

Southern Weights & Measures Association

160th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

April 2020

JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

FLORIDA

Greetings from Florida, we hope that this correspondence finds everyone and their families doing well in these difficult times.

On Wednesday March 18th The Bureau of Standards was told to cease field inspections throughout the state and have our inspection staff work from home until further notice. Having weathered more than one hurricane recently, my staff knew exactly what to do, we teleconferenced with our supervisors and training staff and quickly drafted a plan.

- Each day inspectors are attending on line training provided by the Ag Academy training staff. Some of the many classes offered are Microsoft Word, Excel, phone skills, Microsoft teams, and working remotely.
- Bureau of Standards training staff is hard at work developing and up-loading new training webinars each day to our own e-learning site. Some of these include Five Parts of an Inspection, price verification, intranet navigation, hazmat shipping and many other topics.
- Our supervisors are hosting webinars on topics specific to our procedure manual. Our field staff is also attending webinars hosted by NIST. So far, we are getting some really good feedback from our teams on these projects.

In the last newsletter I mentioned that we received 25 new pickups and SUV's. Transporting weights in an enclosed vehicle poses a greater risk to the driver and since we now have so many SUV's we have done some work to secure the weights that our retail inspectors use.



Pictured above is one of the boxes that we designed and installed in one of the new SUV's.



Here is one of our new Freightliner tractors that has been outfitted for use as a high capacity test unit. The Medium capacity units are still in the shop having the cranes installed but we hope to have them ready to roll very soon. 🚛

LOUISIANA

Overview

We recently added the LSU-Alexandria testing center for the National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM) professional level exams (PLE) proctored testing. Chancellor Paul Coreil was very gracious to let us visit with their testing center staff to make this happen and give central and north Louisiana team members access to this center. Our Louisiana State Civil Service folks in Baton Rouge still proctor NCWM PLE's and state credentialing exams can be taken in our offices as well. This greatly expands opportunities for our team members to enhance their professional development through these venues!

As of March 17, 2020, our inspection team plus our metrology and fuel labs are continuing business as usual. Our staff members are conducting their jobs using proper social distance, recommended PPE as well as other COVID-19 best practices in the field. We appreciate the diligence and professionalism of all of our team members!

Metrology

The volume lab in metrology was recently renovated to make volume calibrations safer and more efficient. Equipment and furnishings designed to calibrate volume replaced several years of retrofitting: 1. The old cabinets and sink were replaced with a seraphin test table. The self-leveling table assists the metrologist with pouring so that pours are consistent and ergonomic. 2. The basin sink was moved and raised to accommodate J provers at an appropriate height. Each of these updates maximizes consistency while minimizing heavy lifting.

Price Verification Program

To date, LDAF Weights and Measures inspectors have conducted 1,704 price verification inspections with a 11.60% rejection rate. We have inspected a total of 1,673 businesses for 2020. We will continue to help and work with retailers by promoting compliance with Louisiana Weights and Measures Law plus Rules and Regulations.



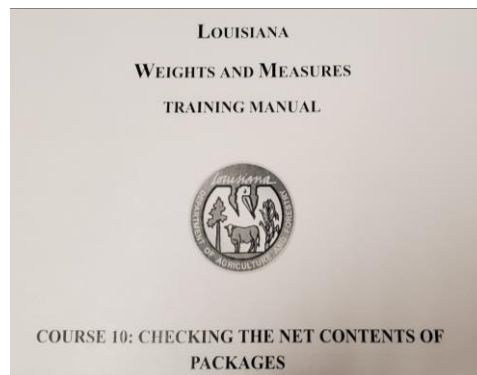
Inspector Alicia Waller conducting a price verification inspection as a cellular provider outlet in Northeast Louisiana

Scale and Package Program

This year we've had an increased focus on package inspections, especially labeling. We've found that a significant number of in state packers are leaving off the declaration of responsibility. We also plan to ramp up checking of feed packages as soon as our resources allow.

Professional Development

State Training Manual/Exam Update: Each of the unfinished Louisiana Training Manual Courses will be shared with all weights and measures staff. Everyone will have the ability to both edit and comment on any of the courses. Team members are encouraged to add content to the courses, not just edit the material that's already there. Editing is the last step in the process. As we continue to build our state training and testing, this will continue to allow our team members to build their resume as well as prepare to take NCWM basic and professional level exams.



Course 10: Checking the New Contents of Packages.

Here are the current stats for the NCWM and state exams:

- NCWM Basic Competency Exams - 31
- NCWM Professional Exams - 39
- State Exams - 76

Made available by:

Bobby H. Fletcher, Jr., PhD

Director, Weights and Measures

Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry 

NORTH CAROLINA

As I write this, I expect many of our programs are in similar circumstances. We suspended routine field inspections on March 19th, doing complaint investigations and some requests. The Metrology Lab is still operating, but we have reduced staff on a rotating basis. The Motor Fuels Lab is staffed only as needed for complaint samples. Our downtown office has a reduced staff at this time. We will adjust as necessary to this fluid situation. Hope everyone is coping, stay safe! - Stephen

Standards Laboratory

The first of the year is always a busy time of the year for us. We reserve this time on our schedule to have our working standards calibrate and to get ready for customer calibrations. We were able to begin customer calibrations by the first week in February. I applaud the efforts of our metrologists (**Van Hyder, Ashley Lessard, Joshua Hairston, Marina Paggen** and **Robert Rogers**) for a job well done.

Again, this year, Van Hyder, will serve as chairman for the Legal Metrology committee by NCSLI. We look forward to the many opportunities and contributions Van will make to enhance the legal metrology world.

In safety news, we will continue to participate in the Carolina Star Program. Our safety team representatives for this year are Steven Clapp and Sharon Woodard. Theme for this year's safety conference is: Safety Vision 2020. We have made the commitment to abide by the common goal of keeping safety first.

Sharon Woodard

LP-Gas Section

We are back at full strength with the hiring of **Kenneth Johnson**. He started March 1st and comes to us from the natural gas industry, where we worked for 20 years.

Richard Fredenburg, LP-Gas Engineer, participated in the *LP-Gas Code* technical committee pre-first draft meeting in Charlotte on February 27.

Richard spoke about significant changes in the 2020 edition of the *LP-Gas Code* at the North Carolina Propane Gas Association Train the Trainer conference on March 4.

Richard participated in the National Propane Gas Association Technology, Standards, and Safety Committee meeting in San Antonio on March 8-10

Richard participated in a meeting of the Technical Committee on Explosion Protection Systems for the *Guide on Explosion Protection for Gaseous Mixtures in Pipe Systems* by conference call on March 27.

Richard Fredenburg

Measurement Section

Greetings from the Tarheel state, North Carolina.

It is a very unusual time here in North Carolina, as I'm sure much of you are dealing with the corona virus lock down as we are. Usually I would be writing this in Raleigh at my desk, but at the time of this composing, North Carolina is under a state of emergency. We are encouraged to telework from home when possible, so I'm sitting at my dining table at home. Our field staff still must perform their duties during this time. I have instructed them to stay off the beaten path. Stay away from large grocery stores or gas stations. Find those little stores way out in the middle of nowhere and come in contact with as little as the public as possible. It's a weird time for everyone in the States.

Business must go on. We have filled another fuel dispenser position in the western mountains. I want to welcome **Roger Huskins**. He brings plenty of tech experience from his past work. He has completed his training with us and is fitting in nicely. We are planning on filling two more fuel dispenser positions in the next quarter. We are moving our way forward.

We are outfitting our new vehicles at this time with the possibility of acquiring some more this budget year. We are also very excited about some software technology that is on our horizon. Maybe I can share some more information next time. I hope everyone remains healthy and safe.

God Bless,

Chad Parker

Motor Fuels Section

We lost 2 field inspectors within the last month. Nikki Brown (Raleigh Area) resigned to move back to Tennessee to be near family. Her and her husband recently had a daughter, so having the grandparents closer was a factor in the decision. Shelby Sloan retired after a being out for an extended period for medical reasons. Shelby was the inspector "down east" or the southeast corner of the state and had been with us about 12 years. Both will be missed. 🙏

The SWMA Newsletter is published quarterly: Annual dues are \$50.

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