

Southern Weights & Measures Association

163rd Edition

SWMA Newsletter

April 2021

Our newsletter editor, William “Bill” Brasher, stepped down from his role in March due to health reasons. As a long-time contributor, I would like to say thank you to Bill for his many years of service to the SWMA and wish him well.

JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

Florida

Greetings from Florida, we hope that this finds everyone healthy and doing well, life and work are slowly showing signs of returning to some degree of normalcy. We hope you are experiencing the same.

❖ **Field office and administrative functions –**

The Bureau of Standards field office continues to remain open but still only partially staffed. Our Commissioner has extended our “work from home” agreements through September in case the office staff must work from home for an extended time period.

This last year has seen an inordinately high rate of retirements, transfers and resignations. At one time we were up to 26 vacancies however we have finally been able to resume interviewing and rehiring. We are now down to 12 vacancies and are beginning the process for hiring for those remaining vacancies, hopefully we will be able to find qualified candidates and will return to being fully staffed again soon.

As many other states have done, Florida issued a 30-day extension of the RVP requirements due to the refinery shutdowns in Texas related to the unusual cold snap.

❖ **Labs –**

The Petroleum labs in Tampa and Pompano Beach have ceased operating with split shifts so all lab personnel are working as a single team again.

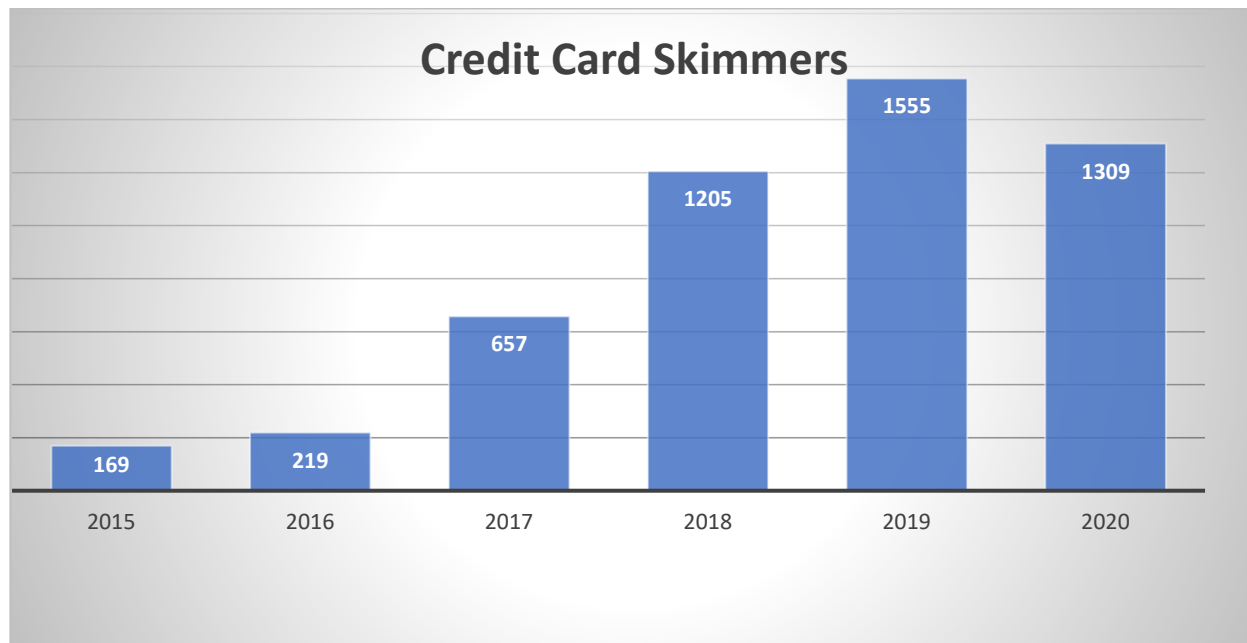
The Metrology lab has remained open and operating without split shifts throughout the pandemic, the metrology staff is attending SEMAP (virtually) this week.

❖ **Field Inspections –**

Our field inspection staff are now back to performing 100% of their normal inspection work although they continue to utilize personal protective equipment and practice social distancing. With the warmer weather our field inspectors may be changing up some of their normal work hours since the face masks are extremely uncomfortable in the heat.

❖ **Items of Interest–**

As you all know credit card skimmers in gas pumps is a large problem in the State of Florida and we have taken extraordinary steps to prevent consumers from having their personal and financial information stolen through the use of these illegal devices. 2020 has seen a mild reduction in the number of skimmers that our inspectors are finding and we are hopeful that our efforts are paying off!



Louisiana

Overview/Annual SWMA Meeting Update

The third quarter of 2021-22 continues to bring about new exciting program outcomes as we continue to navigate through the new normal of Weights and Measures (WM). On March 2nd, Louisiana upgraded to **Phase Three Guidelines** relative to the pandemic.

PHASE THREE GUIDELINES



75% capacity at restaurants, malls, & most other businesses



Gatherings in indoor event halls limited to 50% capacity, up to 250 people



Bars in all parishes at 25% or in parishes below 5% positivity at 50%

WASH YOUR HANDS. WEAR A MASK. SOCIAL DISTANCE.

Louisiana is making significant strides as we prepare for the best **SWMA annual meeting October 9-13, 2021 in New Orleans!** You will soon be seeing details regarding exciting and rewarding opportunities when you choose to participate. The winning bid for our soiree is the [Hotel Monteleone](#) located in the heart of the [French Quarter](#)! Opening in 1886, the Hotel Monteleone is in its 5th generation of local ownership and features the Carousel Bar, is a [literary landmark](#) (William Faulkner) that includes first class accommodations and wonderful meeting room facilities!

Here is a video that will introduce you to the ambiance of this word class facility:
<https://vimeo.com/125629230>.

Third Quarter Division Outcomes:

Staffing: We have had several staffing changes this quarter with two District Supervisors retiring (Dedra Moore and Fred Carter) and one inspector (Laura Oliver) moving out of state. Joey Smith and Steven Coco have been promoted respectively and we are currently filling those inspector positions. We moved Laura's New Orleans based position to Baton Rouge to fill a Heavy-Duty inspector position that has been on a job appointment (aka four-year temporary position). We have several employees on similar temporary positions and we are moving them onto permanent positions. We will not backfill these temp positions to give us some salary savings through the end of June.

In HQ in Baton Rouge, two of our Administrative Assistant personnel (Rachel Rice and Stephanie Bureau) were promoted, Rachel stayed in Agro Consumer Services and Stephanie went over to our Louisiana Agricultural Finance Authority two doors down. We have been blessed with their service and Rachel still has a minor appointment in WM. We have onboarded Laurie Walker and Kasey Patton to fill their two positions respectively and they are getting up to speed quickly as we wrap up our license renewal season!

Funding: \$\$\$\$\$ We have a fee increase (last fee increase was in 2003) legislative bill that will be considered by our legislature starting on April 2nd. *More details under Scales and Packages program.* Once it is approved and signed off by our Governor, our hope is to add (FY 22') needed positions using the additional funds as a fiscal note to pay for them as well as some needed equipment additions and upgrades.

Our WM program is totally self-funded by our WM Fund (Registration fees and fines) and Petroleum Fund (1/8 of one cent per gallon of fuel sold in the state) so we receive zero state general funds to operate. We have seen a slight dip (7.6%) in receipts in our Petroleum Fund but our WM Fund receipts are steady and in line with previous years.

Professional Development: Our efforts in Professional Development continue to move forward. Our staff has now successfully completed 339 exams in our Louisiana W and M training program. We have also added a few NCWM certifications. To date we have 40 Basic Competency Certificates and 57 Professional Certificates.

Paul and I participated in the 2021 NCWM Annual/Interim virtual meetings in January via Zoom and we felt the meeting as well as discussion were very good. Technology is continuing to have a positive impact on our ability to conduct business daily and the conference was no exception. Paul serves on the PDC committee and Cannabis Task Group. In addition, I was added to the Skimmer Education Task Group which held the charter meeting during the conference. Mitch Marsalis serves on the Milk Meter Tolerance Task Group as well.

I also had the opportunity to lead the technical session on the last day of the NCWM meeting along with Valerie Forbes (Delaware), Jason Glass (Kentucky) and Steve Harrington (Oregon). Our panel discussion covered best practices learned and allowed questions from the virtual audience. Overall, we thoroughly enjoyed the NCWM virtual meetings and dialogue.

Program and Lab Reports

Motor Fuels: The motor fuels program has been busy as usual. We wrapped up 2020 by working with our metrology laboratory to calibrate and recertify all of our vehicle mounted J provers and five-gallon hand cans. We have new J provers that are calibrated and certified, waiting to be installed on the three new vehicles we will be adding to our fleet of weights and measures trucks. We continue to update and improve our fleet of weights and measures trucks to provide a safe and quality work vehicle for our field personnel.



We were fortunate enough to have Compass instruments come into our fuel lab for some in person training. Compass instruments provided hands on training of Octane Engine operation and procedures, for three days in January, to our fuel program manager and four other staff members. This was done in an effort to provide further support for our fuel lab in the event of our chemist being absent, and to provide a means of assistance to our chemist in times of high fuel sample volume. Almost immediately after the training was over, we had to utilize our newly trained staff members due to Covid 19 exposure causing our program manager and chemist to quarantine. Our newly trained staff members stepped up to the plate and allowed our fuel lab to continue to process samples, thus not interrupting the service and protection provided to our citizens.

Scales and Packages:

Despite the impacts of the pandemic, we have managed to set the table for lots of needed growth. We have initiated the bid process for four new Kanawha Scales and Systems outfitted heavy duty trucks. One of these trucks will be specially designed to serve as our state's new livestock scale inspection truck. These are much needed upgrades as our current heavy-duty fleet has spent more time in the shop than on the road in recent years. As for our existing trucks, we plan on trading in two and keeping two as backups.

Our existing livestock truck will have its range lessened to one region so that we can limit wear and tear on both it and our new truck. Sharing one livestock truck for the entire state has not been an ideal situation, and we are very happy to have two moving forward. We are also excited to finally have the opportunity to open a permanent Heavy-Duty Inspector position in our Baton Rouge District. Despite having the highest concentration of truck scales, rail scales, and mass flow meters, this area has not had a dedicated heavy-duty inspector with permanent status in recent memory. We are grateful to be able to rectify that situation, especially right now.

One reason that we have been able to create this growth during a less than optimal budget situation has been that we are planning to have an increase in our Registration Fees beginning July 1. This increase was in our plans prior to the pandemic and is needed now more than ever. As noted above, our Weights and Measures Division is completely self-funded, and our last increase was in 2003.

After doing the math on our salary and equipment costs, our actual time spent working all types of inspections, and our state's actual business growth, we felt like an immediate 40 % increase in registration fees (it's really only about a 2% increase per year, from 2003-2022) was a very reasonable request, and exactly what we will need to continue to fulfill our responsibilities to consumers in Louisiana. In the coming years, this increase will allow us to fund new inspector positions for areas of the state that have experienced tremendous growth over the last 20 years, and also to update our essential equipment as it fails.

Metrology:

In 2020 the metrology laboratory's volume laboratory received an equipment upgrade for test measure calibrations. The new Seraphin test measure stand is an ergonomic solution that allows the metrologist to perform calibrations more safely and with the consistency that is required of volumetric calibrations.



Additionally, the laboratory obtained a Mettler Toledo XPE604 Comparator that significantly reduced the uncertainty for 1000 lb. calibrations and allowed the 250 lb. and 500 lb. workloads to be added back to the scope of measurement.

All of the NCWM Exams are targeted towards AS positions working in the field and performing inspections related to scales, motor fuel dispensers, and price verification inspections. Agricultural Specialists working in Metrology **do not have** the same training requirements or knowledge base. Because of the difference in scope of the Metrology AS positions, the following adjustment to the Allocation Policy will be:

AS 2:

- One year of experience;
-

- Successful completion of [NIST Fundamentals of Metrology](#), successful completion of Laboratory Auditing Program* (LAP) Problems, and
- State credential Course 5: Field Standards and Test Equipment.

AS 3:

- 2 years' experience at the Ag. Specialist 2 position;
- successful completion of [NIST Mass Metrology Seminar](#);
- Successful completion of [NIST Volume Metrology Seminar](#);
- Participation in [Southwestern Assurance Program \(SWAP\)](#);
- NIST Webinars
 - [Document Control & Record Keeping](#) (if offered)
 - [Internal Auditing Best Practices](#)
 - [Conducting an Effective Management Review](#)
- State credential Course 2: Laws, Rules, and Regulations

*Fundamentals of Metrology, Laboratory Auditing Program (LAP) Problems – required for State Weights and Measures Laboratories

For the 2020 submission process, NIST required all state laboratories to conform to the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 standard. The laboratory staff worked diligently for months to update all Quality Management System documents to meet the standard's requirements. The efforts put forth by the metrologists earned Louisiana a two-year certificate of traceability.

United States Department of Commerce

National Institute of Standards and Technology

Certificate of Metrological Traceability For:

Louisiana

This laboratory has demonstrated evidence of an unbroken chain of metrological traceability of its standards to the international system of units (SI), documented measurement uncertainties, uses documented measurement procedures, successfully completed training and proficiency tests, documented calibration intervals, submitted a quality management system, and demonstrated suitable measurement assurance for the Scope listed on this certificate.

The Office of Weights and Measures Program assesses laboratories to NIST Handbook 143 - Program Handbook for State Weights and Measures Laboratories and ISO/IEC 17025:2017.

Scope

Mass Echelon III
 25 kg to 1 mg
 2500 lb to 250 lb
 50 lb to 0.001 lb
 8 oz to 0.03125 oz

Volume Transfer, II
 5 gal



2021 to 2022

Douglas A. Olson

Douglas A. Olson, Chief
 NIST Office of Weights and Measures

Effective Dates: 2021-02-01 to 2023-02-01

Made available by:

Bobby H. Fletcher, Jr., Ph.D.
Director, Weights and Measures
Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry

North Carolina

We are getting so close to completion of the Agricultural Sciences Center. The move will now take place mid-May through mid-June, involving the metrology and fuel quality labs, the downtown office and well at the main veterinary diagnostic lab, food and drug protection and the structural pest and pesticides divisions – almost 200 employees will work here. Pictured below is the front of the building which has 225,000 sq. ft of lab, office and support spaces. On the back side, it is 3-stories, with both our labs on the ground floor: Fuel Quality on the West end and Metrology on the East end. We will have more photos of them next edition.



Metrology

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.

Due to Covid-19, there was no training for this past quarter.

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. This year has been quite different as we prepare to move into a newly built facility about ½ mile from our current location.

Customer calibrations were complete in December 2020 and no further calibrations will be done until mid-2021. Our new home will be located at the Agricultural Sciences Center. More details to come.

In safety news, we will continue to participate in the Carolina Star Program. Our safety team representatives for this year again will be Steven Clapp and Sharon Woodard. Due to Covid-19 the conference was cancelled so the Theme for this year's safety conference will again be: Safety Vision 2020. We have made the commitment to abide by the common goal of keeping safety first.

Our Grain Moisture section is in the height of its inspection season. The inspections are going well, despite the effects of the pandemic. We are also preparing to move into our new facility. We expect some interference because of the move, but we hope to have all inspections completed before the beginning of wheat harvest in June. As we have seen in the past few years, we expect a smaller wheat crop across the state this year. We are looking forward to warmer, dryer weather as we finish our inspection season and move into our new facility.

Sharon Woodard

Measurement Section

Greetings from the Tarheel state, North Carolina.

Spring is here and things are getting busy. After this past Covid year I look forward to things returning to normal. I had to look back almost a year to find our last staff hire. Seems everything was on pause with this Covid mess. First of the year (2021) we started hiring back positions. We started with our Wake county fuel dispenser position. Michael Amberg accepted and brought many years of experience from his work at a refinery. Next, an opportunity opened for W.A. Creech to move into our Johnston county weights and measures position. We are glad he was able to take the promotion. Last, Lisa Haywood accepted our weights and measures position in the western mountains area up near Boone. I'm sure she will make a good fit there.

Well as I write this, my section is going through its biggest change in probably 30 years or more. We are finally dumping paper inspections and transitioning to WinWam software for our inspections. It will be radically different in a good way. Neal and Lance with WinWam have been great to work with and have been very helpful. Hopefully by next article we will be live and have all our staff trained.

God Bless,

Chad Parker

Fuel Quality Section

The Motor Fuels Laboratory has started to pack up our offices and lab spaces in preparation for our upcoming move to the new Agricultural Sciences Center in late Spring, where we will re-brand as the NCDA&CS Fuel Quality Laboratory.

The engines have been refurbished and were installed in the new space in December. In addition, we are looking forward to receiving a significant amount of new equipment that will increase our testing capabilities which was purchased as a result of funding provided the State and from a grant through Golden Leaf grants. This move has been a long time coming and we are all excited to get over to the new location and start using this space.

In personnel related news, at the start of January the section welcomed Seth Whaley as an inspector for the Wilmington area. Seth has previous soil and water testing experience and is replacing long time inspector Shelby Sloan who retired last year. In addition, Tamikqua Ellis started training this week as the new inspector for the Greensboro area. Tamikqua was previously an inspector with the Department's Meat and Poultry Division and is replacing inspector Anas Salifu who entered graduate school last fall. Upon hiring Tamikqua, this is the first time in many years that our section is fully staffed with eleven field inspectors.

Marcus Helfrich

LP-Gas Section

The First Draft meeting of the *LP-Gas Code* committee in Feb-Mar, this took place over a 5-week period due to the meeting being virtual.

I also participated in the NPGA TS&S Committee meeting on Mar 8-10. A significant discussion of the TS&S meeting concerned a proposed change to NIST Handbook 44 concerning the zero-set-back interlock requirement for propane retail motor fuel dispensers. This comes after enforcement action for this requirement in West Virginia and North Carolina. In NC, we found NTEP devices that had been modified, adding another line, that was intended for vehicle fueling, but lacking the necessary Handbook 44 requirements when used for that purpose. This also became a road tax issue as one meter was now used for both highway and non-highway purposes, which is not legal under our Department of Revenue statutes.

Richard Fredenburg

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

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