

Southern Weights & Measures Association

169th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

September 2023

Hello SWMA Members,

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the 78th annual meeting of the Southern Weights and Measures Association. The meeting will be held at the DoubleTree in Annapolis October 8th-11th. The hotel is within walking distance of Annapolis Towne Center, The Festival at Riva, and the Annapolis Mall, which have a multitude of dining and entertainment options. The outing is scheduled for the evening of October 10th and will be held at the Annapolis Maritime Museum. As guests, you will be able to browse the museum exhibits, and enjoy the open dock area on the Annapolis waterfront during cocktail hour, with dinner to follow.

If you have any questions about the area, hotel, or the outing, please contact me. I will see you all in a few short weeks.

Take care,

Alison

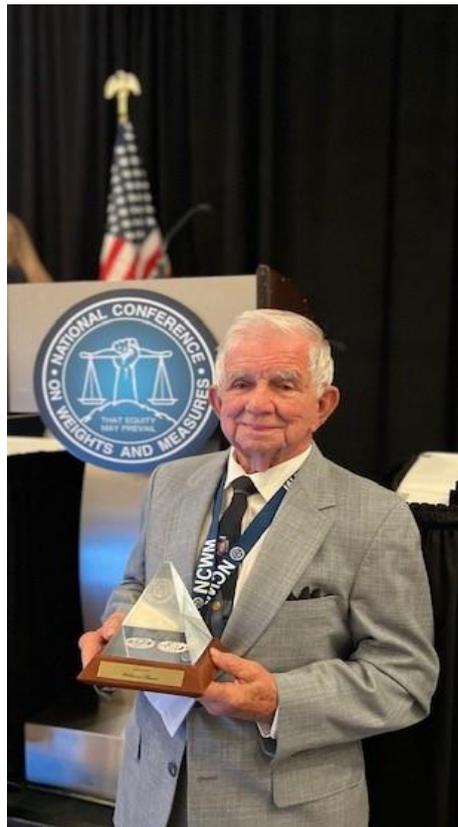
Reminder – The hotel block closes September 8th!!!

Florida

- In the last newsletter we reported that, as some other states, Florida has seen an increase in Price Verification violations and the trend continues. The Bureau of Standards is maintaining its emphasis on Price Verification and Net Content inspections.
 - The department is still having some difficulty hiring and retaining employees. Even though we have seen and increase in qualified applicants, we still have several vacant positions. Due to the increased turnover
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our demand for training is higher and our inspection interval has been affected with some areas slightly falling behind on inspections. We are having special difficulty hiring LP Gas inspectors.

- Our bureau just held the Inspectors Annual Workshop in Lake Mary, Florida with attendance of all our field inspection staff. We had multiple presentations and training modules directed to improve our inspection procedures and provide better tools to our inspector to enhance proficiency and increase efficiency. The IT team presented several updates to our system as well as an improved version of the GIS map.
- Within the past six months we finally received 12 new replacement petroleum inspection trucks, and five more are expected to arrive in the next four months; these five trucks we'll have utility bodies and J provers installed on them. We are also in the process of ordering the replacement of one of the tractors of our vehicle scale inspection units and three of our medium capacity inspection trucks; one of them was just delivered and we are in the process of installing the body and inspection equipment on it. By next year we expect to have replaced all the old vehicles in our fleet including large and medium inspection units.
- Florida is very pleased with the recently created NCWM Inspector of the Year Award in recognition to the important work of those members of the Weights and Measures Community performing field inspections. One of our inspectors, Bill Masur, happened to be the first recipient of this award that serves as tribute to hundreds of inspectors nationwide. We are very proud of Bill's 30 years of great service to Florida consumers. He is set to retire in a few days.



Mississippi



The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce has been fortunate enough to hire several inspector positions, in several of our Regulatory Bureau Divisions.

Drew Villar (left), who was previously in the Petroleum Division, has returned to the MDAC, and is working as an intermediate scale inspector in our weights and measures division. Drew covers the north central area of the state.

Robert Waltman (right) has also been hired as an intermediate scale inspector in the weights and measures division, working the southeast area of the state. Robert’s experience in weights and measures, as

a cattle and poultry farmer, made him an excellent choice to fill the post.

Both gentlemen have completed their training under the direction of division supervisor Greg Gholston and are doing an outstanding job.



Accepting a position with the Petroleum division in February 2023, is Michael Kusch, Jr. (left). Michael is one of two father-son teams working within the division and has been a part of the petroleum family since birth. His knowledge and capabilities have been instrumental in covering an ever-growing area along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Michael has completed his training, under the direction of division supervisor, Clay Hammons and is doing a great job.

Mauriuna Jackson (right), also joined the MDAC family in February 2023. Mauriuna is our newest Metrologist in-training and is doing an outstanding job learning the ropes and assisting with getting the Mississippi Metrology Lab up and running and on the road to recognition.

A huge thank you to our Louisiana partners, especially Whitney, Jennifer, and Tyler for assisting with Mauriuna’s on-the-job training! Mauriuna has completed the NIST Fundamentals course held in Gaithersburg the first week of August. We are hopeful that we will be much closer to NIST recognition very soon.



The Weights and Measures Division recently upgraded their fleet of Intermediate Scale vehicles, transitioning from cargo vans, to work bodies for three of the six vehicles, providing a much safer and quieter environment for the team. While we are hopeful to complete the fleet by fiscal year end this is a work in progress, given that supply issues continue to present a problem with purchasing vehicles.

Pictures top left, Marty Phillips, right, Matthew Kelley, bottom Charles Champagne.



Oklahoma

It was great seeing everyone at the NCWM Annual meeting in Norfolk, VA. I had a great time and learned a lot.

Congratulations to Gene Robertson on becoming the new NCWM Chairman!

Our Metrology laboratory is working on gaining their NIST Accreditation again and should be able to start conducting Mass 3 calibrations sometime in September.

That's about all that's going on currently in Oklahoma as we wrap up the summer months.

Gary Smith

North Carolina

We are busy preparing for our Mountain State Fair, held in Fletcher, September 8-17, followed by the State Fair in Raleigh, October 12-22. The Division has a booth at both events in addition to having inspectors checking all the scales used on the grounds and having and LP-Gas inspectors checking all the propane tanks throughout the fairs on a daily basis.

The department is planning to launch a new website in early December. Having one webmaster for the entire department is not practical, so much of the effort has been pushed down to the divisions – so Stephen has developed a new skill set towards this goal.

Weights and Measures

Greetings from the Tarheel state, North Carolina.

We have been plugging through the hot summer looking forward to the fall. We have three positions open currently. One is in the hiring process with the other soon to begin. We had one new hire. Drew Bond accepted our fuel dispenser inspector position and he has settled in well. Archer Wilkins got the opportunity to take a promotion into our weights and measures inspector position. He is doing well and currently going through in house training.

We are working on switching over two G&O beds onto new chassis this year. Maybe that will go smooth and quickly. Also hope to pick up a new truck for one of our calibrators as the mileage is growing high.

God Bless,

Chad Parker

Metrology

During the last quarter, several metrologists participated in training and attended conferences. In April, Ed Stevens and Kevin Knox attended the Mass Metrology Seminar on the NIST Campus in Gaithersburg, Maryland for two (2) weeks Also in April, Robert Rogers attended the A2LA Conference in Tucson, Arizona. In July, Van Hyder attended the NCSLI Conference in Orlando, Florida. Ed and Kevin recently completed the Volume Seminar in August, but Kevin then resigned on August 21. We are currently in the process of conducting interviews for our other metrologist vacancy and have requested Kevin's position to be advertised.

On May 1st, 2023, we hired Jeremiah Lanning to take over our Grain Moisture Program. He comes to us from our Markets Division in The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Our Grain Moisture Section completed SRWW harvest at the beginning of June. We were able to collect adequate grain in the desired moisture ranges for the 2024 testing season! We are looking forward to a good corn harvest in late summer. One of our 2 field inspector position is vacant again as the temporary employee we had for 11 months decided he did not want the full-time position, that position recently posted.

Sharon Woodard

Fuel Quality

The program recently had one of the octane engine operators resign after 7 months and are exploring using a temporary employee, given how long it took to find a qualified candidate last time. As a temp, they can gain some experience towards the full-time position and the process to onboard is much faster – once a candidate is found.

Field staff in this program is also a challenge, with 4 of our 11 positions vacant at the moment, which includes a new employee that started on August 28th. This impacts not only the ability to investigate complaints, but the lab is dependent on samples from the field.

LP-Gas Program

The 2024 edition of the *LP-Gas Code* should come out shortly. We automatically adopt this document, but delay implementation until January 1. With our web-based inspection system we must update the various inspection forms to reflect any code reference additions or changes. Some training of staff on these new codes has been completed, with more to come in the fall.

Wanted – Secretary/Treasurer for SWMA

For those that did not attend the NCWM meeting in Norfolk, I plan to retire at the end of the year. We need a new Sec/Treas for the organization, though I am willing to be in the assistant role to mentor the new person.

Responsibilities include this fabulous newsletter, producing minutes of the business meeting of the SWMA, keeping the financial records, producing the Treasurer's report and assisting in the annual SWMA and SEMAP, primarily paying deposits/invoices. Most of the time commitment is in the months prior to the annual meeting, getting the registration organized, working with the host state on the documents and keeping up with the accounts as our fiscal year ends on September 30th. The NCWM staff is always willing to help getting things on the website for us! If you are interested or curious, please feel free to contact me with any questions - Stephen

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Membership inquiries should be directed to: Stephen Benjamin, SWMA Secretary-Treasurer
NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, 1050 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1001
Phone: 984-236-4755
E-Mail: steve.benjamin@ncagr.gov , Website: <http://www.swma.org>
News may be submitted to: SWMA, 1050 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1001, E-mail:
steve.benjamin@ncagr.gov