



# Southern Weights & Measures Association

111th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

October 2007

## Fee Changes Approved By SWMA Board of Directors

The SWMA Executive Committee met during the 2007 Annual Meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas. One of the items on the agenda was to review the annual membership dues and the registration fee for the annual meeting. The primary reason for considering the fee changes was the cost of conducting the annual meetings. Host states are often finding that they need funding beyond the revenue received from the annual meeting dues and Associate Membership contribution. The committee felt that this situation was placing the host states into potentially complicated situations. The most practical solution was to propose a slight increase in both the annual dues and meeting registration fees, with the understanding that the increase in revenue would be used to assist in the cost of conducting the annual meeting. The committee provided their report to the membership in attendance; however, in an attempt to allow all SWMA BOD members the opportunity to vote, it was decided that an e-mail vote would be conducted immediately after the meeting. On October 26, 2007 an e-mail ballot outlining the proposed fee increases was issued to each SWMA board jurisdiction. The result of the ballot was 14 jurisdictions voting in favor, and 0 votes opposed. Jurisdictions voting in favor were: AL, AR, DE, MD, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, WV. The return met the requirements of the SWMA Bylaws; therefore, the motion carried and the fees for SWMA annual dues and Annual Meeting Registration Fees are now as follows:

- Effective January 1, 2008 – Annual Dues are \$50.00 per person.
- Effective with the 2008 Annual Meeting – Registration Fees are \$150.00 for SWMA members and \$225.00 for non-members.

The Executive Committee is grateful for the support of the SWMA Board of Directors in approving these increases. The committee urges the association to monitor the effect of these fee changes and to continue to make any necessary adjustments to ensure that the host states have the resources to conduct successful meetings in the future. ☩

## JURISDICTIONAL NEWS GEORGIA

The 2007 SWMA meeting held in Little Rock Arkansas was a big success and the State of Arkansas was very gracious and accommodating to everybody. The hospitality that was provided was outstanding. Rich Lewis and Marvin Pound want to extend a warm thank you for all the people that helped in putting on the meeting and entertainment.

Some of the topics discussed at the SWMA meeting were Retail Motor Fuel Temperature Compensation, Safety Awareness, Multiple Dimension Measuring Devices, Vehicle on-board Weighing Systems, Belt Conveyer Systems, Biodiesel Labeling at the Retail Level, and last of all the proposal to increase the annual SWMA membership dues.

The discussion about the Retail Motor Fuel Temperature Compensation led to several topics on the subject to be introduced at the National Conference by the L&R committee.

The PDC presented several issues concerning static electricity at the retail level.

The recommendations to replace the PVC storage tubes with aluminum tubes were brought up. To connect the delivery hose to the truck first before approaching the storage tank. Having annual safety meetings with field staff to ensure proper procedures are being used in the field. Also to eliminate all plastic materials in the inspection process.

The committee voted to a no change position on the Multiple Dimension Measuring Device law and no discussion on the Vehicle onboard Weighing System. The topics were to be moved to the National Conference for more discussions.

The committee recommended additional labeling for all biodiesel fuels at retail level.

Due to the rising cost of everything involved in planning, paying for, and other costs associated with the SWMA meeting the committee had recommended an increase in the annual membership fee to help support meeting expenses. The proposal to increase member fees from \$125 to \$150 and non member fees from \$175 to \$225 was discussed by the committee. In closing we would like to extend to each and everyone of you a invitation to the 2008 SWMA in Atlanta. We look forward to a very productive conference and promise a good time will be had by all. ☩

## NORTH CAROLINA

### Measurement Section

The NC Western State Fair and The NC State Fair here in Raleigh, that are held in September and October respectively, require many, many man hours of our time to assist the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in putting these two large events on each year. This is in addition to performing inspections of LP-Gas tanks and scales used by vendors participating in these events.

Thousands upon thousands of people come to these two events each year. It gives us an excellent opportunity to let people know what agriculture is really all about and how it affects them. You would be surprised at how many times you will hear "I didn't know that" or "I didn't know that's where that came from". Plus they get to have a great time on the amusements and view the exhibits while learning. It is also a good time to showcase the Standards Division and how we are out there to protect and serve the consumer with our various inspections.

### Measurement Section

Fall of the year is upon us. A lot of our regular inspection duties have been reduced due to seasonal activities. Cotton, tobacco, livestock and peanut scales have occupied most of our Heavy Scale Inspector's time recently. With a lot of our attention drawn to other things, we still keep our regulars inspection duties going. Great care is taken to see that all concerns and requests are handled or investigated within 24 hours if at all possible. Our regular duties are our top priority and must still be carried on.

Price scanning errors are still a great concern. We are meeting with companies, at their requests, to help them find ways to reduce the pricing overcharge errors we are finding in their locations. We have gotten their attention and want to help them in finding a solution to this problem. We altered our fining structure this year and now inspect until a store passes in an effort to reduce repeat offenders. Unfortunately I think we will have another record with regards to the numbers of penalties and the amount collected.

Mike Simonof is planning to retire at the end of October. He has been with us 18 years and currently serves as a dual role inspector checking fuel dispensers, scales, price scanning systems and packages for net content. His wife has been retired for a couple of years and they plan to travel for awhile. Congratulations Mike!

### Motor Fuels Section

A few personnel changes recently, Wanxi Chen has joined our staff as a Chemist I. He has a Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry. Previously, Dr. Chen held a research position with a local laboratory. James Milliam has been promoted from Courier Driver to a Chemistry Tech I. The courier and one of the field chemist positions will be advertised shortly.

The lab has installed a new GC and a FTIR. They are now in the process of setting up test methods to analyze both biofuel samples as well as petroleum fuels. Two of our employees are planning to travel to Maryland for FTIR training at the beginning of October.

We have completed the conversions of two Dodge Sprinters into mobile lab vans. They are expected to use less fuel due because of their efficient diesel engines compared to the gasoline powered step vans that make up our current fleet. State agencies are under a mandate to reduce petroleum use by 20% by the year 2010. Since we can't reduce our miles driven, we are looking to meet that goal by driving more efficiently and using alternative fuels. We are still working on a third Sprinter and expect to order two more this year.

### Standards Lab

Ronnie Eubanks and Harry Moody audited the laboratory for NVLAP in August. Thanks to the work of Cliff Murray, laboratory quality assurance manager, and expertise of all laboratory metrologists, the audit went extremely well. Cliff was responsible for significant revisions of quality program to comply with the new requirements of ISO Standard 17025-2005. Sharon Woodard even commented that Harry asked a lot more questions than any other previous auditor did. She answered each without hesitation and with a level of professionalism that impressed both auditors. The only audit finding (yes, only one!) concerned the new requirement to actively seek customer feedback. This system was already in development and has since been completed. L.F. has been heard to say that he actually enjoyed this audit! It was really a pleasure to sit back and observe how the NVLAP accreditation process has helped to lead the laboratory to a new level of professionalism. Accreditation required a considerable effort. Now, we finally feel that we have reached a maintenance level and are enjoying the benefits of accreditation. There are still improvements to make. There always will be. Constant quality improvement is a process, not a goal. This NVLAP audit confirmed that the NC Standards Laboratory is progressing proficiently along that endless path toward the future.

L.F. attended the Southwestern Measurement Assurance Program (SWAP) meeting in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Some of the new members of SWAP questioned the North Carolina connection to the Southwest, but we truly appreciate North Carolina's long time adoption by our Southern neighbor. The addition of SWAP proficiency testing and training provides our lab many resources. Participation in both programs affords the lab training opportunities that could not exist without totally shutting the lab down for a single regional meeting. Proficiency tests are strengthened for all participants by the increased number of measurements. Finally, sharing information across regions is one of the strongest advantages of the NIST Weights and Measures Division, State Laboratory Program. Again we thank NIST WMD and SWAP for this opportunity.

As construction plans continue to expand for the area around the NC Standards Laboratory, we are continuing to research robotic mass comparators. These will allow Mass Echelons I and II work to be done after hours when construction and traffic vibration levels are low. The legislature has appropriated funding for this equipment as both a stop gap measure until a new laboratory can be built and as a step forward into the future. These comparators will allow the laboratory to provide the higher levels of mass calibration accuracy needed by our customers (especially the many we serve in the pharmaceutical industry).

Once again L.F. hopes to stay on the leading edge of technology instead of the bleeding edge of experience. (He's been in both positions often!) Sometimes the line between the two is very narrow indeed!

### LP-Gas Section

We got approval for a new LP-Gas Site Inspector position with the 2007-08 budget. It will be based in the Raleigh and cover an 11 county area. We currently have 4 site inspectors for the entire state, so this will be a long needed shift in workload for those guys. We will advertise this position shortly.

James Lambert, our LP-Gas site inspector for Western North Carolina was the NCD&CS Employee of the Month for August.

Our LP-Gas Engineer, Richard Fredenburg, participated in the NPGA Technology, Standards, and Safety Committee meeting in Kansas City in September. Also that month, he attended the annual staff meeting of the Florida LP-Gas Bureau to discuss matters of mutual concern.

With the recently issued 2008 edition NFPA 58, the LP-Gas Code, we are in the process of getting ready to enforce the new edition beginning on January 1, 2008 ☞

## TENNESSEE

Fall is upon us which means that the annual Southern Weights and Measures Association meeting is right around the corner. Tim Chesser has developed an outstanding program for this year's meeting in Little Rock, AR. We hope to have several members attending this session which will be highlighted by the Automatic Temperature Compensation (ATC) discussion.

Speaking of ATC, Bob Williams recently attended the ATC Steering Committee meeting in Chicago which included attendees with a wide range of expertise. Don Onwiler, Chairman of the Steering Committee, did an outstanding job in facilitating this session with help from the other committee members. Different points of view were presented and discussed during this session with everyone in attendance having an equal opportunity to ask questions and present their points of view.

Randy Jennings and Bob Williams attended the National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM) in July held at Salt Lake, Utah. A number of important and timely issues were discussed and voted on during this conference.

Our inspectors recently completed their annual inspection of cotton gin bale scales and will be beginning tobacco warehouse scale inspections soon. Fall livestock scale inspections began in mid September. Two (2) of our large scale testing units have recently been in the shop for an extended period of time due to transmission and engine problems. This has made for some interesting scheduling for our staff!

We have recently purchased and installed two (2) new balances in our metrology laboratory. Our Metrologist, Ken Wilmoth, has made great strides in reviving our laboratory program and we sincerely appreciate all of the assistance and patience that our neighboring state labs have extended to us.

NIST Weights and Measures Division will be conducting a joint federal/state sponsored instructor training course on NIST Handbook 133, "Checking the Net Contents of Packaged Goods" in Nashville September 23-28, 2007. This course will be conducted at our training facility and we look forward to meeting the attendees along with seeing the NIST instructors. We have been fortunate to attend these type courses in the past and have found them to be very beneficial.

See you in Little Rock!! ☞

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## The 62nd Annual Conference

By Randy Burns

The 62nd Annual Conference of the Southern Weights and Measures Association held October 21-24, 2007 in Little Rock, Arkansas is now history. Over 120 delegates and guests representing government and industry from numerous states chose to participate.

The Southern has always been a forum for exchanging ideas and working toward issues vital to the weights and measures community. Once again all the components were there for a successful and productive conference: Issues, opportunity and a group of dedicated delegates willing to listen as well as share their ideas and experience.

Petroleum-based issues addressed were those foremost on our minds. Automatic temperature compensation and biodiesel labeling were among those hot topics of discussion. One plan of action to come as a result is that the SWMA is encouraging the Professional Development Committee to work with the Specifications and Tolerance and Law and Regulation Committees on developing the possibility of an automatic temperature compensation training course for the testing of retail motor fuel devices in the event the National Conferences approves automatic temperature compensation. Education was also an offering. To better inform the regulators there was presentation on ARegulatory Impediments to Ethanol Blending in the Southeast@ by Daniel H. Moenter of the Marathon Petroleum Company.

Sandwiched in between committee sessions, participants were afforded the opportunity to dine on world class barbecue and trimmings by the Memphis World Championship winners Jim and Becky Johnson of the Complete Scale Service.

It was a time also to honor the long-term efforts of Weights and Measure supporters Mike Belue, Dick Suiter and Tom Coleman on their retirements.

Mike Belue, of Belue Associates was honored with a lifetime membership and plaque for his 31 years of commitment to the SWMA (and by his count over 150 weights and measures conferences), the last seven of which he served as chaplain. Mike has been a longtime supporter of weights and measures.

Dick Suiter, NIST received a plaque and thanks for his many contributions as NIST Technical Advisor to the Specifications and Tolerance Committee, NTETC Weighing Sector and his long-term assistance in the development of Handbook 44.

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Tom Coleman NIST also received this recognition for his role as NIST Technical Advisor to the Laws and Regulations Committee as well as his aid in the evolution of NIST Handbooks' 130 and 133.

There was even a little time to kick back and socialize at the Little Rock Supper Club where attendees and their guests were

treated to an opportunity to dine, socialize and enjoy live entertainment.

To host a conference is a daunting, but rewarding task. We would like to thank all of you for this opportunity and your cooperation, assistance and understanding. We hope this meeting will be remembered as well worth the time and effort. ☪



**Delegates and guests enjoying lunch at the Riverfront Amphitheater along the scenic Arkansas River.**

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**Richard (Dick) Suiter receives special recognition for his service and friendship to the SWMA**



**Mike Belue accepting an honorary lifetime membership to the SWMA.**

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**Contact SWMA**

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