

Southern Weights & Measures Association

166th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

April 2022

We are working on the draft to update the SWMA bylaws, with 2 work sessions scheduled for May. I expect this to go out to the SWMA BOD by the end of July and to the entire membership at least 30 days prior to our annual meeting – per our current bylaws. If anyone has any ideas, concerns or comments please send them to me at steve.benjamin@ncagr.gov

For those that could not attend our 2021 annual meeting in New Orleans, we did seek feedback on 3 topics:

- Currently there is Associate Member Committee in the bylaws, but it has not been used in 18+ years – do we delete or modify it?
- Historian – what is the expected role, do we keep it, it is required?
- Making the Secretary/Treasurer and ex-officio member of the executive committee.

Hope to see you at the NCWM annual meeting in Tacoma, Washington!

Florida

Florida Bureau of Standards

Greetings from Florida, we hope this finds all our SWMA friends in good health and doing well. Well, spring is here and we're experiencing some of the nicest weather of the year!

❖ **Field office and administrative functions –**

The Bureau of Standards field office has long since returned to normal operations, and we were just informed that the rest of the department will return to their offices on July 5th.

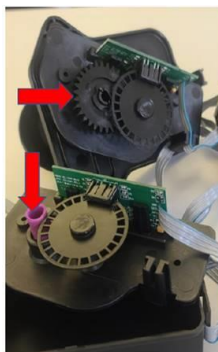
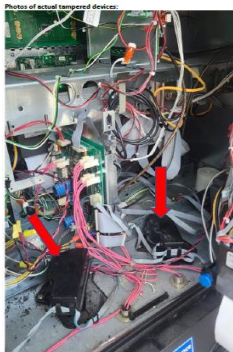
We have received approval to purchase six new Ford F-250 pickups, but their build schedule has been pushed back again and no build date has been given but most likely it will be sometime next fall, after we submit our request for the next round of replacement vehicles!

Even though our supervisors and lab managers have been hiring as quickly as possible, the bureau still has 35 vacant positions while resignations continue to come in and qualified applicants are nearly impossible to find.

❖ **Field Inspections –**

Florida continues to see a substantial decrease in credit card skimming in the state. To date in 2022 only thirteen skimmers have been found by our inspectors. We have seen a shift to criminals breaking into gas pumps and installing modified pulsers (or modifying the pulsers on site) to steal fuel. The modified pulsers are easy to spot and an accuracy test of the motor fuel dispenser also reveals the inaccuracies associated with the modified pulsers.

Left: pulsers in place. Center & Right: different styles of modified pulsers



We have recently redirected our inspection focus towards package and price verification inspections and have found alarmingly high failure rates, particularly for price verification inspections. So far in 2022, 24% of the facilities inspected have failed their price verification inspections with some stores having up to 88% of the items in the inspection priced incorrectly.

❖ **Lab Update –**

Both petroleum labs are fully staffed (for now) and operating normally.

The FL metrology laboratory has undergone a staff reorganization where Megan Money, the Sr. Metrologist, is now the supervisor of the laboratory and the addition of another metrologist will be hired to give the lab a staff of four employees. The metrology lab obtained four new slicker standards (10 gal, 25 gal, 50 gal, and 100 gal) to use for large volume calibrations. These new slickers will ensure smaller uncertainties for the laboratory’s customers. Continued work is being done to renovate the metrology laboratory for both large and small volume in order to provide a safe work environment as well as accommodate other Divisions within the Department.

The Florida metrology lab staff attended this year’s SEMAP in Lexington, KY. Topics covered during training were software verification and validation, particularly regarding uncertainty budgets, on-the-job training, as well as technical management concepts, and quality tools for laboratory use. During SEMAP, all the attendants planned the next 4 years of proficiency testing to comply with recognition and accreditation requirements. Sr. Metrologist, Megan Money, who is one of the regional coordinators, worked with Van Hyder from N.C. on organizing these for the coming years.

❖ **Items of Interest –**

Florida has received the NIST CNG Master Meter and are using it, coupled with our own “master meter”, and in comparison, with gravimetric testing. As you can see from the pictures below, this is a very labor intensive operation. Inspectors along with Supervisor Ben Hair are conducting testing at multiple sites each week to gather data for Val Miller (NIST). Val is assessing the data collected. The data coming in is showing very good agreement between the master meters however agreement between the results from the master meters and the gravimetric testing isn’t nearly as good. We have purchased a tent for gravimetric testing because the scale is affected by the

slightest air movement. Moisture and ice buildup also are a problem for us, continuous drying of the receiving vessel is necessary to minimize the impact to the gravimetric results. Ben has estimated that if we continue gathering data through testing, at our current rate that we will have spent up to \$132,000 to purchase CNG for this endeavor.



As many other states are, Florida is participating in the NCWM/NIST LP Gas survey. At the time of this writing we have submitted the following inspection totals for the survey:

Phase I (cylinder filling plants):

- Tare of new cylinders submitted 34 inspection forms for a total of 689 cylinders inspected in 8 facilities.
- Tare of used cylinders submitted 18 inspection forms for a total of 370 cylinders at 5 locations.

Phase II (dispensing units):

- Method of Sale surveys forms submitted 159.

Phase III (exchange facilities) in progress:



Hal Prince

North Carolina

Metrology Laboratory

The first of the year has been filled with preparations for the anticipated New Lab opening. We are not as close as we would like to be but we are making steady progress. Our packet was submitted to OWM in Mid-February and our packet was submitted to NVLAP a week later. We are currently working on feedback from our submittal.

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.

After a two-year hiatus, the SEMAP region was able to meet in person. March 28 thru March 31, 2022, SEMAP was held in Lexington, Kentucky. Van Hyder and Sharon Woodard represented North Carolina in a 4-day week of training. We had good Round Table feedback from each lab represented; trainings on Technical Management Concepts, Quality Tools and Processes for Metrology and Non-Conformities for Software Verification and Validation and Uncertainty. The afternoon of the last day was for invitation only participants of Fundamentals of Metrology attendees.

In safety news, we will continue to participate in the Carolina Star Program. Our safety team representatives for this year will be Sharon Woodard and Marina Currie. The theme for this year's safety conference will be: 25 Years of Safety, Past Present and Future. We will continue to strive to make our workplace safety first!

The Grain Moisture Section is currently completing routine inspections throughout the state. We are still in the process of filling our vacant field inspector position as well as resolving the challenges of working in a new laboratory space. We expect a good wheat harvest despite recent negative impacts to the grain industry. We are enjoying the warmer weather as the inspection season ends and we prepare for grain harvest.

Sharon Woodard

Measurement Section

Greetings from the Tarheel state, North Carolina.

Spring is on the way. Looking forward to warm temperatures. Last quarter I told you we had two inspectors retire. We were able to fill those positions in house. Michael Trogdon accepted our heavy scale position and Joseph Chandler accepted our retail weights and measures position. Both inspectors are going through training currently. With those positions being filled in house, it leaves us two fuel dispenser inspector positions open. Those are in the final stages of being filled with interviews coming up soon. So soon we hope to be fully staffed once again.

We are still waiting on new trucks with the supply/chip backups. Equipment seems to be at a standstill now.

God Bless,

Chad Parker

LP-Gas Section

Stephen and I participated in the Southeast Propane Alliance (SEPA) meetings on January 12 (Safety and Education Committee) and March 22 (general quarterly meeting). SEPA is a new-this-year multi-state organization composed of the former North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia Propane Gas Associations.

Our LP-Gas Engineer, Richard Fredenburg, participated in the NPGA Technology, Standards & Safety Committee meeting on March 7 in Charlotte, NC

Richard Fredenburg

Louisiana

Legislation

House Bill 386 was recently filed to give LDAF the authority to regulate commercial electric vehicle charging devices with the goal to protect consumers and ensure equity prevails in the marketplace. Currently, our definition of commercial weighing and measuring device excludes devices used to measure electricity. We believe this was included in the original definition to exclude residential and business' electric meters and not technologies such as EVSE. Louisiana does adopt Handbook 44 in full, so we would follow Section 3.40 EVSE.

Metrology

Louisiana is currently exploring the addition of some Mass Echelon II work to the scope of our Metrology Laboratory.

Also, Jenny Adair recently completed the Mass Seminar (in person!) at NIST OWM in Gaithersburg, MD. She is enrolled in the upcoming Volume Training and with successful completion of that course, she will be a signatory for our lab.

Office

We have recently hired Trissi Pearson to fill the role of Administrative Assistant 3 in our Baton Rouge office. She, with Laurie, Tammy, and Kasey are doing a great job keeping our office running great.

Crawfish season and Festival season are in full swing in Louisiana. If you find yourself down here, drop us a line.

Made available by

Paul Floyd

Director of Weights and Measures

La. Dept. Of Agriculture and Forestry

Mississippi

All Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce employees received a 3% pay increase in January of this year. Most employees should receive an additional increase July 1st due to realignments and new job classifications by the State Personnel Board for all State Agencies.

The department ordered 6 new inspection vehicles in November of last year for the Weights & Measures and Petroleum divisions, however because of supply issues those vehicles may be delayed until November of 2022.

Mississippi is seeking qualified individuals to fill three (3) positions in the Mississippi Metrology Laboratory, located on the campus of Alcorn State University, Lorman, MS. Interested parties should complete an application on the Mississippi State Personnel Board website by following the links below.

[Consumer Protection Supervisor](#)

[Consumer Protection Specialist III](#)

For additional information contact Gene Robertson at 601.359.1102 or Jennifer Thompson at 601.359.1144.

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

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