurricane bearing down on North Carolina, adequate samples were collected for the upcoming inspection year. We will begin our soybean harvest in October.

Cheryl Tew retired September 30, after 31 years of state service (26 of those in the grain moisture program). The search is on now for her replacement and we will keep you apprised of when the position is filled.

### **Motor Fuels Laboratory**

The HVAC renovations to the 1976 wing of the Motor Fuels Lab are 25% complete. We are continuing to conduct testing in this wing while construction is going on. This has required a good bit of coordina-

tion between the lab and the contractors, but it is working out well so far. This renovation will bring the wing up to current standards while adding some additional fume hoods.

### **Measurement Section**

We thought we were getting a handle on price scanning errors but businesses are starting to slip it appears. As of the end of August we have completed around 2250 price scan inspections with 448 of them failing due to an overcharge error rate exceeding 2%. 53 locations have paid civil penalties for a total of \$82,012.66 and 8 more are pending with an amount of \$14,057.00 and we still have 4 more months to go. As required by law, these monies are given to the county school systems in which the civil penalties were assessed with the exception of processing fees.

### **LP-Gas Section**

We have finally launched our database for LP-Gas inspections. With compliance rates slipping over the last several years, we needed to motivate people to make the necessary repairs. The main purpose of the database is to track violations found during inspections which allows for the generation of a warning letter and, if necessary, a civil penalty assessment. There were a lot of technical/programming issues to resolve, but our programmer, Susan Myrick, has been very patient and dedicated to this project. At the moment we are only capturing information on our bulk plant inspections but we plan to add on other inspections later. ☛

**Contact SWMA**

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

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