



Southern Weights & Measures Association

162nd Edition

SWMA Newsletter

October 2020

SWMA Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting was a little different this year, being held virtually due to covid-19 and the restrictions in place for events in Washington, DC, where we were supposed to meet. We had a little more time spent on meeting preparation than we usually do, both in getting the modified agenda organized and understanding the technology we would be using – but it all worked out well by the end. The standing committees worked well and got their hearing, work sessions and addendum reports completed in a timely manner. About 37 of our 67 members “attended” the voting and business sessions, including regulatory members from 13 jurisdictions, with Delaware joining us for the first time in forever.

I want to thank our **Ronald Johnson**, Washington, DC, our outgoing President, for all his efforts, especially over the last few weeks as the virtual event came together. Thank you to **Don Onwiler** and the NCWM staff for hosting and providing the technical support to the event. I appreciate the efforts of those making the business meeting complete – **Lou Straub**, **Tory Brewer** and **Hal Prince**. Finally, a thank you to all the committee chairs and members for their work under the circumstances, making it possible to get the new proposals reviewed and making recommendations to NCWM. I guess I just did a resolution report after all.

Congratulations to **Dr. Bobby Fletcher**, our 2020-21 President of the SWMA who will be hosting our next meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, details to follow in the coming months.

Stephen Benjamin – Secretary / Treasurer

JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

FLORIDA

Greetings from Florida, we hope that this finds everyone healthy and doing well.

Field office and administrative functions

The Bureau of Standards field office remains open and partially staffed, office staff are rotating days in the office to handle the workload while the others continue to work from home.

Field Inspections

Our field inspection staff are now back to performing their normal inspection work, they continue to utilize personal protective equipment and practice social distancing. Although inspections are a bit more difficult, the inspectors are doing a great job at getting back to normal.

Statewide inspection sweeps have been conducted for bark mulch, bagged ice and LP Gas cylinders. These sweeps originated from consumer complaints however inspectors are continuing inspections of these products to assure that any ongoing issues have been resolved.

All our labs continue to remain open and operating the workload at the metrology lab has increased due to several other state lab closings. The Pompano Beach petroleum lab has split the lab staff into two groups to avoid possible spread of the Covid virus, they are now utilizing shift work, alternating staff (one week in lab and one week working from home) for lab teams.

Items of Interest

Hurricane Sally impacted the Panhandle area with widespread flooding and our inspectors responded. Teams from all around Florida moved to the area and operations began as soon as the storm passed. Inspectors worked through the weekend to check gas stations and assure that the petroleum in their tanks were not contaminated with water. In all, 482 stations were inspected and 69 of them were found to have water in their petroleum storage tanks.

Skimmer sweeps are of utmost priority for our inspectors, recently 3 major sweeps have been conducted in Pasco, Hillsborough, Volusia, and Flagler counties.

- Hillsborough – 440 stations inspected with 31 skimmers found and removed.
 - Pasco – 147 stations inspected with 25 skimmers found and removed.
 - Volusia – 115 stations inspected with 7 skimmers found and removed
 - Flagler – 7 stations inspected with 1 skimmer found and removed.
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Florida Bureau of Standards trainer with a haul of skimmers taken as evidence.

Petroleum sampling/testing -Sampling and testing by our petroleum laboratories continues at the terminals and at retail gas stations. 🚛

LOUISIANA

Overview

In the first quarter of the new fiscal year, we have continued to face change in different forms. We have had some staffing changes due to a retirement and other changes in life and this has given us opportunities to initiate our succession plan, giving those ready to step up, an opportunity to lead at a higher level. In addition, tropical weather has also changed the landscape figuratively as well as literally in Southwest Louisiana by way of hurricane Laura. Our winning team is always up to the task, anytime, anywhere!

Hurricane Laura's Impacts

In the aftermath of hurricane Laura, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) Weights and Measures Division was asked by FEMA to deploy inspectors to assess the status of gas stations in Calcasieu and Cameron parishes, two of the hardest hit areas in the state.

Over a four-day period, we sent 16 inspectors *8 teams) to evaluate all gas stations in both parishes. In all, 205 stations were inspected, and the results were documented using Google Sheets. As the state recovers from the storm and people rebuild and return, they will need operable gas stations. We will continue to work to ensure these stations are functioning properly and the consumer is protected.

Here is a breakdown of the situation in each parish (as of September 10th):

Cameron Parish:

- 12 (92%) were closed and non-operational, and one (8%) open and operational

Upon inspection, water was discovered in several of the underground storage tanks at the closed stations. Those pumps were "red tagged" and inspection reports were left for station owners to take appropriate action to correct the problem prior to re-opening. Meanwhile, Weights and Measures inspectors will continue to monitor these stations when they come back online and work with station owners to correct any problems.

Several of our employees were impacted in that region due to Laura and our weights and measures family made a trip (others contributed funds) to provide them gasoline, cold water and Gatorade ice down as well as our new motor fuel program manager, **Lee Mabile** prepared a jambalaya. In addition, our new regional enforcement supervisor (RES), **Shawn Waguespack**, assisted and served lunch to our families. Northern RES **Mitch Marsalis** and inspector **Josh Salley** also brought down fuel and assisted with some cleanup the day we were in the Lake Charles area



This was a gas station in Cameron parish near the town of Creole



Feedback from our folks impacted were:

“This is the first hot meal we have had in ten days.” and “Thank you guys so much for everything. I really appreciate the help so very much!”

There have been quite a few changes in personnel in Louisiana this quarter. Regional Enforcement Supervisor **Earl Thomas** retired in August and was replaced with one of our diligent District Supervisor's (DS), **Shawn Waguespack**. Our Motor Fuels Program Manager, **Jarrad Poirrier** resigned to take a position as a PE teacher and coach. Jarrad has always been interested in coaching and we wish him the best. Inspector **Lee Mabile** has been promoted to fill that position and he has hit the ground running in his new role.

We have also hired **Zachary Fuselier** (fiddle aficionado) in the Lafayette District and **Jennifer Beyl** in the Hammond District, we welcome Zachary and Jennifer to our team. We have Shawn's DS position to fill and one more inspector position left, and the domino effect will be complete!

Metrology

The NIST 2021 submission for traceability will be submitted in October. The lab is fully staffed and is accepting all requests for calibrations within our scope.



**Jennifer Martin unloading a 2,500 weight from Domino Sugar in New Orleans.
Our new second hand electric forklift is doing the heavy lifting!**

Fuel Lab

Our fuel lab continues to process complaints and routine samples for fuel quality. Post Hurricane Laura, our field personnel completed a sweep of fuel station locations in the southwest portion of Louisiana. This effort allowed our division to compile data for FEMA and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness regarding the status of fuel stations during this difficult time for Louisiana. This effort consisted of a team of field personnel from all regions of the state working as a cohesive unit over a four-day period to complete the task.



Complaint Samples from the Lake Charles area.

One of the lessons learned from doing this type of operation was the effective use of Google Sheets (GS). We were able to coordinate this operation in real time as inspectors inputted data into the GS, including photos and station status. Completing 205 gas station inspections in four days was an excellent accomplishment that caught the eye of our Governor and from FEMA. KUDOS to our great team

GAS STATIONS IN CALCASIEU and Cameron Parishes

Last edit was made 7 days ago by Jason Timmons

JEAN LAFITTE RV PARK

NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	ZIP	OPEN Y or N	Damage Y or N	Intact Y or N	WinWam #	Insert Images Here	Water in Tank(s) Amount/Tanks(s)	Completed By	WinWam Report #	Overall Comments
OPEN AND PUMPING GAS												
MORE 4 LESS 6	1405 BROAD STREET	LAKE CHARLES	70931				13338					
CHARLIES SHELL	1400 OAK PARK BLVD	LAKE CHARLES	70601				21200009			SS		OPEN, ROOF DAMAGE
SUPER FOOD MART	1536 NORTH MARTIN LUTHER KING HWY	LAKE CHARLES	70601	Y	Y	Y	13327		REGULAR 37", SUPER 25" DIESEL 18", NO WATER	SS		OPEN, NO DAMAGE
GERSTNER MEMORIAL HOP IN	1717 GERSTNER MEMORIAL DRIVE	LAKE CHARLES	70601				14961			TCRC	AS001738	OPEN, ROOF AND AWNING DAMAGE
IN AND OUT 11	1748 WEST SALE ROAD	LAKE CHARLES	70605				14419			SS		OPEN, NO DAMAGE
FIRST STOP 3	1782 HWY 171 NORTH	LAKE CHARLES	70611	Y	Y	Y	15048		R=82, S=48, NO WATER	SS		OPEN, SELLING FUEL, SOME DAMAGE
TOBACCO PLUS 20	1801 WEST PRIEN LAKE ROAD	LAKE CHARLES	70605				7630			SS		CLOSED PERMANENTLY
ROAD KING TRAVEL PLAZA	1825 INTERSTATE 10 WEST	LAKE CHARLES	70601	N	Y	Y	2212		UNABLE TO ACCESS	SWDD	BO002025	CANOPY MESSED UP, UNABLE TO LOCATE HALF OF THE AREA IS UNDER WATER, RED TANKS UNACCESSABLE
SAVE AND GO	1828 BELDEN STREET	LAKE CHARLES	70601	N	Y	Y	15311		UNACCESSABLE POWER LINES AND TREES DOWN	SWDD	BO002026	UNACCESSABLE POWER LINES AND TREE, ROOF DAMAGE
SHORTY'S ONE STOP	1830 GERSTNER MEMORIAL DRIVE	LAKE CHARLES	70601	N	Y	No power	21200003			SS		CLOSED ROOF ON TOP OF PUMPS
JONES GROCERY AND DELI	1845 GERSTNER MEMORIAL DR	LAKE CHARLES	70601	N	N	No power	14426			SS		NO PWR, NO DAMAGE
FIVE STAR QUICK STOP	1900 SAM HOUSTON JONES PARKWAY	LAKE CHARLES	70611	N	Y	N	15014		R=32, S=37, D=43, NO WATER IN GROUND TANKS	JS, BA	BO002496	CLOSED, DAMAGE TO ROOF AND PUMPS
GRAB N GOALX 3	1901 SAM HOUSTON JONES PARKWAY	LAKE CHARLES	70611	Y	Y	Y	21200008		87=71", 87E=51", S=63", D=40" NO WATER IN GROUND TANKS	JS, BA	BO002497	OPEN NOT MUCH DAMAGE, SELLING FUEL
WALMART FUEL CENTER	2011 RYAN ST	LAKE CHARLES		Y	Y	N	D DONE			SS		OPEN NO DAMAGE
TOBACCO PLACE	2027 NORTH MARTIN LUTHER KING HWY	LAKE CHARLES	70601	N	Y	Y	13730		REGULAR 2" FUEL 1 INCH WATER	TCRC	AS001739	STORE IS CLOSED NO POWER, DAMAGE GAS PUMPS, ALL PUMPS ARE RED TAGG
JEAN LAFITTE RV PARK	2101 PUJOL ROAD	LAKE CHARLES	70615	Y	Y CANOPY	Y	13829		NO DIESEL RD TAGGED BY LDEQ, NO WATER IN ALL THREE REGULAR	SWDD	BO002004	DIESEL GROUND TANKS RED TAGGED BY DAMAGE
												CLOSED, COSMETIC DAMAGE TO PUMPS

Google Sheet activity from the Lake Charles area aka Operation Southwest Blitz.

Scales, Packages, Taxi

The Scale Program is fully operational with social distancing and PPE in place. One issue that keeps popping up is the use of non-permanent ID stickers on scales, in place of the traditional engraved metal plate. This is causing our inspectors and businesses a lot of confusion trying to keep track of scales.

Our renewed effort in checking pre-packaged goods is really paying off. We have found many tare weight and packaging errors over the last few months. We even identified some quality control issues in some short weight Moon Pies, that Moon Pie was grateful for. They have now increased their ingredient amounts across the board and are back on track meeting their labeled weights. More chocolate and marshmallow!



Our taxi program has had some bumps. In New Orleans we are witnessing meter calibrations, rather than riding the cabs ourselves. The industry has suffered significantly due to the pandemic, so we have streamlined this as much as possible for them. Taximeter inspections in other parts of the state are currently on hold, as they have little to no work, and not a lot of service agency options. We plan to resume those inspections as normal as soon as pandemic restrictions allow.

Price Verification

For the first quarter of the 2020-21' fiscal year (to date), we have conducted 1,479 routine and follow-up price verification inspections with a 91.75% approval rate. On July 23, 2020, LDAF also conducted an Adjudicatory Hearing charging 13 individual store locations with a total of 127 violations of the Louisiana Weights and Measures Law and Regulation with fines up to \$500.00 per violation. We will continue to reach out to businesses and offer to meet with them and help educate them about compliance with our laws, rules, and regulations.

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LDAF Website: <http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/consumers/consumer-protection/>

YouTube Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTzx2v3m6gIUgI-a4jTWxrrbeodKWLNTa>

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom and in all your getting, get understanding.

PROVERBS 4:7 ¶

NORTH CAROLINA

Hope everyone is doing well under the circumstances. We have largely been back to full operations, with some office and lab staff teleworking as we can. We had planned on a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Agricultural Sciences Center on October 6th, but that is now a press conference and tours to comply with Covid-19 restrictions. The building is still scheduled to be completed right before Christmas, with us moving in the spring.



Agricultural Sciences Center, front view, with Main Lobby at center



**ASC main
lobby/reception**

Our State Fair

Our State Fair was cancelled for this year. We typically had several staff involved with that event, from daily inspections of all the LP-Gas tanks on the property to staffing our Division's booth or other events

Standards Laboratory

During the past quarter, several employees took advantage of attending virtual conferences and training events. Quality Assurance Manager **Robert Rogers** participated in the regional Southeastern Measurement Assurance Program, SEMAP, training and **Van Hyder** participated some as well. This training was held in the month of April. The Volume Metrology Seminar has been postponed until a later date. Covid-19 quarantine has slowed down a lot of training sessions.

The Grain Moisture Section is currently completing routine inspections, including peanut scales throughout the state. These inspections were put on hold due to the pandemic. We are almost done collecting the corn samples we need for standards in the coming inspection season. We are looking forward to soybean harvest in late October and hoping for successful sample collection.

Sharon Woodard

LP-Gas Section

Our LP-Gas Engineer, **Richard Fredenburg**, chaired a working group of the Technical Committee on LP-Gases refining the requirements for the propane system on food trucks. There will likely be a new chapter in the LP-Gas Code dedicated to this in the next edition.

Richard participated in the NPGA's TS&S Committee virtual meetings on September 14-16.

Our Field Supervisor, **Jeff Walker**, attended the Marshall Excelsior Roadshow Van on September 16 at a local propane equipment supplier.

Richard Fredenburg

Fuel Quality Section

By the start of July, most of the Motor Fuels Section's field and laboratory staff had returned to full duty following the lab's closure due to the pandemic. While the field inspectors are working to catch up on their inspections, the lab has started to focus heavily on preparing for the upcoming move to the new Agricultural Sciences Center next year. We recently had the two octane engines that will be in the new facility sent to Texas to be refurbished and have started preparations to order the new equipment that will be set up in the building.

We have also hired two new field inspectors in the last two months. **Robert Marble** was hired in July to replace **Nikki Brown** in the central region of the state, and **Toby Hash** joined at the end of August to

replace Inspector **Julia Kanagy** who covered the south western region. Robert has fourteen years of previous inspection experience working with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality and has also worked with a local petroleum equipment company. Toby was a fuel technician with the US Marine Corps for three years and officially started training this week in his area. We welcome them both to the Section.

Dr. Marcus Helfrich

Measurement Section

Greetings from the Tarheel state, North Carolina.

Isn't everyone sick of this virus already. Would be so nice to return to normal work. Like everyone else we are still dealing with the new normal. Our staff are doing a great job getting through this and working safely with adjusted procedures. We are planning on hiring in the coming winter months to fill a few open positions. Hopefully, everything will continue to improve.

We finally were able to complete our new fuel inspector trucks. It took much longer than expected but it's finished. Safety is still the word of the day. All activities are viewed through the lens of Covid-19 with social distancing in mind. In the last update, I was hoping these past three months would be better, but it was really much of the same. So, here's to hope. Hope for football parties, family gatherings, and Christmas celebrations.

God Bless,

Chad Parker ✉

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

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