

Southern Weights & Measures Association

164th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

November 2021

Hello All!

A little late getting this out as I returned from the SWMA annual meeting in New Orleans and the next day our State Fair began, which we are quite involved in!

I apologize as I had asked for information prior to the meeting, but once we determined we could not vote on any draft bylaws published, I held off until after the meeting. So, some contributions may be a little dated.

Louisiana

Special thanks to everyone who attended SWMA 2021 in New Orleans October 9-13th! Our Louisiana team had a great time planning as well as hosting this educational and fun face to face opportunity for our sister states and members in the Southern region.

We had 50 registered members with eight guests for our meeting including eleven states, numerous private partners as well as our NCWM chair, chair elect and Executive Director. Henry Harrison started us off with *a cappella* versions of the National Anthem and *Proud to Be an American*.

The educational presentation on emerging technologies by Kevin Schnepf from California really gave us some reality checks relative to what is coming down the road and Eric Hamilton with API led an excellent panel discussion on small prover calibration. In addition, Russ Vires led our discussion for the Scale Manufacturers Association to solicit comments from the membership.

Our Committee chairs did a very good job relative to managing input as well as reports based on member interaction. Thanks to Alan, Mauricio, Paul and Ron for leading the way as well as to Matt Curran and Gene Robertson for presiding over the committee discussion as well a voting session. Dr. Lippa from

NIST provided our state Directors with the NIST Directors Roundtable questions electronically so our region would have input moving forward.

Our Louisiana planning committee of Paul, Mark and Gene did a great job in putting this together and Kasey handled our onsite registration like a champion! THANK YOU!

Stephen has handled our finances eloquently and helped lead us through the planning processes as well. We appreciate his leadership as well as willingness of North Carolina to host in 2022 as we passed the gavel onto him on behalf of the 2021-22 President, Chad Parker!

Now that SWMA 2021 is in the books, here is a [three-minute Vimeo](#) that captured the spirit of the meeting. Please take some time to view this as you may be in it! The [NCWM Facebook page](#) also captured numerous aspects of our meeting and check them out as well.

Thanks again!

Bobby H. Fletcher, Jr.
SWMA, Past President

Florida

Florida Bureau of Standards

Greetings from Florida, we hope this finds all our SWMA friends in good health and doing well. We are continuing with business as usual, even with the current uptick in covid-19 cases. We are looking forward to seeing everyone in The Big Easy in October.

❖ **Field office and administrative functions –**

The Bureau of Standards field office has returned to normal operations. Since the last newsletter we have hired a new Administrative Assistant and are pleased to welcome Kyrsten Dalton to that position. Kyrsten has worked in our office for several years but with her recent promotion has taken on the oversight of the office staff as well. Along with her new responsibilities she is in charge of reviewing and submitting all of the employee hiring packages and since we are in the process of filling 33 vacancies, that is no small task! We are still down one full time position in the office but hope to have that vacancy filled very soon.

❖ **Labs –**

The Petroleum labs in Tampa and Pompano Beach are almost fully staffed again and are operating at capacity. The Metrology lab has just completed a NVLAP audit.

❖ **Field Inspections –**

Our field inspection staff is still operating at 100% of their normal inspection workload even with the increased covid-19 variant concerns.

We have received 22 new “slide-in” provers for our retail petroleum inspection program and are awaiting the delivery of 4 new B-Tec 5000lb weight carts for our Large Scale inspection units.

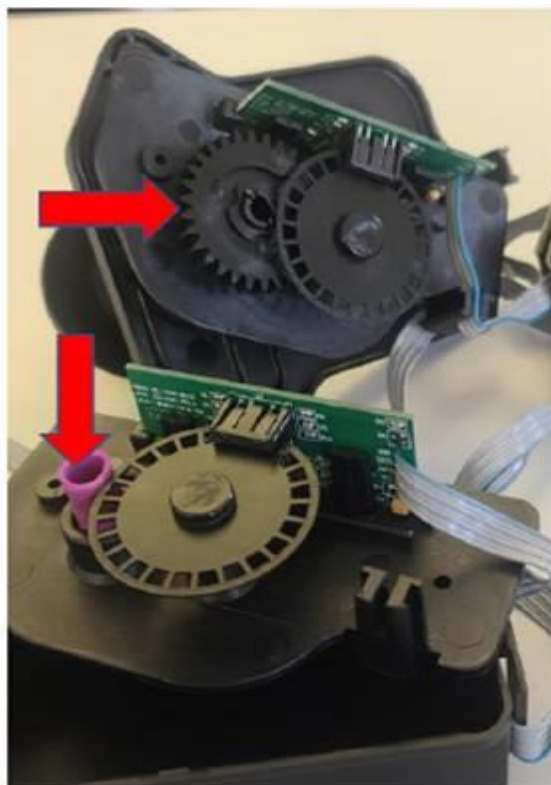
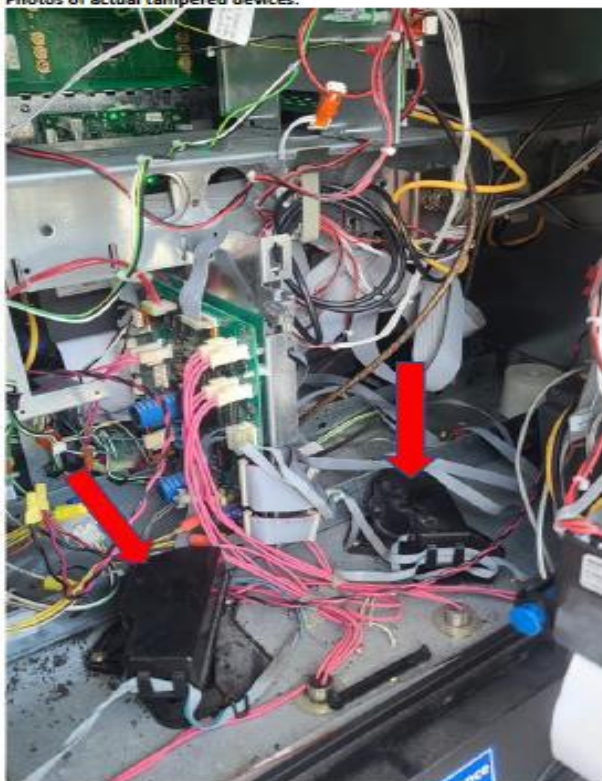
We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our three new Field Supervisors - Charles Davidson in the Panhandle, Darryl Mauney in East Central Florida and Sullivan Palermo in South Florida. Each of these individuals are seasoned inspectors and trainers and have served in the Bureau of Standards for some time now, their promotions are well deserved.

❖ **Items of Interest–**

The State of Florida has seen a decline in the numbers of skimmers found in 2021, however we are now seeing where thieves are tampering with the pulser units in retail fuel dispensers to steal fuel. See the explanation and photos below:

Current tampering of fuel pulsers (*gears within the pump that indicate the amount of fuel being pumped and associated costs*) the modified fuel pulsers will have the lower plastic gear removed and replaced with a piece of rubber tubing, which forces the upper gear to spin at a much lower rate and causes them to indicate significantly less than the actual gallons that are being pumped. Consequently, the RMFD system has been “tricked” into pumping significantly more gallons of fuel at a drastically lower cost to the consumer. I suspect that Florida isn’t the only state finding these modified pulsers.

Photos of actual tampered devices:



Arkansas

No major changes to report. Tim Chesser has agreed to Ivan's request to be the presiding officer for the voting session. Inspection activities are normal in spite of the third wave. No out of state travel restrictions are in place for now. We intend to travel to SWMA in New Orleans.

Nikhil Soman

South Carolina

Petroleum Lab:

- E-15 is being in SC at 2 locations.
- The lab is inquiring about a Raman spectrometer to be used to help identify unknown and contaminated petroleum samples.
- Sampling is continuing as normal, with water still being the most common violation found.

Metrology Lab Update:

- Lab has been open and calibrating Echelon II and III test standards and volume standards since Jan 2021 with minimal interruptions due to HVAC issues and DI water issues in the lab.
- Our work flow and work load has been doubled due to NC State lab being closed due to new lab being built.
- New calibration charges have been established after a 20-year period.
- Our new employee that has been with us since March 2020, has not been able to receive any NIST formal training due to COVID pandemic.

Consumer Services:

- Looking to train other inspectors on livestock truck and help them obtain CDL license.
- Budget is good.
- 2.5% across the board cost of living raise and state will cover increase in health insurance for 21-22 fiscal year.
- As gas prices rise, seeing increased complaints about accuracy.

John Stokes

North Carolina

Metrology Laboratory

During the past quarter several employees took advantage of attending virtual conferences and training events. Several staff members participated in the SEMAP regional training held the later part of March. The Volume Metrology Seminar has been postponed until a later date. Covid-19 quarantine has slowed down a lot of training sessions. We are still preparing for our laboratory move to a new location about ½ mile around the corner from our current location.

The Grain Moisture Section is currently completing routine inspections, including peanut scales throughout the state. We are hoping for dry weather as we begin collecting the corn samples, we need for standards in the coming inspection season. We look forward to settling into the new laboratory space at the new state-of-the-art Steve Troxler Agricultural Sciences Center.

Measurement Section

Greetings from the Tarheel state, North Carolina.

Well summer has come and gone. Looking forward to my favorite time of the year. With our last two hires, my section is fully staffed. First time that has happened in many years. I get to enjoy it for four months though. We have two employees that are planning retirement at the end of the year. Jonathan Butler accepted our fuel dispenser position and Dillon Gibson accepted our dual role position in the mountains. Both are starting in the next few weeks with their trainers.

The transition from paper inspections to WinWam has been great. For a staff of about 45 the process has actually gone better than I thought it would. My staff has done an excellent job learning the new inspection software. We are continuing to tweak areas that need little changes but for the large part the transition has been a complete success. Thanks for all those who have helped.

God Bless,

Chad Parker

LP-Gas Section

In April, a joint task force for NFPA 58 (*LP-Gas Code*) and NFPA 96 (*Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations*) held meetings to determine the best way to present new safety requirements for the propane systems on mobile food facilities (food trucks and trailers). The

program has been inspecting the propane system at these facilities for several years now, at the request of both the owners/operators as well as the county offices issuing permits for them.

There has been continuing discussions among NCDA&CS, NC Propane Gas Association, National Propane Gas Association, NIST and some affected parties concerning use of proper metering systems for LP-Gas dispensing stations as a retail motor fuel device. At issue is dispensers used for cylinder/bottle filling, and the recent addition of another hose with a nozzle to connect to a vehicle. These additions were made after LP-Gas retail motor fuels device requirements were added to Handbook 44 in 2017 and do not meet them. Some proposals for changes to NIST Handbook 44 have been submitted to the fall regionals for consideration.

Richard Fredenburg

Fuel Quality Section

The Motor Fuels Laboratory has finally moved out of our old building where we have been for 67 years and into the state-of-the-art Steve Troxler Agricultural Sciences Center. Along with the move we have also changed our name to the Fuel Quality Laboratory to better represent the type of testing we conduct. We are still in the process of verifying our equipment but hope to be back up and running within the next two weeks. In personnel related news, Inspector Seth Whaley has left our Section and accepted a position with the USDA. Seth did an excellent job getting things back on track in his territory and we wish him the best of luck with his new career!

Congratulations to Chad Parker, our President for 2021-22. At the moment we are looking at hotels in Raleigh for the 2022 Annual Meeting and are hoping to include a tour of our new laboratories!

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

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