



Southern Weights & Measures Association

167th Edition

SWMA Newsletter

September 2022

Hello All!

In addition to the articles from some states, the proposed by-law changes are included in this issue. These will be a topic during open hearings at the annual meeting in Raleigh, October 9-12. Our current Bylaws require they be published in the newsletter prior to the meeting. However, they are included as a separate attachment as pasting them into the newsletter seemed to accept all the proposed changes.

Mississippi

Mississippi has issued multiple administrative complaints to Dollar General Stores for habitual UPC violations. Since implementing penalties for such violations in November of 2021, collections from Dollar General total over \$125,000, and average \$11,000/month. Total collections for the same period total \$168,275.00, with Dollar General accounting for 75% of collections.

For the past 2 years, the department has been unable to replace eligible vehicles in our fleet. Chip shortages have made it nearly impossible for the agency to replace any contract vehicles. Emergency purchase power has been exercised in some instances; however, the availability of any suitable vehicles has limited that power to non-regulatory workforce vehicles.



Mississippi has experienced, since the onset of COVID, difficulty with hiring inspector positions. Particularly in the number of candidates applying for jobs. While prior experience is not necessary, the few applicants that apply, have salary expectations that cannot be met in the entry level positions being offered. The Weights and Measures Division has been fortunate to hire two inspectors recently. Justin Crawford, right, filling a heavy scale operator position that has been vacant for nearly a year and Jason Bell, left, filling an intermediate inspector position that has been vacant since March 2021.





The Mississippi Metrology Lab has been closed since the retirement of the State Metrologist in December of 2020. Attempts to get the lab back on its feet have proven to be challenging. The closing of NIST to in-person training for over 2 years, along with investments in personnel that resigned following extensive assistance from NIST’s Georgia Harris and upon NIST reopening have delayed progress. In addition, finding qualified candidates with the math skills required at the current salary threshold is also a challenge.

We are hopeful that the Mississippi Lab is on the upswing and that the hiring of Erica Griffin, our metrologist in-training is up to the challenge. A huge thank you to our Louisiana partners for assisting with Erica’s on-the-job training! We are also proud to report that Erica has completed the NIST Fundamentals course held in Gaithersburg the last week of August. We are hopeful that we will be much closer to NIST recognition by this time next year. We are in the process of filling an additional position to assist at the lab.

Jennifer Thompson

Florida

Florida Bureau of Standards

Greetings from Florida, we hope this finds all our SWMA friends doing well and we are really looking forward to seeing you all in Raleigh!

❖ **Field office and administrative functions –**

Even though our supervisors and lab managers have been hiring as quickly as possible, the bureau still has 20 vacant positions but that’s down from 35 at last report.

❖ **Field Inspections –**

As several other states have reported, we have seen a sharp increase in Price Verification violations and have been concentrating on increasing inspections in this area.

❖ **Items of Interest –**

The Bureau of Standards conducted a week-long inspector workshop in August, this is our first one since 2019 and it was well attended. Our field inspectors, trainers, supervisors, administrators, lab managers and field office personnel were in attendance. Numerous training and administrative issues were discussed, demonstrations were conducted, and updated safety training was given. It’s an exhausting week of training and discussion but the management staff has worked hard to make the training more interactive and the positive feedback from the inspection staff was tremendous!



Hal Prince

North Carolina

Measurement Section

Greetings from the Tarheel state, North Carolina.

Favorite time of the year. Fall. It has been very busy. We are getting ready for the hosting of the SWMA annual meeting and preparing as usual for our State Fair. We also have a booth at our Mountain State Fair, which runs Sept. 9-18. Hope to see many of you here this October at SWMA.

We have had two new hires take place in the last quarter. Kevin Kearns joined us and filled our open fuel dispenser position. He has completed his training and doing well. Luke Craven was recently promoted to fill our weights and measures position. He is just starting his training and expected to do well. We once again have two positions open and both are within the HR process to be filled. Always chasing that elusive fully staffed.

God Bless,

Chad Parker

LP-Gas Section

The *LP-Gas Code* is moving into the final phases of issuing the next edition. The second draft meeting was held in May. The final formal vote taken on action from that meeting in August. No actions taken in the meeting were reversed by the vote. The next edition of the *LP-Gas Code* will be issued in the spring of 2023 unless there are appeals. If there are appeals, it will slip to the fall of 2023.

There have been a series of discussions and meetings concerning FEMA and National Flood Insurance Program requirements for placing propane tanks in flood-prone areas. Some municipalities are requiring elevation of tanks up to about 13 feet above normal sea level. The quick fix to this appears to be burying tanks, as those do not affect wind, wave, and current actions on surrounding structures.

[Stephen, you may want to add something about the NIST requirements for RMFD and some of the issues we're having with certain companies.]

Richard Fredenburg, our LP-Gas Engineer, participated in the NPGA TS&S Committee meeting on September 11-13 in Indianapolis, IN.

Richard Fredenburg

Metrology Lab

The Laboratory was given NIST recognition Mid-June and we immediately began on our field standards, with customer work beginning late July. We are still working to coordinate our NVLAP evaluation.

In June we gained and lost a metrologist. Edward Stevens from Raleigh, NC joined our staff with a degree in Physics. Marina Currie left us to further her career in the private sector. We congratulate both metrologists and look forward to their contributions in their opportunities for growth.

The Grain Moisture Section is currently completing routine inspections, including peanut scales throughout the state. We are also collecting corn samples we need for standards in the coming inspection season. Hopefully we will not have any major storms that affect grain collection this year. We look forward to having Ryan Askew return to fill our vacant inspector position in the coming weeks.

Sharon Woodard

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