



Southern Weights & Measures Association

121th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

July 2010

JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

GEORGIA

We have several issues that the Georgia Fuel & Measures Division is currently occupied with. Most notably, the Georgia Legislature recently passed bill 1055, "the fee bill". This large wide sweeping bill dealt with fees charged by many different state agencies.

In some cases it increased existing fees, in others it created new fees, and in other cases it simply gave an agency the authority to set a fee.

Several fees charged by the Fuel & Measures Division were affected by this bill. The fee for a Certified Public Weighers License was increased from \$5.00 annually to \$15.00. Also, the fee for a certified brand of antifreeze was increased from \$25.00 annually to \$50.00. The biggest change was that the bill gave our division the authority to change our Rules & Regulations to set a fee for gas pump inspections. Consequently, Georgia Rule 40-20-1-.09 was changed to establish an annual registration fee for retail gas stations. The fee is based on \$20 per pump and \$40 per high speed pump. The notices were sent out in early July and our phones haven't stopped ringing.

There has been a great amount of progress with the building of our new lab complex in Tifton, Georgia. The construction is coming along right on schedule and we are looking at starting operations there next summer. There will be a new fuel quality lab and a new metrology lab.

Director Rich Lewis will be attending the NCWM annual conference in Minnesota. He's looking forward to some interesting topics and some cooler weather.

We wish Supervisor Marnie Pound a quick recovery. Marnie recently had gallbladder surgery. He came through the surgery fine and is at home recuperating.

On a very sad note, recently retired scale inspector Jim Collins passed away on July 7. Jim was involved in a very tragic boating accident while on a fishing trip at Mexico Beach Florida. Jim was highly respected as an inspector and was a great friend to many of us. We will miss him greatly. Please keep his family in your prayers. ☩

NORTH CAROLINA

As of this writing, our 2010-11 budget is all but signed by the Governor. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services lost some funding on several programs and some positions as well. The Standards Division was fortunate as it appears only our equipment budget may be affected. However, there may be further cuts and reversions if federal Medicaid money does not come through and the state has to make up for the shortfall.

Measurement Section

The Measurement Section has had a lot going on the past few months besides just our regular inspection duties. We have completed fertilizer net content inspections and blueberry packing inspections. We have also completed scale inspections at farmers' markets, local produce stands and cucumber buying stations. Our seasonal scale inspections at tobacco buying facilities has also just begun.

Our major issue so far this year has been ice glazing on seafood being sold in grocery stores state wide, particularly King Crab legs, Snow Crab legs and crab leg clusters. While participating in a national survey on glazing of commercially packed seafood, we discovered there was a major issue with frozen crab legs in North Carolina.

Bill Tedder was selected to attend national training on glazing to insure that proper procedures and uniformity was met by all states participating in the national survey. When working as a team with other inspectors, they discovered while there was few problems with commercially packed seafood targeted for the national survey, there was major problems with randomly packed crab legs. Tare was taken for the container but no tare "zero" was being taken for the glazing.

After proper procedure was conducted to remove the glazing, it was discovered that there was anywhere from 11 to 28 percent ice glazing on the crab legs. At a price of 8 or 9 dollars per pound for the crab legs, many dollars were being paid for glaze.

Our thanks to Bill for taking the lead on this project. He has contacted and worked with most of the food store chains and independent food stores to help them implement a percentage or progressive tare for all glazed seafood products packaged in their stores. Percentage or progressive tare is the only way to

insure that correct tare is being taken for glaze. Thanks to Bill and his team of inspectors, and the willingness and the desire of the food stores to treat their customers fairly, we are well on our way to having this issue resolved.

Motor Fuels Section

Low vapor pressure season began on June 1. Many stations in NC are selling gasoline with 10% ethanol. We are allowing a 1 lb. vapor pressure tolerance for ethanol blends.

The Motor Fuels Lab will soon fill a new inspector's position that will cover several counties in the Western part of the state. This territory was carved out of several other territories between Hickory and Asheville. This position will allow for less time spent traveling and more time spent inspecting in four adjacent territories. Once this position is filled, NC will have 11 full time inspectors and 1 inspector who divides time between the field and the lab.

The Motor Fuels Lab continues to receive many consumer complaints. More than 200 complaints have already been logged for the year. For the fiscal year that ended June 30, our condemned sample rate increased to over 4%. Historically, the rate usually falls between 2 and 3 percent. The Motor Fuels Section is attributing the increase to the large number of stations that have converted to E10 during this time period. Some stations have experienced phase separation issues during their initial conversion. During the month of June, 94% of stations whose samples were checked at the Central Lab were selling ethanol blended fuel.

Standards Lab

During the month of April we participated in the Southeastern Measurement Assurance Program, SEMAP, which took place in Gaithersburg, Maryland at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) main campus. Senior Metrologist, Van Hyder represented North Carolina during this week long training process. North Carolina successfully demonstrated proficiency in several areas including mass calibra-

tions, volume transfer calibrations, gravimetric volume calibrations and LPG Prover calibrations.

Standards Laboratory received the prestigious Gold Star Award for having no accidents in the work place from the department of Agriculture. This is the first time Standards Laboratory has received such an honor. Special recognition goes out to all the staff members for a job well done and keeping safety a top priority.

The grain moisture section completed their SRWW harvest with little problems. Originally, ground moisture, or the lack thereof, was feared to be a problem with the 2010 wheat harvest. This turned out not to be an issue and adequate grain in the desired moisture ranges for the 2010-2011 testing season was gathered.

The grain moisture laboratory continues to participate in the soybean quality traits program. The third set of soybeans samples was just received for testing due August 1, 2010. We are presently involved in cleaning the wheat we harvested and are watching this heat take toll on our corn crop. We are keeping our fingers crossed for a good corn harvest in late summer!

LP-Gas Section

The LP-Gas Section attended training in anhydrous ammonia safety at Sampson Community College in April.

Richard Fredenburg, our LP-Gas Engineer, taught a class on the LP-Gas Code at the North Carolina Fire Prevention School at Fort Fisher in April. He also taught a class on new cathodic protection requirements of underground propane tanks coming in the next edition of the LP-Gas Code at the North Carolina Propane Gas Association Education Summit in Cary in June.

Richard Fredenburg participated in the National Fire Protection Association Annual Conference in Las Vegas, NV, in June. Part of this meeting was a business session on technical committees that have new editions of codes or standards to issue. The LP-Gas Code had some issues to address, and Richard participated in these as well. ☪

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