

2017 Chairman's Address

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Honored guests, fellow members and friends, it is my honor to welcome you to Pittsburgh, PA and the 102nd annual meeting of the National Conference on Weights and Measures.

At this time last year in Denver, Colorado we learned the name, and briefly met, the new chief of the NIST, Office of Weights and Measures, Dr. Doug Olson. Any change at NIST OWM will potentially affect NCWM, and anyone following Carol Hockert has big shoes to fill. However, today I am pleased to report that Carol's knowledge transfer efforts worked; Dr. Olson has grown very big feet and is filling in those shoes quite nicely. Doug's actions so far speak volumes about the commitment NIST has to NCWM and ensures that our relationship will remain on solid ground.

My theme for this year is "Tradition and Technology: Finding the Right Balance." Pittsburgh is such a great city to experience instances of each. It is one of the few U.S. cities currently testing autonomous vehicles, in real-world conditions. Indeed, the transportation sector is a very good example of how the speed of technological changes is necessitating the development of new and timely measurement standards. For those of you who are interested in tradition it may surprise you that there is, right here in Pittsburgh, a museum of old weights and measures artifacts, provided and supported by the International Society of Antique Scale Collectors. This is an excellent example of how we give reverence to our past.

Regarding standards development, I am pleased to appoint former NCWM chairman Jerry Buendel to lead the Charter Team he created to review NCWM's current method of developing and creating new standards. To briefly recap the issue: The process to adopt timely measurement standards has become more problematic in recent years. Industry is constantly ahead of regulators in developing new measurement technologies or means to sell their products. The NCWM committees' agendas have grown. They report there is not enough time at their meetings to thoroughly consider each item, develop finished language, and deliver items ready for consideration at the voting sessions. When the voting and publishing changes to the NIST handbooks becomes delayed, this frustrates businesses trying to go through proper channels. Regulators are also becoming more impatient with the deferral of agenda items, as states are being forced to react with state-specific laws which may or may not be in agreement with the adopted uniform codes. Patchwork enforcement is

not good for businesses and it is problematic for regulators and NIST advisors. Under Jerry's leadership, we have an opportunity to refresh NCWM's review of how we conduct business, to ensure process efficiency and effectiveness for all.

As you heard earlier today, NCWM is conducting a widespread review of regulatory programs across the U.S. this year which will establish a baseline for recurring future surveys. The NCWM Weights and Measures Survey, developed by Don Onwiler, Steve Harrington (OR) and Craig VanBuren (MI), was sent to all state directors this July. This is the most comprehensive request for information in recent years. The survey asks questions about funding sources, operating expenses, staffing, salaries, scope of activities, inspection intervals, and compliance rates. The NCWM Board of Directors has approved a two-year cycle for this survey which will alternate with the biannual NIST Metrology Workload Survey. Additionally, the Board has approved the development of a comprehensive Petroleum Laboratory Survey. Combined, these three surveys will give us valuable data accruing on a broad spectrum of subject areas that can be used by individual jurisdictions and the U.S. weights and measures community as a whole. This is in keeping with our Strategic Goal 2; to expand the role of the NCWM as a source of support for state and local weights and measures programs.

Another way NCWM is demonstrating value to regulatory and industry stakeholders is the continued advancement on professional certification exams. It has been five years now since the first exam was produced for retail motor fuel dispensers. Six exams are in place, and two more have just been created. Unlike the others, these two are to test individuals on the basic weighing and measuring concepts of NIST Handbook 44. After the Board of Directors approves proctoring procedures, all exams will need to be proctored. This will assure the integrity of the exam process and is a requirement of the accreditation we are seeking.

Our conference, the 102nd, is being held in the historic Omni-William Penn Hotel, built in 1916. This is where celebrities and presidents stay when visiting Pittsburgh. Every sitting president since Theodore Roosevelt has stayed here while in office so we know that John F. Kennedy has been here. You've heard the good things that NCWM is doing this year, so in the spirit of JFK let me just say, "My fellow members, ask not what NCWM can do for you, ask what you can do for NCWM!" Ours is an organization that is driven from the bottom up; NCWM is only the conduit for change. It is most likely to be an inspector in the field who finds something amiss which generates a proposal to change a handbook. For each of the 237 registrants at this conference, there are tenfold back home. How do we inspire, train, and retain these people? Some of them will become our future leaders, so how do we get them involved in our process? Let them participate! Do you remember your first NCWM conference? I do, and I remember what an inspiration it was to me. Allow your employees to

experience the same "light bulb moment". Expose them to a regional meeting, NIST training event, or NCWM conference if nearby. This year a full 20% of the registrants are first time attendees, and we have two students registered, Maxwell Kirby and Holly Butcher. Help them grow into our future leaders! Other things you can do to keep the Conference fresh in our minds is to talk about these meetings with your staff back home and continue to educate your administrators about the importance of weights and measures.

In closing, I want you to know how much your trust and confidence this last year has meant to me. I've been supported at each step of the way by many groups and individuals: by the Nominating Committee who selected me; by Jerry Buendel who, as immediate past chair was my mentor; by Don Onwiler, the NCWM staff, and Board of Directors who had to put up with a newbie; and by the NIST staff with their coordination of events and technical support.

Thanks to each and every one of you for making this year's conference a huge success! And next year you will be in good hands with Jimmy Cassidy as chairman, and with Brett Gurney who is on the horizon for 2018!