

Southern Weights & Measures Association

155th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

January 2019

JURISDICTIONAL NEWS

Attention:

It is my understanding that this will be the last printed newsletter from SWMA. Steve Benjamin will be sending a mailing in the future with a link where the next newsletter will be available on the website. Bill ⚖️

ARKANSAS

January 2019 marks the opening of the Arkansas General Assembly's 92nd Regular Legislative Session. The Bureau of Standards will stand ready to assist legislators with experience and information as they consider any changes to the laws regarding the operation or procedures of the Bureau.

Our agency has experienced a few personnel changes since the last issue.

Newly appointed Bureau of Standards' director **Christian Olson** has added another family member. Seven- pound, twelve-ounce **Matthew Lyle Olson** made his appearance during the holidays almost two weeks earlier than scheduled. Mother and child are fine and healthy. Congratulations to Christian, wife **Melissa** and son **Seth** on the new addition.

A more traditional addition was newly- hired metrologist **Eva Ramirez**.

She was born in California and raised in Mexico until she finished high school. Her education continued in the United States where she attended Riverside Community College in California where she learned English. There, she completed an Associate Degree in Arts and one in Science. Her next step was to transfer to the University of California at Riverside and complete her degree in Applied Mathematics with Physics. After graduation she worked for different tutoring companies until the company she worked for went out of business. How did she wind up in Arkansas? Her husband had family and they found out there were greater job opportunities here. She was elated to find a job in her field of science where she could use her background.

Brad Newberry has taken over the investigative duties of Area 1. Brad received his Associate Degree in Business for Northwest College in Bentonville.

Area 1 contains Benton and Washington counties with a combined population of nearly ½ million inhabitants (475,149 and growing). This region is also one of the fastest growing in the state. It will be quite a task, but with his background and familiarity of the area Brad is more than capable of meeting the challenge. †

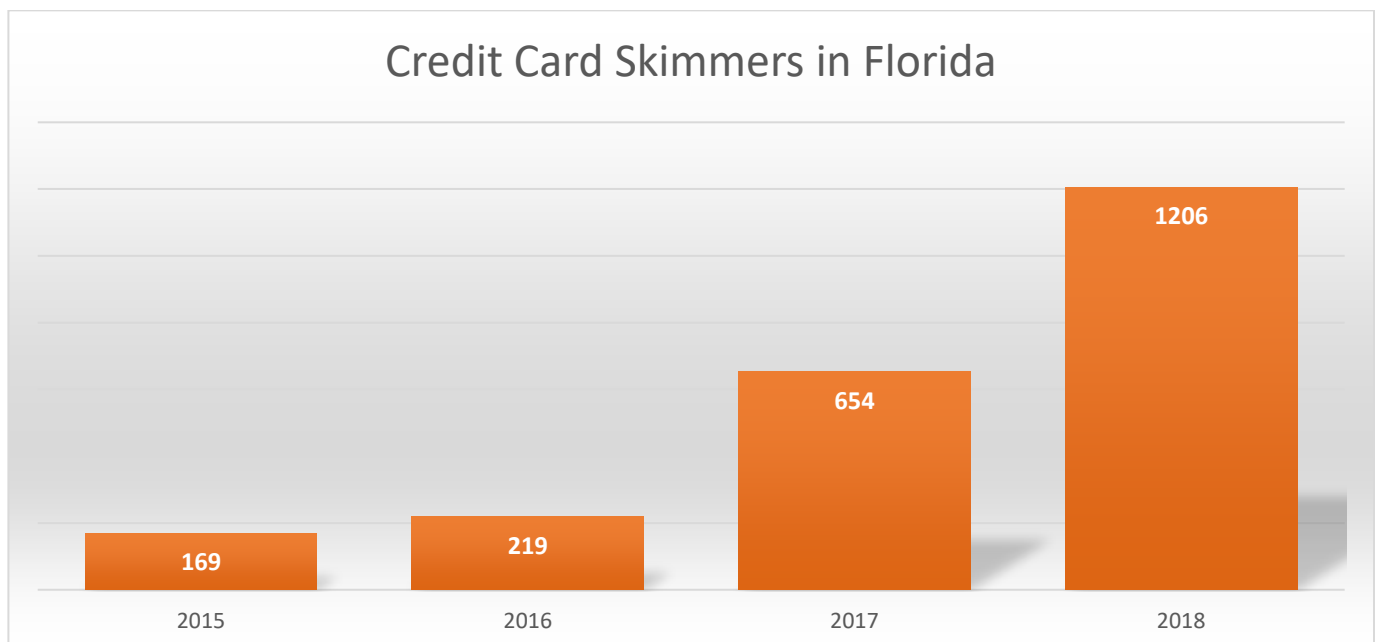
FLORIDA

Greetings from Florida, I hope everyone had a great holiday season! We have been extremely busy the last few weeks compiling information and preparing reports for our incoming Commissioner, **Nicole “Nikki” Fried** and her transition team. **Adam Putnam**, the current Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, served for eight years and had reached his “term limit”. Commissioner Putnam will be sincerely missed but we are looking forward to working with Commissioner Fried in the coming years.

In the last newsletter we spoke about opening our new Pompano Beach Petroleum Lab, however, due to some unforeseen construction delays, completion was again postponed. We have finally received our certificate of occupancy and the lab staff is finally moving in and setting up equipment. Completion and occupancy of the new lab is exactly one year past the original target completion date.

Inspector training continues to be one of our top priorities, our trainers have completed training for numerous new hires and refresher training for all current inspectors. In November, our training staff offered training in package net content inspections and a liquid volume testing class.

The number of credit card skimmers recovered from retail motor fuel dispensers nearly doubled from Florida’s annual total from 2017. The annual skimmer totals are illustrated in the bar graph below: †



GEORGIA

Well our biggest news is after 30 years of service with the Department of Agriculture, Division Director **Rich Lewis** will be retiring at the end of January. Rich is looking forward to retirement and will be spending more time working on his family's farm and is planning on coming back to the Department to work part-time in some capacity.

Our state suffered a good bit of damage during Hurricane Michael, particularly our Pecan and Cotton farmers. We housed the Red Cross Incident Command Center at our facility in Macon. During that time period we received a visit from **President and Ms. Trump**.

Recently we have seen an increase in failed fuel samples due to water contamination. We have experienced an abnormally large amount of rain in the past few weeks.

We are seeing more and more commercial LP gas meters at truck stops. We are using 20-gallon provers to test them.

We issued a stop sale order early last year on 303 spec tractor hydraulic fluid. We have found industry to be very cooperative and compliant with the order.

Recently our Division hosted a booth at the Georgia National Fair, the Sunbelt Expo, and the Georgia Association of Convenience Stores Tradeshow. We were able to issue a good bit of information and help to inform people about our program. ↱

LOUISIANA

New Positions in Weights and Measures and Employee Evaluation:

We have added a metrologist in training position in our Metrology lab as well as an inspector position in the Central Business District/French Quarter in New Orleans this fiscal year. We are currently in the process of adding a heavy duty (HD) scale inspector position (plus new HD truck and van body) in the Baton Rouge district. Once the HD position is filled, we will have 47 field inspectors working in Louisiana.

We are in year two of our new accountability and evaluation system in Louisiana Weights and Measures. Fifteen percent of our team achieved verifiable exceptional ratings in year one and are eligible to receive a onetime bonus. We have modified our process to include more and better training for our team in year two as we continue to look for efficiencies to achieve professional excellence. Louisiana Civil Service is using our methodology as a model for other state agencies, we continue to work with them to enhance our process to allow a more efficient and user-friendly system for our middle managers to implement.

Videos/Training:

Our training and informational videos are now available on YouTube. You can find them by searching “LDAF Internal”. We already have 10’s of views. Help us go viral! Special thanks to LDAF Public Information Officer, **Jennifer Finley** and **Todd Justice** of CPTP for all their hard work on this project.

LDAF hosted the NIST Handbook 133 Package Class and Handbook 130 Price Verification Class in Baton Rouge during the week of October 22, 2018. Thanks to our Assistant Director, **Paul Floyd**, for coordinating this with NIST! We had participants from Alabama and Mississippi as well. We look forward to hosting more NIST training classes in the future.

We have worked out an agreement with Louisiana Civil Service Testing Center to proctor the NCWM Exams for our inspectors. Four of our employees have passed an exam and our goal is for all inspectors to have at least one NCWM credential. Starting in July of 2019, this, as well as our own state mastery and credentialing process, will be incorporated into our promotion process for newly onboarded inspectors as part of their career progression in Weights and Measures.

Problems with Diesel Flash Point and Octane Engines Upgrade:

Our LDAF Motor Fuels lab has seen an increase in the amount of diesel samples that fail the flash point test (ASTM D93). Upgrades to our Motor Fuels octane engines will take place in January, 2019. Our lab staff is looking forward to the upgraded Waukasha XCP digital control panels and carburetors. We will also be sending a mechanic to a CFR Maintenance Class.

Bobby Fletcher, Jr. PhD 

NORTH CAROLINA

Standards Laboratory

The last quarter of the year is usually a slow time for Standards Laboratory. We had our 151st State fair from October 11 – 21, 2018 at our local fairgrounds. The theme for the fair was “Nothing Could Be Finer”. Some of our area inspectors participate including the Standards Laboratory staff. Senior Metrologist, **Van Hyder** was the coordinator for our booth at this year’s fair.

Training for the quarter included Metrologist, **Marina Paggen** attending the Mass Metrology Seminar held on the campus on the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

The grain moisture program ended the 2018 harvest season with a good soybean crop despite the effects of record-breaking rainfall totals. We look forward to a busy inspection year and preparation for a great wheat harvest in June.

Sharon Woodard

LP-Gas Section

The technical committee for the *Utility LP-Gas Plant Code*, NFPA 59, met by conference call twice to act on public inputs for the current change cycle. The first was on October 11, 2018, and the second on November 15, 2018. The committee chairman determined that a face-to-face meeting was not justified, due to the small number of public inputs. The rescheduled North Carolina Propane Gas Association annual convention was held on October 28-30, 2018, in Asheville, NC.

The LP-Gas section participated in a mobile food unit inspection class offered by the Wake County health inspectors. LP-Gas inspectors offered information on what would be included in the LP-Gas system inspection.

Field supervisor **Randy Renfrow** announced his retirement plans at a meeting of the LP-Gas Section on December 6, 2018. His last day of work will be January 17, 2019, and he will take leave before retiring on March 1. Interviews for a filling a newly-created permanent field supervisor position were held on December 13. A selection has been made, pending approval by Human Resources.

Measurement Section

Greetings from the Tarheel state, North Carolina.

Hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas time. It was a warm Christmas here in Raleigh, but I still enjoyed the family and time off. We are moving into our first quarter inspections and it will be a busy time. We check all our airport scales in the month of January, fertilizer inspections are done in February, the mulch plant inspections are in March and for good measure milk inspections if we have time. These were always my favorite inspections when I was an inspector.

We are still working hard at filling open positions here in my section. With four trainers, we can only hire but so fast. Recently **George Grier** was promoted to take our Charlotte weights and measures position. Also, **Randy Ramsey**, who is our fuel dispenser trainer, and NTEP evaluator, stepped into our western calibrator position. He wears many hats. At this time, we have interviews for two more positions scheduled, but still have seven openings left. Looking forward to one day being fully staffed.

This past month we were able to pick up our heavy scale outfit from West Virginia. Our staff and I are very pleased with the new box and boom. We are hoping to pick up our new calibrator test unit in the next few weeks from Akins Equipment in Charlotte. We have lots of scheduled work for that unit just waiting.

God Bless,

Chad Parker

Motor Fuels Laboratory

The two recent hurricanes and the unusual December snow fall have kept the Motor Fuels Section busy over the last three months with several complaints for water in the fuel or phase separation. Many of these involved multiple vehicles and we were able to confirm most of them during our investigation.

The ventilation project that was started in March of 2018 was completed in late fall and the final punch list items are currently wrapping up. This project has been extremely successful in improving the air quality needs in both the can cleaning room and the distillation lab.

Our work on the electronic inspection portal has been moving along rapidly and the system is currently being beta tested by our field inspectors in preparation for an anticipated launch in the spring. This system will integrate our inspection and testing processes and provide an effective means for tracking the data we generate. At the same time the lab has been working with **Brenda Jackson**, the quality manager of the future Agricultural Sciences Center, to begin to develop a quality management system in the current lab that can be transferred to the new building in 2020. As a part of this transition, we have started training on how to use the quality management software from Qualtrax to manage and control our quality documentation.

In personnel related news, **Fisher Midgett** joined our Section as a Motor Fuels quality inspector in July of 2018 and will be responsible for covering the northeast coastal area of the State. Just this week **Dylan McSwain** joined our section and filled our last open fuel inspector vacancy. Dylan will be covering the southern central piedmont region of the State that has been left vacant since **Ron Earnhardt** retired.

Marcus Helfrich

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

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