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**NCWM Announces Weights and Measures Week: March 1-7, 2016**

*Weights and Measures – More than meets the eye*

Weights and Measures Week is celebrated March 1-7 each year to commemorate John Adams signing the first United States weights and measures law on March 2, 1799. Weights and measures responsibilities in the marketplace have expanded well beyond simple scales and meters and include much more than meets the eye. In addition to testing gas pumps and grocery store scales, today's weights and measures officials are responsible for regulating a sophisticated, fast moving marketplace. Their challenges include electronic and software driven devices used in settings from oil refineries to taxis to jewelry stores and for verifying that the fuel being sold to motorists meets quality standards.

Weights and measures officials operate in today's marketplace to protect consumers and provide fair competition among businesses. Inspectors examine price scanners in electronic point-of-sale systems to make sure customers are charged the right price for their items. They also test motor fuel and oil to ensure strict specifications are met so that new generation engines can perform efficiently and meet emission standards. Inspectors check signage, advertising and price computations in all types of businesses to make sure consumers are not misled or cheated. The inspectors must also be skilled investigators. They reconstruct transactions, look at electronic audit trails and perform undercover purchases while following strict legal processes. When they discover violations, they take enforcement actions that may result in fines, injunctions and even imprisonment in extreme cases. Recently officials across the country have been teaming up with law enforcement to combat the use of credit card skimmers.

Jerry Buendel, Chairman of the National Conference on Weights and Measures, points out, "Today's inspectors are highly trained professionals who test complex commercial measurement devices, enforce regulations on how products in the marketplace are sold, test petroleum products for quality and investigate violations." Some jurisdictions require inspectors to complete rigorous national certification examinations to demonstrate their knowledge and assure consistent application of regulatory standards. The inspectors, regulatory agencies, the National Conference on Weights and Measures and the National Institute of Standards and Technology are constantly working to keep up with the latest developments in a rapidly changing marketplace. Some examples are the sale of natural gas, hydrogen and electricity as a fuel for motor vehicles and the use of global positioning systems by taxi and transportation network systems to determine charges for their services.

The impact of the inspectors' work is high. Buendel calculated that a one fluid ounce error in the sale of the 3 billion gallons of gasoline sold in his state in one year results in errors totaling \$87.9 million.

Weights and measures jurisdictions use weights and measure week to inform others about their role in commerce and to help the public to be more aware as consumers. Weights and measures affect everyone and is one of government's most impactful consumer protection services. Contact your state or local jurisdiction for more information.

The National Conference on Weights and Measures is a professional nonprofit association of state and local weights and measures officials, federal agencies, manufacturers, retailers and consumers. NCWM has developed national weights and measures standards since 1905. The organization brings the right interests together to keep pace with innovative advancements in the marketplace.

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