



Southern Weights & Measures Association

122nd Edition

SWMA Newsletter

October 2010

JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

FLORIDA

Bureau of Weights and Measures

In fiscal year 2009-10, the Bureau of Weights and Measures conducted over 59,000 inspections and accuracy tests on commercial weighing and measuring devices, primarily scales and taximeters. There were 3,060 devices ordered to be corrected because they were found to be out of compliance and another 1,526 devices were tagged immediately out of service because they were found to have excessive errors.

Inspectors also sampled lots representing more than 175,000 packages. Stop-sale orders were placed on over 16,000 packages that contained less than the stated contents or failed to provide the required information on the label. Many more packages were recalled or relabeled by producers as a result of Department inspections. A risk assessment procedure is employed that enables inspectors to more efficiently evaluate packages for compliance and target packages more likely to be in violation.

Inspectors randomly tested 5,876 items for price accuracy in 106 businesses, primarily grocery, department, discount, drug, building supply, and other retail stores. Overall results showed that 0.61 percent scanned at more than the posted price and 0.51 percent scanned at lower than the price advertised. Violations were corrected immediately, and 5 businesses that failed to meet the 98 percent national accuracy standard faced additional sanctions and testing.

The 2009 Legislative session established permitting requirements for businesses operating commercial weighing and measuring devices in the state (other than petroleum dispensing devices). The permitting requirement changed the funding for the Weights and Measures program from general revenues to the General Inspection Trust Fund. The Bureau contacted via mail and telephone over 18,000 businesses that records indicated may be subject to the new requirements and issued annual permits to over 16,000 businesses between September, 2009 and July, 2010. There were over 5,300 field enforcement visits to businesses that failed to obtain required permits during the year.

In the metrology laboratory, tests and calibrations were performed on more than 10,900 mass standards used by state inspectors, laboratories, high-tech industries, and commercial scale repair agencies, as well as 736 test measures used to check the accuracy of gas pumps and wholesale meters. The laboratory maintained its National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program accreditation for providing traceable calibration services.

Bureau of Petroleum Inspection

In fiscal year 2009-2010, 97.8 percent of the petroleum products collected and tested met state standards, which are considered among the strictest in the nation. The samples represent more than 8.8 billion gallons of alternative and petroleum fuels distributed throughout Florida. During this period, the Department issued 602 stop-sale orders to prevent the sale of more than 9,374,080 gallons of substandard or improperly labeled fuel.

The petroleum laboratories, located in Tampa, Tallahassee, and Port Everglades, conducted 156,504 tests on petroleum and alternative fuels and antifreeze and brake fluid products. Department petroleum field inspectors also conducted 225,243 inspections on retail motor fuel dispensers at approximately 8,991 retail motor fuel facilities throughout Florida. As a result of these inspections, 3,463 motor fuel pumps were cited for improper calibration and 35,753 correction notices were issued for improperly maintained pumps.

The Bureau of Petroleum Inspection is also responsible for registering and monitoring antifreeze and brake fluid products sold in Florida. Laboratory personnel analyze antifreeze products for corrosion, freezing point, boiling point, and chemical content, and brake fluid products for boiling point, elastomer swelling, and chemical content before registering such products as suitable for sale to the public. During fiscal year 2009-2010, the Department registered 338 brands of antifreeze and 160 brands of brake fluid as acceptable products to be marketed throughout Florida.

The Department also handled 3,412 petroleum-related consumer- and pricing-related complaints as a result of posting the 1-800-HELP FLA consumer hotline decal on motor fuel dispensers. Complaints were concentrated primarily on fuel quality, meter accuracy, and price. The petroleum inspection field staff work to respond to these complaints within 24 to 48 hours.

This past year the Department continued to inspect and monitor the more than 1,000 wholesale and retail motor fuel facilities that were required to have alternate generated power equipment and/or wiring installed to operate designated facility functions during an electrical outage. Affected facilities were required to install electrical transfer switches capable of connecting to backup electricity generators, which may be used to supply electrical power to facilities and supply available fuel to consumers during a disaster.

Renewable and alternative fuels continue to migrate further into Florida's motor fuel marketplace. Following years of preparation for such products, the Department's petroleum testing laboratories continue to test such fuels entering the marketplace, ensuring compliance with state fuel quality standards and providing maximum consumer protection for consumers purchasing these products. Revised standards continue to be evaluated and adopted to ensure maximum consumer protection when purchasing these fuels.

The Department also uses numerous fraud investigation techniques, including the deployment of undercover vehicles, to ensure that consumers receive fair measure from fuel pumps. The unmarked vehicles have a specially designed and calibrated fuel tank that enables a trained inspector to determine a pump's calibration without a service station operator's knowledge. The undercover vehicles have confirmed that most fuel pumps in Florida are accurate and consumers are receiving fair mea: ⚡ .

GEORGIA

There are some big changes on the horizon for the Georgia Department of Agriculture and the Fuel & Measures Division. Our State Agriculture Commissioner, Tommy Irvin is getting ready to retire. Commissioner Irvin is the longest serving Commissioner of Agriculture in the United States. He has served as Commissioner of Agriculture for more than 41 years of a 54-year-plus career in public service. He also is the longest serving statewide official in Georgia. The American Farm Bureau Federation recently honored Commissioner Irvin with its Distinguished Service Award. Irvin has served as president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) as well as president of the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture (SASDA). Commissioner Irvin and his wife, Bernice, live on a farm in the Glade Creek Community of Habersham County. They are the parents of five children, 14 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. We wish Commissioner Irvin a happy and fulfilling retirement.

The progress continues with the building of our new lab complex in Tifton, Georgia. The construction is coming along right on schedule. We anticipate to starting operations there next year during late spring or early summer.

Director Rich Lewis and Agriculture Manager Marnie Pound will be attending the SWMA annual conference in Columbia, South Carolina. Rich will be serving on the PDC and Executive Committees as well as serving as a Presiding Officer.

Our division courier, Clyde Young, was recently diagnosed with throat cancer. Clyde is currently at home undergoing cancer treatment. We miss Clyde greatly at work and are wishing him a speedy recovery. Please keep Clyde and his family in your prayers during this difficult time. ⚡

NORTH CAROLINA

LP-Gas Section

Richard Fredenburg, our LP-Gas Engineer, made a presentation to North Carolina OSHA supervisors and some inspectors to explain how we do LP-Gas inspections. They explored where our programs overlap and explained concerns that we do inspections to different editions of the LP-Gas Code. It was suggested that we do the inspections for LP-Gas equipment and that OSHA limit their inspections to actions and practices of the LP-Gas companies.

Richard participated in the National Propane Gas Association Technology, Standards, and Safety Committee meeting in Cincinnati. One subject being explored by a task force in this committee is the use of master meters for calibrating LP-Gas delivery meters. There is an effort to develop standards and procedures for this type of calibration.

Standards Laboratory

The month of October is always an exciting month for us at the Standards Laboratory as it is time for our annual 5 gallon test measure run. From October 1 – 11, we begin our journey from Lumberton traveling as far west as Asheville, making stops in Greensboro and Charlotte, before ending in Greenville. Metrologists Tal Anderson and Gerald Price will calibrate over 400 test measures during this 7 day process, coming home on the weekends only to hit the trail bright and early Monday mornings. Between the two of them, they have over eleven (11) years of experience calibrating test measures and they both really enjoy the opportunity to work out in the field.

We are preparing for the NC State Fair scheduled for October 14 – 24, 2010. The theme for this year is "Celebrate what's great." We will have our annual standards booth set up to give customers their weight for free. Again this year the fair setup will be handled by metrologist Van Hyder. He has worked diligently over the years to make sure our booth is an outstanding representation of the Standards Division. The main feature will be an 8' x 16' picture of our brand new heavy duty scale truck with the weight cart and some weights being on display. Another display will cover small and medium scale inspections.

As part of being a NC STAR public sector site we were invited to participate in the regional Carolina Star Safety Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina. Our laboratory is part of the Northeastern region. There were workshops on "living the process", "training outside the box", "getting beyond zero" and many more. One important workshop that was highly recommended was the workshop on "Giants of Leadership – The nature of safety" which is the foundation of all successful safety programs. Two members of our laboratory safety team, Janice Long and Joey Creasy, were participants and came back with a lot of knowledge and ideas on how to make safety fun while

keeping it a top priority. We look forward to attending the conference again next year.

The grain moisture program just completed their corn harvest for the 2010-2011 testing season. Although the heat and lack of rain produced a less than stellar crop, we managed to get our samples harvested with little trouble. We are looking forward to the soybean harvest to wrap up our harvest year with high hopes for a good crop!

Measurement Section

It's "Harvest Time" here in North Carolina. We have been hurrying around to make sure that all tobacco, cotton, peanut, grain and livestock scales have been tested to insure that our North Carolina producers are getting a fair deal for their year long efforts. It's been a dry summer and in most parts of the state the crops have taken a beating. The farmers need everything they are entitled to.

The Mountain State Fair, held in Fletcher, NC, has come and gone with our inspectors in that end of the state devoting a lot of time and effort into that event. I understand that they had great "fair" weather, helping to set the second largest attendance record ever. The "Big Fair" is coming up in a couple of weeks here in Raleigh. Many of our guys will be pulled from their regular duties to assist in that endeavor. It's an eleven day event with many booths, exhibits and activities that need our assistance in staffing. Great care is taken to keep requests and complaints top priority, after all "Consumer Services" is part of our name.

With the ever changing prices of gasoline, complaints from the pumps are still high on our list along with incorrect pricing on the scanner scales. With a full staff we are able to get around to most of the dispensers each year. We are finding most of the complaints unfounded, but we still have to follow through on each one we get. The price scanning errors are another matter; we usually find there are problems with signage or some other reason for the prices to be wrong. If our inspections continue as they have, everyone should get close to getting around their assigned territories this year.

Motor Fuels Section

Mr. George Harrill will begin work as an inspector in October. He will fill the newly created territory carved out of the lower mountains area. Our goal is for the inspectors of the region to be able to reach the majority of their stations in less than two hours. Mr. Harrill previously was employed by Duke Power Company.

Karen Seymour, a veteran Chemist I with our section has retired. Karen worked for the department for 30 years, 25 of those were with the Motor Fuels Lab and her experience will be missed. We are presently working to fill her position.

The state continues to have issues with Phase Separation. There have been several cases recently in which E10 was mistakenly delivered to a station that was slated to receive conventional gasoline. The effect is that E10 is delivered to station

that has not prepared for it (didn't have all the water out of the tank).

A small quantity of sub-blend gasoline is being distributed in NC. Many retailers had set their Plus dispensers to deliver 100% Regular Unleaded w/10% ethanol, which has an octane greater than 89. When sub-blend w/ ethanol product is delivered to these stations they are now using an 87 octane fuel, the ratio in the blend pump has to be adjusted to add Premium back to the blend to get the octane correct. ⚡



The following is used to fill space; hope is acceptable to everyone.

The Guys' Rules

At last a guy has taken the time to write this all down Finally, the guys' side of the story.

(I must admit, it's pretty good.)

We always hear "the rules"

From the female side.

Now here are the rules from the male side.

These are our rules!

Please note.. these are all numbered "1"

ON PURPOSE!

1. Men ARE not mind readers.

1. Learn to work the toilet seat.

You're a big girl. If it's up, put it down.

We need it up, you need it down.

You don't hear us complaining about you leaving it down.

1. Sunday sports. It's like the full moon

or the changing of the tides.

Let it be.

1. Shopping is NOT a sport.

And no, we are never going to think of it that way.

1. Crying is blackmail.

1. Ask for what you want.

Let us be clear on this one:

Subtle hints do not work!
Strong hints do not work!
Obvious hints do not work!
Just say it!

1. Yes and No are perfectly Acceptable answers to almost every question.

1. Come to us with a problem only If you want help solving it.
That's what we do.

Sympathy is what your girlfriends are for.

1. A headache that lasts for 17 months is a problem .. See a doctor.

1. Anything we said 6 months ago is inadmissible in an argument.

In fact, all comments become null and void after 7 Days.

1. If you won't dress like the Victoria's Secret girls, don't Expect us to act like soap opera guys.

1. If you think you're fat, you probably are.
Don't ask us.

1. If something we said can be interpreted two ways and one of the ways makes you sad or angry, we meant the other one ..

1. You can either ask us to do something
Or tell us how you want it done.

Not both.

If you already know best how to do it, just do it yourself.

1. Whenever possible , Please say whatever you have to say during commercials.

1. Christopher Columbus did NOT need directions and neither do we.

1. ALL men see in only 16 colors, like Windows default settings. Peach, for example, is a fruit, not! A color. Pumpkin is also a fruit. We have no idea what mauve is.

1. If it itches, it will Be scratched.
We do that.

1. If we ask what is wrong and you say "nothing," We will act like nothing's wrong.

We know you are lying, but it is just not worth the hassle.

1. If you ask a question you don't want an answer to, Expect an answer you don't want to hear

1. When we have to go somewhere, absolutely anything you wear Is fine... Really.

1. Don't ask us what we're thinking about unless you are prepared to discuss such topics as baseball, the shotgun formation, or golf.

1. You have enough clothes.

1. You have too many shoes.

1. I am in shape. Round IS a shape!

1. Thank you for reading this.

Yes, I know, I have to sleep on the couch tonight;
But did you know men really don't mind that? It's like camping.

Pass this to as many men as you can -
to give them a laugh.

Pass this to as many women as you can -to give them a bigger laugh ☪

Contact SWMA

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