



Southern Weights & Measures Association

127th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

January 2012

JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

FLORIDA

Activity results for the Florida Bureau of Weights and Measures in fiscal year 2010-11:

W&M conducted 61,474 inspections and accuracy tests on commercial weighing and measuring (non-fuel dispensing) devices. There were 2,874 devices found out of compliance and ordered to be corrected and another 1,029 devices taken immediately out of service because they were found to have excessive errors.

Stop-sale orders were placed on over 22,000 packages that contained less than the stated contents or failed to provide the required information on the label. Additional 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 4,802 items for price accuracy in 84 businesses, primarily grocery, department, discount, drug, building supply, and other retail stores. Overall results showed that 1.25 percent scanned at more than the posted price and 1.04 percent scanned at lower than the price advertised. Violations were corrected immediately, and 11 businesses that failed to meet the 98 percent national accuracy standard faced additional sanctions and testing.

There over 16,000 businesses permitted for commercial non-fuel dispensing weighing and measuring devices, over 8,300 device inspections related to permit violations or situations during the year.

The state metrology laboratory conducted 7,999 tests and calibrations of mass standards as well as 717 volumetric test measures and provers. The laboratory maintained its NVLAP accreditation and NIST traceability certification.

Activity results for the Florida Bureau of Petroleum Inspection in fiscal year 2010-11:

Of the samples collected and analyzed from more than 10 billion gallons of petroleum fuel distributed throughout Florida 97.9 percent met state standards. There were 516 stop-sale orders issued to prevent the sale of 17,877,298 gallons of substandard or improperly labeled fuel. The quality of gasoline, alternative fuels (E85, biodiesel, ethanol, etc.), kerosene, diesel and fuel oil are determined at Department testing laboratories through analyses of octane rating, distillation, vapor pressure, vapor-liquid ratio, sulfur content, lubricity, oxygenate content, silver corrosion, alcohol content, fatty acid methyl ester (FAME) percentage, and flash point.

The Bureau registered 610 brands of antifreeze and brake fluid as acceptable products to be marketed in Florida. Laboratory analysts at laboratories in Tallahassee, Port Everglades, and Tampa conducted 195,915 tests of petroleum and alternative fuels in addition to antifreeze and brake fluid products.

Field staff conducted 277,762 petroleum inspections at both wholesale and retail petroleum facilities across the state. Inspections included calibrating tests, proper installations and maintenance of measuring devices and attached equipment, price gouging investigations, testing for water and debris, verification of backup electricity generation equipment and wiring, and labeling of petroleum dispensers at both wholesale and retail facilities. As a result of these inspections 4,946 dispensing devices were

cited for improper calibration and 66,321 corrections were issued for poorly maintained pumps. The Department also handled 3,306 petroleum-related and pricing consumer complaints as a result of a consumer hotline decal on petroleum dispensers and elsewhere. Complaints have concentrated on fuel quality, meter accuracy and price. The Department continues to use numerous fraud investigation techniques including the deployment of undercover vehicles to further ensure that consumers receive fair measure when purchasing petroleum products. The unmarked vehicles have a specially designed and calibrated gasoline tank that enables an inspector to determine a pump's calibration without a service station operator's knowledge. The undercover vehicles have confirmed that most petroleum pumps are accurate and consumers are receiving fair measure.

Note: This will most likely be the last time the activity results of the two programs will be reported separately. The Bureau of Weights and Measures and the Bureau of Petroleum Inspection are undergoing a merger that should be completed within the next couple of months. Although the responsibilities and duties assigned to both programs will continue, it is expected that the merger will benefit from efficiencies realized in the areas of supervision and management to address legislative budgetary concerns while providing consumers, businesses and visitors with continued quality services. †



Why women live longer.

GEORGIA

As we get into the winter months in Georgia the Fuel & Measures division becomes occupied with its usual cold weather activities; testing the quality of kerosene, monitoring firewood sales, licensing brands of antifreeze, etc. We are very pleased that our new fuel quality lab in Tifton is up and running as well as our mobile lab in metro Atlanta, just in time for the kerosene season. We recently discovered a couple of stations in south Georgia that were selling K2 kerosene for K1. We have also fielded a number of firewood related complaints.

We are getting ready say good bye to long time fuel chemist Larry Potts. Larry runs our mobile fuel lab and will be retiring at the end of January. We wish Larry a long and happy retirement. Fuel Inspector Doug Baker will be taking over the mobile lab in February. We would also like to welcome aboard Linda Roberts at our Tifton fuel lab.

Director Rich Lewis, Assistant Director Marnie Pound, and Supervisor Doug Killingsworth will be attending the NCWM Interim meeting in New Orleans. Rich will be serving on the L&R committee.

We are very saddened to announce the sudden loss this past fall of Glen Price. Glen was our middle Georgia Field Supervisor. He suffered a fatal heart attack at home. Our prayers continue to go out to his widow Jan Price and his father Mr. Raybun Price.

Doug Killingsworth is our new middle Georgia Field Supervisor. We would also like to welcome aboard Arnold Ivey as a heavy scale inspector.

It would appear that our budget situation is finally improving. There is some talk that we may get a few new pickup trucks for our retail fuel program. Some of our fuel inspectors are currently driving trucks with over 200,000 miles, so they are very much needed. †

NORTH CAROLINA

Happy New Year Everyone!

Standards Laboratory

The last quarter of the year is usually a slow time for the Standards Laboratory. During the month of November we filled our vacant Grain Moisture Supervisor position. Caroline Chewing joined us on November 14; however, she resigned in January for a position in Virginia. We are in the process of advertising this in mid- January.

We had our 2011 NVLAP assessment December 7th and 8th. We completed our annual OWM submissions which were allowed to submit after our NVLAP audit. We finished up the year with two successful Test Can Days, one in November the other in December, conducted in our laboratory for those last minute petroleum technicians who couldn't make the field test sites in October. We calibrated over four hundred 5 gallon test measures, 432 to be exact, which was a few more than we did last year.

The grain moisture meter testing program ended its 2011 harvest with a spotty soybean crop. Yields were down this year. While finding robust samples for the 2012 testing season was difficult, we were able to find an adequate amount for the upcoming year. We look forward to the beginning of a new year of grain inspection.

We will be busy in January working on our internal standards to be ready for customer work in February.

LP-Gas Section

A new database for tracking violations and for drafting warning and penalty letters for violations at LP-Gas bulk plants went live on September 1, 2011. Over 100 warning letters have been sent along with several penalty letters. This new process is already resulting in a better violation clearing rate than we have seen in the past. Planning for expanding the process to dispensing sites, trucks, and domestic sites is underway. The next step would be computers or tablets in the field to allow for data entry by the inspector rather than using paper forms.

Motor Fuels Laboratory

The HVAC renovations to the East Wing of the Motor Fuels Lab are almost complete. We have had to move some equipment to other rooms or work around the contractors for several months. The East Wing was constructed in the mid-seventies, so be-

yond a couple of low volume fume hoods, few resources were applied to air quality concerns. The renovation includes: One new fume hood, increased flow for existing hoods, installation of duct hoods in parts of the lab, and installation of two "elephant trunk" hoods. Overall, the system now provides for constant air exchanges in that part of the building. It has also separated the lab from the front office area with the intent to have better ventilation in the lab areas and better heating and air conditioning in the office areas.

Measurement Section

Our work for 2011 has come to an end. Let's tally up some numbers and see what we have accomplished. We conducted inspections at 17,840 locations as well as 1,751 special requests or complaints. Some of these were quite interesting or even comical. (Mr. Henry Opperman and I were talking about this one day at a National Meeting and he said we needed to get together and write a book of them. Probably would be a best seller. I know all of you bound to have some good ones as well.) 30,313 small and medium capacity scales (2,500 pounds or less) were tested. 2,341 were taken out of service for a rejection rate of 7.72%. Tests were conducted on 2,280 vehicle and livestock scales. 436 were rejected for a rejection rate of 19.12%. Inspections were done on 2,456 Scanning Systems with 289 exceeding the 2% allowable overcharge error rate for a failure rate of 11.77%. Civil penalties in the amount of \$108,178.00.00 were collected from 62 locations that exceeded the 2% overcharge error rate on the follow-up 300 item scan inspections. The county school systems in which the violations occurred received the monies collected for these civil penalties. 3,236,067 packages were inspected for correct net contents and correct labeling. 1,441 stop sales orders were issued involving 80,358 packages. 104,869 gas, diesel or kerosene dispensers were tested. 9,579 dispensers were rejected for repairs with a failure rate of 9.13%. 3,842 vehicle, rack or terminal meters were tested. Of these, 519 meters failed to meet the allowable tolerance with a rejection rate of 13.5%.

Considering we have been short handed 4 inspectors for most of the year, I am quite proud of our accomplishments. We have the go ahead to replace two of these positions and Sam Cain is back on the job af-

ter being out since April. Hope we can get everyone back in place and have even a better year.

Of course, I already know of two guys retiring this year and Jerry Lewis just had knee surgery and is go-

ing to be out many weeks. I guess when the average age of your staff is on up in the years as ours is (me included), being short-handed is just a fact you need to be willing to accept. †



Proof that marriage exists in the animal kingdom.

Contact SWMA

The SWMA Newsletter is published quarterly. Annual dues are \$50. Membership inquiries should be directed to:
N. David Smith, SWMA Secretary-Treasurer NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
1001 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-1001 Phone: 919-733-2113 Ext. 223 Fax: 919-715-0026
E-Mail: David.Smith@ncagr.gov www.swma.org

News may be submitted to:
SWMA 1904 Mission Road, Birmingham, AL 35216 E-mail: wdbrasher@charter.net

SWMA Newsletter
1904 Mission Road
Birmingham, AL 35216