

## **Weights and Measures Week: March 1-7, 2017**

### **“Tradition and Technology Drive U.S. Standards for Trade”**

Annually, the first week in March is designated as Weights & Measures Week. This is a time to celebrate and acknowledge the hard work of dedicated inspectors whose responsibility is to ensure that commerce remains fair and equitable for both businesses and consumers alike.

Napa County Weights and Measures Inspectors inspect and test all commercial devices enforcing weights and measures laws and regulations throughout the County. If a commodity is sold by weight or measure, rest assured, your local Weights & Measures Department is working hard to make sure you get what you pay for! A typical day for a Weights and Measures Inspector may include testing gas pumps, propane dispensers and utility sub-meters, all types of scales; checking the net content of packaged goods; verifying point of sale price accuracy; as well as investigating local and sometimes statewide complaints.

This year the Weights and Measures Week theme, “Tradition and Technology Drive U.S. Standards for Trade” brings together the history and tradition of early weights and measures and addresses the advancements in technology that continue to shape it. We’ve come a long way. At the first Weights and Measures Conference in 1905, the need for basic uniform weights and measures standards statewide was discussed. As technology evolved, the use of computing devices became more popular. As you can imagine there are always new devices being developed, not only to help business transactions be more efficient, but also to sell new commodities that are being developed.

Over the past few years there has been growing interest in transportation technology which has created the need to develop new standards. Behind the scenes there is work being done in Ethanol, Electricity, Biodiesel, Hydrogen, Natural Gas, and Propane as alternative fuels. Take diesel fuel for example. Diesel is a commonly used fuel for transportation of goods and commodities to consumers, and the use of biodiesel blends is becoming more popular. Additionally, have you noticed that more electric vehicles are filling the roads and electric charging stations are popping up all over the place? More auto manufacturers are providing electric plugin vehicles prompting the need for standards for electric charging stations, equipment to test them, and customer invoicing.

But let’s not stop there! Currently, there are 24 retail hydrogen fuel stations throughout California so before long you may see more hydrogen powered vehicles on the roadways along with the electric vehicles as infrastructure increases.

As science makes technological advances, the weights and measures world must also advance and develop standards. Similar to the early 1900's, your Weights and Measures Department will help develop new standards for fair trade practices to make sure you get what you are paying for.

If you have any questions about subjects in this article or want to know more about the office, visit our website at <http://www.countyofnapa.org/AgCommissioner/Weights> or contact your Napa County Weights and Measures Official at (707) 944-8714.