



# Southern Weights & Measures Association

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114th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

July 2008

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## JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

### GEORGIA

In the State of Georgia the fuel complaints are increasing as fast as the price. Our fuel inspectors have been hit hard by fuel measurement complaints as well as quality complaints. At the rate we are receiving complaints we are looking to hit about 3000 fuel complaints by the end of the year. Along with the increase of complaints our fuel inspectors are going into the cabinets and putting our agriculture seals on the meters. We are holding the stations responsible for any pre-domanance found after our inspectors have checked the station.

We are also losing one of our Lab Techs at the fuel lab to private industry. It is becoming increasingly harder to hold on to good employees with the pay base we have to work with. We are also trying to hire a retail fuel inspector in the South Georgia area to replace one that left due to going to private industry for better pay. We did however hire a new fuel inspector for the coastal area of Georgia around the Savannah area. He comes from another state agency and looks forward to his new job duties.

Due to the cut backs in vehicles this year, we only received 3 new vehicles to replace the aging fleet we have. Mainly the vehicles were for the retail slip-in units. We have seen a steady increase of ethanol at the retail level in the state. Most of all the stations in the state of Georgia have 10% ethanol in their gas. We have seen a slight increase in the number of quality complaints due to the ethanol conversion, but the majority of all the stations have seen a smooth transaction to ethanol blends. Our retail inspectors are also seeing a big increase of EPD samples during these summer months. We have one metro county

this month that had 13 EPD samples that needed to be pulled!

On the Weights end, the next 6 months bring in a lot of scale companies and other private industry that are wanting to keep up with ISO regulations. Due to the weights lab being short on staff, this is putting a strain on getting the work in and out in a timely manner. We do have a job posted for a Metrolist 1 to be hired at the lab, but until that happens we have been pulling scale inspectors off their routine jobs to help Dale Gann and Kontz Bennett out in the Weights Lab. We also have a vacancy in one small scale inspector in the metro Atlanta area due to him wanting to try his luck making more money in Afghanistan!

Jim Duffy decided after working over 25 years in state government he had a calling to take a leave of absence and go to try making a lot of money in the next 12 months to add to his retirement funds. Good Luck Jim in you adventure!

Our Director, Rich Lewis, and Training Officer, Marvin Pound will be leaving on July 12th to attend the NCWM in Vermont. We wish them a safe trip and hope they bring back several topics of discussion for our Fuel and Measures personnel. Field Supervisor, Chuck Royal, and L.P. inspector Steve Brannon will be attending the Georgia Propane Association yearly meeting at Jekyll Island on July 21, 22 to keep in touch with the new meters coming out on the market and news in the L.P. gas business as well. †

## MARYLAND

We are very pleased to announce the hiring of two new Weights and Measures Field Inspectors. Christopher Ebeling joined our staff on June 18, 2008 and Steven Bratten on June 25, 2008. We hope to announce the hiring of a third inspector once the hiring exemption is approved.

In turn we are saddened to announce the disability retirement of Richard Bristow on June 1, 2008. Rick was a Field Inspector for twenty years and will be greatly missed. We wish Rick the best of luck in his future endeavors and his recent move to Erie, Pennsylvania.

Agricultural Inspector Joseph Boako has completed a CDL driving course and has passed the Maryland CDL driving test. He is currently being trained on our large tractor trailer test unit to test and inspect vehicle and large scales. Once Joseph is trained and on his own this will return our staff to three large scale inspectors.

The following is a list of Maryland firms that were found in violation of Maryland Weights & Measures Laws and were assessed a civil penalty:

On May 2, 2008, we received \$2000.00 for a civil penalty assessed to Giant Food #327, Bethesda, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight packages.

On May 27, 2008, we received \$750.00 for a civil penalty assessed to Grand Mart #1, Germantown, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight packages.

On May 29, 2008, we received \$500.00 for a civil penalty assessed to Shauls Kosher Market, Silver Spring, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight packages.

On June 2, 2008, we received \$750.00 for a civil penalty assessed to Bloom #2708, Rockville, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight packages.

On June 4, 2008, we received \$750.00 for a civil penalty assessed to Balducci's, Bethesda, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight packages.

On June 16, 2008, we received \$500.00 for a civil penalty assessed to Han Ah Reum, Wheaton, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight packages.

On June 16, 2008, we received \$750.00 for a civil penalty assessed to Martin Food #109, Rising Sun, MD. The civil penalty was assessed for short weight packages.

On June 17, 2008, we received \$500.00 for a civil penalty assessed to Target Corporation. The civil penalty was assessed for scanning violations. †

## NORTH CAROLINA

After a long rule making process, we have been able to update many of our regulations used by the motor fuels and measurements sections. What started out as adopting ASTM biofuels specifications and editorial changes grew to include changing our specifications for E10 ethanol blends. The permanent rules went into effect on June 1st.

At the moment the N.C. House and Senate have included funds in the new 2008-2009 budget for planning a new metrology and motor fuels laboratory, although the amounts differ. We are hopeful that they will come to an agreement on some funding so can begin work on this phase of a new lab campus, combining Standards Division Labs and administration. We all have our fingers crossed that this proposal will pass.

### Standards Lab

LF had the opportunity to attend WRAP in May. The tour of the Hawaii lab was very informative and provided many ideas as we approach the possibility of a new laboratory ourselves. L.F. was able to photograph the original, original state mass standards that were issued to Hawaii when the islands gained statehood. These standards were interesting since they were supposed to be prototypes for all of the labs in the 1960's NBS New State Standards Program. Instead the design was changed before the other laboratories were equipped and the Hawaii mass standards are unique (hence, the original, original standards). Thanks again to Michael Tang and the Hawaii folks for the invitation.

We encourage all Southern W&M directors and metrologists to respond to the recent decision by the U.S. Department of Labor, Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Policy Committee rejecting the three metrology occupations proposed by the NCSLI. These position titles and descriptions would have been included in the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) used by educators and counselors

to inform students about career opportunities. This decision nullifies many long hours of work by NCSLI and hinders recruitment of well trained technicians into metrology positions. The SOC is updated once every 10 years. The comment period on this decision is May 23 thru July 21, 2008. Hopefully the committee will receive enough comments and reverse the decision. For details contact Craig Gulka [cgulka@ncsli.ccsend.com] or Val Miller [val.miller@nist.gov].

L.F. is proudly showing off the first “baby pictures” of our new Sartorius CCR-10-1000 robotic mass comparator from Germany. Katarina (as L.F. has named her in honor of Katarina Witt, the East German Olympic skater) is developing nicely and promises to be an excellent addition to the laboratory staff...uh, I mean equipment. We hope to receive this unit in early August.

The LP gas calibration shed has been enclosed, adding much needed (temperature controlled) storage space for equipment and supplies. We have ordered a new 4,000 lb capacity pallet stacker to replace our aging unit. We’ve also received new ergonomic chairs for everybody at the laboratory. Laboratory productivity will be monitored closely to ensure folks aren’t sitting too much in their new, comfortable chairs.

### **Motor Fuels Section**

Art Rupard, program manager, was able to attend the ASTM International meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia. There was a lot of discussion on biodiesel concerning specifications and test methods.

The Motor Fuels Lab is awaiting delivery of four Dodge Sprinters for conversion into mobile lab vans. We have three Sprinters already in use. They are averaging almost two times more miles per gallon than the step vans that they are replacing. As we are under a legislative mandate to reduce our petroleum use, this will be a big help in meeting our goal over the next couple of years. The inspectors have more space inside for testing and they drive very nice. The savings from buying less fuel will cover the additional expense vs. a step van in about 2 years.

### **Measurement Section**

The Measurement Section is almost fully staffed with the exception of Jimmy Bowles who is out on medical leave, having had knee replacement surgery

on June 23rd. He is a Retail Weights and Measures inspector in the Rockingham area in the southern part of the state. We are also waiting for confirmation on the new Retail Weights and Measures Inspector for the Carteret and surrounding counties area. With Jimmy’s return and this position filled we will be fully staffed. Hope we can stay that way for a good while.

As usual prices of gasoline and diesel have been “fuel” for keeping us on the go; investigating concerns and complaints of dispenser starting before product begins to flow, shortages, overcharges and the like. Another problem that has come into light recently is with the analog dispensers that will not exceed \$3.999 per gallon. New computers to correct this are on back order due to the influx of orders. At first we were not going to allow ½ pricing as we have in the past, but due to the back order of computers, we are allowing it again to prevent anyone from having to discontinue gasoline and fuel sales. As always these concerns are top priority.

Price scanning errors are still a major concern. We have, to date for 2008, received payment on 29 civil penalties and have over a dozen still pending on locations exceeding the 2% overcharge error rate. We have collected over \$55,000.00 to date in paid penalties. These monies are given to the school system in the county in which the penalty was issued.

### **LP-Gas Section**

In April, Richard Fredenburg, LP-Gas Engineer, made a presentation to the advanced class at the annual North Carolina Fire Prevention School about the state’s LP-Gas Law and changes in the LP-Gas Code. They request

In May, all personnel in the LP-Gas section received training on cathodic protection of underground LP-Gas tanks. This will allow the inspectors to verify that underground tanks are in compliance with the LP-Gas Code requirements for being protected to minimize corrosion. These inspections were suspended last year at the request of the industry due to lack of “documented” training. Now that this concern has been addressed, we are considering including this testing as part of our inspection.

Several managers from the Standards Division participated in an audio conference on How to Effectively Supervise Off-Site Employees. While the conference was not aimed specifically at supervising

field employees (inspectors) it did provided some useful information.

LP-Gas Inspectors checked food vendors and barbecue contestants for safe and proper propane tanks and equipment at the first Got To Be NC Festival. This was a good training session for one of our new site inspectors as he will have the honor of performing similar (but much more numerous) inspections at the N.C. State Fair in October.

Stephen Benjamin and Richard Fredenburg attended the North Carolina Propane Gas Association board meeting. Part of that meeting was a seminar on global warming and how it may affect the propane industry.

One of our LP-Gas meter calibrators came across a Mid:Com meter he could not calibrate. We made contact with Mid:Com and downloaded some information from the Mid:Com web site, which allowed our inspectors to write a procedure to calibrate these meters. †

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**Contact SWMA**

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