

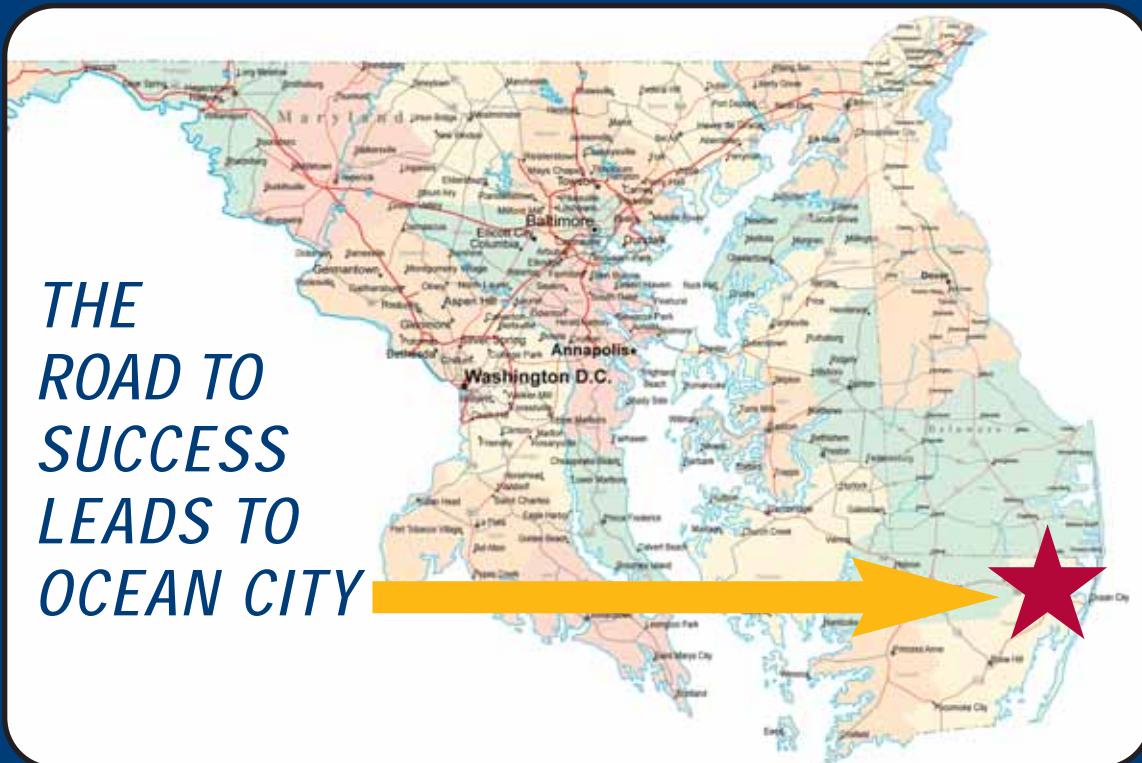
# WMDA NEWS

VOLUME 10/ISSUE 8



AUGUST 2011

An Official Publication of the Washington DC, Maryland & Delaware Service Station & Automotive Repair Association



**THE  
ROAD TO  
SUCCESS  
LEADS TO  
OCEAN CITY**

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& THE MEGA TRADE SHOW... SEE PAGES 2-7**

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## EDITORIAL

by Roy Littlefield

### ROADS TO SUCCESS LEADING TO OCEAN CITY

Early booth sales, convention registrations, hotel bookings and golf tournament registrations indicate that the 2011 WMDA Convention and Mega Trade Show in Ocean City will be a great success.

The early interest and optimism surprised me, so I researched how other trade association conventions and trade shows were doing this year. To my surprise, the trends we see for the September 29 - October 1 Ocean City Convention and Mega Trade Show were consistent with other trade groups – large and small. Is it a sign that the economy is doing a little better? Or is it a sign that small business owners serious about their profits and future, see the need more than ever to attend their industry event?

A recent survey conducted by the American Society of Association Executives of members of trade associations concluded that their number one perceived benefit if association membership was a professional convention and trade show (beating out such traditional choices as government affairs, insurance, training, and information).

When you look at what WMDA offers in Ocean City – outstanding educational seminars, an opportunity to meet and socialize with suppliers, a phenomenal family package that includes a reception at Seacrets, a Crab Feast, Hospitality Suites, and a golf tournament at Beautiful Ocean City, and the largest state service station dealer and repair

facility operator association trade show in the nation – it is easy to see why the show is a great success year after year.

The Mega Trade Show links WMDA members with professional companies and resources. The show exhibitors will present the newest ideas, marketing options and technologies to make your business more professional and profitable.

To the exhibitors, I would like to share with you some “tips” and “lessons learned” from “The Complete Idiots Guide to Trade Shows” book written by Linda Musgrove.

#### “TIPS AND TRICKS”

- 1.) Don't choose a show based on price alone. All shows describe exhibitor packages differently; read the details thoroughly. Sometimes, the additional costs of items that are not included in the exhibit package can add up to a sizeable amount.
- 2.) Paper items can be lost or misplaced. If you have a scanner or networked copier, scan paper items such as purchase orders and invoices to a show specific folder on your computer for back-up purposes.
- 3.) Arrange a meeting with your accounting department and ask for their advice on how to best work with them to make your payment processing smoother.
- 4.) If cash flow is an important consideration, ask the accounting department if you should consider paying as many items as possible by credit card and ask which credit card should be used if you haven't already been supplied with one.
- 5.) The earlier your freight carrier delivers your material within the allowed time frame, the earlier your shipment will be at your booth location.
- 6.) For smaller booths, it's difficult to get drapes and skirting to accurately match your corporate colors. If

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you order draping, skirting and your carpet in all black, your display will stand out more, emphasizing your design and signage.

- 7.) If you use a paper-based lead system, have pens for prospects to answer questions about product needs and fill in contact information. Also have staplers and extra staples available to staple business cards to the form.
- 8.) One layer of floor padding is great, but don't go overboard. Having two or more layers will give your booth floor the feel of a sandy beach and your booth staffer's feet and legs will feel as tired as they would after a day walking in sand at the beach.
- 9.) Place your messaging on inexpensive banners, not on your large display. You may exhibit at a variety of shows with different target audiences where you need different messages to reach different prospects with different needs. This enables you to easily adjust messaging without the expensive cost of replacing your main display.
- 10.) When you design display graphics, remember that you are designing them for what your

prospects are likely to be attracted to, not what you like or would be attracted to.

- 11.) Sometimes, booth staffers, especially the ones that consider themselves veterans, may be a little opposed to the idea of booth staff training. Ask if they can help you by training and mentoring new staffers. This usually appeases them and makes them happier to participate.
- 12.) With the combination of personalities assembled for booth duty hours, you should consider having these booth staffers always work the same shifts and learn how to work the booth as a team.
- 13.) Create a pocket-sized conversation cheat sheet for your tradeshow team so they have an easy way to look up and memorize the top phrases.
- 14.) When creating your tradeshow brochure, don't focus on the features of your product; focus on the benefits users experience when using your product.
- 15.) Consider sending several post-show follow up items such as direct mail or email. Or consider advertising in an industry publication, particularly one produced

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by the show. A great item is a general thank you to those who visited your booth and a sorry we missed you type of message to those who weren't able to stop by. In any case, invite attendees to visit your website for more information. Consider offering an incentive for following up with a sales-person within a certain timeframe for more information about the company. Always make sure any ad you create includes several benefit statement messages.

- 16.) Always submit for a Best-of-Show award when available. Many companies don't bother submitting and this increases your odds of winning an award at that show.
- 17.) For tracking competitor activities, including when they will be exhibiting, Google Alerts is a great tool to use for receiving automated updates.
- 18.) Every booth staff member should have time to check in with the office and answer important emails. However, in the booth during show hours is not the place to do it. Ban cell phone and PDA usage on the show floor as much as possible.
- 19.) Exhibit halls are a great place to learn more about your competition and their marketing activities. Send someone who looks like a normal attendee to gather information.
- 20.) You might see marketing approaches that work well observing your competitors. Try to stay away from copying them. Doing so will make you a follower rather than a leader in the eyes of your common prospects.
- 21.) It's okay for things to go wrong as long as you learn from them and don't repeat those mistakes.
- 22.) Adding a kiosk or two near the aisles with a presentation running will give you a closer presence to anyone walking by.
- 23.) Consider displays that are light in weight. You will save money on shipping and material handling fees.
- 24.) If you are having a display custom built, ask if it can be built in a way that you can easily use components to assemble a smaller sized booth.
- 25.) Always have a CD or memory stick with your display and collateral graphic files travel on your person in case your booth does not arrive and you need to re-print graphics or collateral.

- 26.) Make friends with the labor crew and your booth neighbors early on. Bring some treats or promotional items from previous shows people may be interested in to use as thank you's for any help you may need from them.
- 27.) Make sure to remove old labels and clearly label all boxes and crates with the address you are shipping to. Place multiple labels on several sides of the crate.
- 28.) Have a check list of booth items and what container they belong in. This helps to pack the correct items into each box and manage supplies.
- 29.) Never use automated lead follow-up or automated mailings on media contacts. They get way more information than they care for and anything you do should be personalized and specific to the media contact's preferences.
- 30.) Flowers and plants are a great way to hide things you don't want to be seen, such as cabling or small blemishes on your display.

There is early excitement to be in Ocean City this year for the annual Convention and Mega Trade Show. There are two main reasons for the enthusiasm – it's an enjoyable way to make a very important investment in your business and your future. See you in Ocean City! ♦

## LAST CALL FOR ALL AWARD NOMINATIONS

If you have any nominations for the **Friend of the Industry Award, Member of the Year, and/or Hall of Fame**, please email them to **Larry Jackson (ljax5@goodtogomarkets.com)** or **Roy Littlefield (rlittlefield@wmda.net)** by **August 5, 2011**.

For questions about the awards, please contact **Marta Gates at 301-390-0900, ext. 115**.



## AS I SEE IT

by *Marta Gates-Jones*  
*Director of Operations*

### HOSPITALITY SUITES UPDATE

I am so very excited to announce that WMDA will have a full house of Hospitality Suites at the Clarion Resorts Fontainebleau Hotel from 8:30 p.m. – 11:30 p.m on Friday, September 30.

**Carroll Independent Fuel, Sunoco, PMG, SMO, Repair Facilities/Council of Automotive Repairs (CAR), Ocean Petroleum and Ewing Oil** will each be having a Hospitality Suite.

This is the first year that **Ewing Oil** has had a Hospitality Suite at the Convention, and they have created a “family fun” theme with a build-your-own sundae bar, cookies, and coffee, tea and hot chocolate. What a great way to showcase their very first Suite! For those of us with children, or those that prefer coffee to beer, and everyone who has a sweet tooth – this will be a real family favorite. (I can promise you that this will be my first stop of the evening!)

Perennial favorite **Carroll Independent Fuel** will once again provide a themed extravaganza – but the theme is always top secret until they open their suite. I can’t wait to see what Carroll does with their Suite this year! (I have images embedded in my mind of hula skirts and hairy legs in 2005.) There will be music, laughter, and tons of fun!

**PMG** will be holding their fabulous suite again this year, with lots of terrific food and drink. PMG’s Suite is always elegant, filled with awesome food, great conversation, and super nice people. Stepping in to the PMG suite is like going to visit your family, you feel right at home!

Speaking of super nice people, you have to stop by the **Sunoco** Suite too. They always have a beautifully decorated Suite and serve up some very gracious hospitality. Since Sunoco is the official fuel of NASCAR, and I am a well-known NASCAR nut, you can be sure to find me checking out the decorations at the Sunoco Suite.

**Ocean Petroleum** oozes elegance at their suite – they always have a classy and most tasteful ambience in their Suite, and I love the way they decorate. You can be sure to



Last year's Hospitality Suites were a big success!

meet Ocean Petroleum, LLC founder Ed Ellis and his wife, Chris at their suite.

Now just the opposite will be found in the **Repair Facilities/CAR Suite**. With a rocking deejay, I can promise the noise level will be high, and the energy level will be off the charts! This suite is sponsored by various auto repair equipment suppliers (and related businesses) such as **MTD Services, Jasper Engines and Transmissions, First Merchant Services, etc.**, and is a haven for those members with repair shops. This Suite is where you may find me on the dance floor with my sister dancing to “Footloose” (hee, hee, hee).

And last, but definitely not least, **SMO** will have a Suite this year (it’s been a few years since they have had a Suite) – and we couldn’t be happier! Last year SMO sponsored a coffee and cookie station, but this year they are jumping in with both feet to say thank you to their dealers, and we are very excited to have them on board! I really admire SMO for wanting to get involved – not for us, not for themselves – but **FOR** their dealers. I can’t wait to visit their Suite!

So what are you waiting for? Make plans now to join us in Ocean City for the 38th annual Convention and Mega Trade Show. Did I forget to mention that the Hospitality Suites are FREE? Well they are! No excuses, check out the new registration form and schedule in this newsletter on pages 8 and 9, and register now! ♦



## KIRK'S KORNER

by Kirk McCauley  
Director of Member Relations

### MURF'S TURF AND A WARNING TO MEMBERS

#### MURF'S TURF

Make it a point to come to Murf's Turf Town Hall Meeting at the Convention in Ocean City on Friday, September 30, from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (free to all). We will have John Patrick and Steve Hull from Ewing Oil there and they will discuss how gas is bought and sold. We send out rack prices every day, but do you know how that fuel goes from Point A to Point B? This will be a generic presentation and not an advertisement for the company – these guys live and breathe this stuff, and they are willing to share their knowledge with our members.

I am excited about this because I have wanted to learn what the different terms mean and more importantly, what they mean to dealers. Plats, Fixed Forward Buying, Spot, Wet Barrel, Green Barrel – terms I hear, but I do not know what they mean. We talk and act like we know, but I think we all could use some schooling. John Patrick has been doing this for along time and they tell me he's one of the best. It's not like he talks in tongues – but Steve will be there to help us just in case.

See you in Ocean City and don't forget the golf outing at Rum Pointe on Thursday, September 29 (just complete the registration form on the next page); plus, you can go to Seacrets on Thursday night for the Welcome Reception/Jamaican Beach Pary!

#### TIN FOIL BANDITS UPDATE

Riaz Ahmad called to say his Silver Hill BP was a target of the tin foil bandits not once but twice last week. The first time there were three cars milling around the pumps, and then five or six more cars pulled in. The group was playing very loud music, dancing and moving all around distracting cashier and just being loud. Not until the next morning did they know there was a problem when the system quit accepting cards. At this point, the system (which can store 50 transactions so customers are not inconvenienced when satellite is out) quit working. Checking the dish, tin foil was discovered on the receiver. These scum bags work in groups that are most likely put together on our social networks for crime.

Two days later, the group was back again but the cashier had learned a lesson and shut down the pumps when the band and music arrived. When one of degenerates came up and asked the cashier why the pumps were not working, he told them he thought someone was messing with the satellite and he had called the manager. The pump islands emptied quickly. Sure enough tin foil was on the dish.

The cure for this is a dedicated backup phone line or reprogramming computers to not take cards when the system is down. Relocating the dish to a canopy might work. This is getting out of hand and I will dig a little deeper and try to find some answers and options available to our dealers, and find out if Oil Companies are addressing the issue. Until this issue is solved, dealers need to school their cashiers on the methods that should be used and call the police immediately when problems occur.

The camera that would normally reveal some this activity was cover with plastic. The police came in both incidents after tin foil bandit were gone and didn't seam too enthused about doing anything. We as a group need to change law enforcement's attitude toward this type of crime. They are using stolen credit cards or stolen information to make their cards – and I believe this a felony. You must insist that a report is made. Any tape of the incident should be given to police, along with tag numbers and descriptions of cars.

This all occurred in early July and this newsletter won't come out until August. That being said, it still applies and will keep happening until Shell and BP addresses the issue of authorizing cards with no confirmation or credit status. I know BP has changed the software in many station to accept no cards when the system is down, but I think you have to ask for that change. I do not know if Shell has done the same, or if dealers are being charged back for bad cards. The best way is a dedicated backup phone line to authorize cards – keep customers happy and fraud at a minimum. I have had over 50 reports from BP and Shell stations. I will keep you updated by newsletter and email and keep reports coming that could affect members. I would like thank all the members that keep WMDA up to date on events as they happen. ♦

# ANNUAL CONVENTION & THE MEGA SHOW TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

September 29 - October 1, 2011 • Ocean City Convention Center • Ocean City, Maryland

**Please  
Note!**

*Educational Sessions, Mega Trade Show, and Hospitality Suites are open to all members at NO COST, if registered by September 23. Trade Show Passes will be distributed at a later date.*

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2011

10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Golf Tournament – 11:30 a.m. Shotgun Start	Rum Pointe
7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Welcome Reception/Jamaican Beach Party	Seacrets

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2011

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Federal PAC Breakfast	O.C. Convention Center
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Legislative Workgroup	O.C. Convention Center
11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	WMDA Board of Directors & Membership Meeting	O.C. Convention Center
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	SSDA-AT Board of Directors Meeting	O.C. Convention Center
11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	General Membership Meeting	O.C. Convention Center
12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	Grille on the Bay	O.C. Convention Center
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	<i>WMDA Educational Sessions</i> <i>Benefits of Recycling Waste Oil for Heat Recovery</i> <i>C-Store ProfitFactor</i> <i>GASONOMICS</i> <i>TPMS &amp; Tire Repair Update</i>	O.C. Convention Center
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Murf's Turf Town Hall Meeting Presented by WMDA	O.C. Convention Center
4:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	<b>Mega Trade Show</b>	O.C. Convention Center
8:30 p.m. – 11:30 p.m.	Hospitality Suites	Clarion Resort Fontainebleau Hotel

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2011

7:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Awards Breakfast and Harry T. Murphy Customer Service Contest Awards Presentation	Clarion Resort Fontainebleau Hotel
10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<i>WMDA Educational Sessions</i> <i>MDE – 2011 Update</i> <i>MOSH Compliance Inspection – Will Your Repair Facility Pass?</i> <i>Ignite the Internet – for Auto Repair Professionals</i>	O.C. Convention Center
11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	<b>Mega Trade Show</b>	O.C. Convention Center
3:15 p.m.	Grand Prize Drawings	O.C. Convention Center
7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.	Crab/Seafood Feast	Higgins Crab House North

*Schedule subject to change.*

## HOTEL INFORMATION

**Clarion Resort Fontainebleau Hotel**  
10100 Coastal Highway  
Ocean City, MD 21842

### WMDA Member Rates (Single/Double):

Double/Double	\$139.00	1 Bedroom Condo	\$159.00
Executive King	\$159.00	2 Bedroom Condo	\$184.00
Studio King	\$169.00	3 Bedroom Condo	\$299.00
Cabana	\$187.00	<i>All rates per night plus tax.</i>	

*Make reservations by calling 1-800-638-2100 (cut-off date is September 12, 2011). Mention WMDA/The Mega Show to receive convention room rate.*

*For additional information, please call WMDA at 301-390-0900 or visit [www.wmda.net](http://www.wmda.net) for up-to-date program details.*



## CAR TALK

by Ken Quasney  
CAR Committee Chairman

### IT'S ALL UP TO YOU

I started in the Auto Repair business 36 years ago. Like most of you, I have seen a lot of changes. Just the Technology alone is enough to keep anyone busy. Unfortunately, we all run a business and have to wear a lot of hats and sometimes – we really don't have the time to look into the future.

When I started in this business, you had three choices for your car service: do it yourself (that's almost gone), the local garage or gas station, and the dealer. Then there was Precision Tune, Jiffy Lube, and the muffler stores. They are, of course (for the most part), franchises. In the beginning, they really weren't a threat, and like most of us, they are independent business men and women. However there's a shift taking place. The small operator is slowly but surely getting squeezed. Remember the local parts store? Where are they now?

The small stores have been bought out and formed into buying groups such as NAPA, Federated, Pronto, Auto Service Plus, Auto Value, etc. – not to mention large retailers like Auto Zone and Advanced. I'm not putting them down; they did what they had to do. Could the auto repair business be heading in the same direction? It appears so.

The dealerships aren't making it on car sales anymore, so they are concentrating on service more than ever. (Did you ever think you would see dealerships open on Saturday and Sunday to offer a quick lube at \$29.95? I didn't.) And say what you want about the quick lubes stores, but they are getting their act together. Now we have AAA as competition, and they have plenty of money to compete with us – and they may hire one of your techs.

The X and Y generation think differently than we do, and the auto repair business model is changing with them. As I write this, Borders Books is going out of business because they didn't follow the times. This has been happening at a slow but consistent pace, and if you're not careful you might not notice it happening, or maybe you think you can survive it. Most of us are still making pretty good money, but sometimes we are busy which makes it hard for us to keep our eye on the ball. Has anyone thought about 10

years from now? Do you care? You might figure you'll be retired by then. I don't know. We believe there is an investment to protect. Let's face it, opening or keeping a shop running is expensive. Please, if you don't do anything else today, close your eyes and envision the future of your business for yourself.

We (the Council) have been working on endorsed programs. We have also been getting an education from some of the suppliers. On one hand, they definitely want our business. On the other hand, I'm not so sure they want us organized. Like you, I negotiate with suppliers on price and service. I have only one shop, and that makes my bargaining power limited. However, the franchises and large box stores act as buying groups and in most cases buy direct from the manufacturer or from a supplier who is willing to negotiate on a different level. We all know this has been happening, but I don't think we know how much of a spread (difference) there is.

Recently we had a meeting with an oil supplier. They explained that some of the quick lubes pay less for oil than they do. How could we possibly compete with them or any other large retailer when our supplier pays more than they do? Remember, our suppliers have to make a living also. Have you ever wondered how they can afford to build new facilities with all state-of-the-art equipment? It's called profit.

OK, enough of that. Here's what we (CAR/WMDA) propose. A small group of seven people on the Council have been trying to act as a buying group for our members. The problem is we are only seven and we need all hands on deck for this one. We need everyone to tell their suppliers they belong to CAR or WMDA and will be buying from our endorsed suppliers. Tell them you are tired of being nailed to the wall on pricing and service. One of the hurdles we have to overcome is how much volume can we give them? It will take a year of collecting data to know for sure. We are still negotiating with projected numbers, however, when we have real figures to hit them with, then BINGO, the games is definitely on.

Here are some real figures to think about. If we had 200 shops participating with an endorsed parts supplier at an average of \$5,000 a month, for 12 months, that would equal **12 MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR**. Two hundred shops buying 2,000 gallons of oil a year would equal **400,000 GALLONS A YEAR**. Think we could get someone's attention with those figures? You bet we could! How many of you belong to your parts suppliers program (NAPA, Pronto, Federated, Bumper to Bumper, Auto Service Plus, Auto Value, etc.)? That's their plan – not ours – and it's tailored for their needs – not ours.

Go to [www.TheCouncilofAutomotiveRepair.com](http://www.TheCouncilofAutomotiveRepair.com) and join the forum section to join in on the discussion. We will be adding a resume section for technicians, service advisors or

managers to post resumes. We will post regular ads on Craigslist to post their resume on our forum page.

**If we don't hear from you, then we'll know there's no interest and there's no sense in wasting time on this.** As we mentioned in previous articles, we will have the website on board with every repair shop (including stations with bays) that belongs to WMDA/CAR on it for customers to find us. If your shop isn't on the website, please contact us and we will fix the problem quickly. Remember you have to be a paid member to be on the site.

**I LOOK FORWARD TO TALKING WITH YOU ON THE FORUM!!!** ♦

## WMDA TO SWEAR IN 2011-2013 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There will be changes to the WMDA Executive Committee when the new nominees are sworn in at the August Board of Director's meeting on August 23, 2011.

The 2011-2013 Executive Committee will consist of:

- Rick Agoris of Brunswick Crown will become President. Rick has served in various capacities on the Board of Directors over the years, and currently serves as First Vice President.
- Current President Larry Jackson, Sr. of Hickory Ridge Sunoco, who has diligently served as President for an extended 3 years, will become Past-President. WMDA is fortunate to be able to retain his expertise on the Board of Directors in this new position.
- Frank Eberle of Eberle Automotive in Severn will move up to First Vice-President after serving in various positions on the WMDA Board of Directors including a very impressive run as PAC Chairman.
- Shafiq Umar of Whitfield Chapel Sunoco will remain Second Vice President.
- Sajid Chaudhry of Landover Shell Service Station will remain Secretary.
- James (J.R.) Rosenberger of Aspen Hill Shell will remain Treasurer.

- Past President Billy Hillmuth of Hillmuth Certified Automotive will return to the Board of Directors as a Repair Facilities representative.

Re-elected to serve another 2 year term on the WMDA Board of Directors were:

- Lucy Drayton of Pattie's BP No. 1 Washington D.C.
- Mel Sherbert of Marlow Heights BP Prince George's County Area
- Tom Watts of Greenbelt Road Shell Prince George's County Area
- Mike Mitchell of Mitch & Bill's Sunoco Montgomery County Area
- Gary Thompson of Chesapeake Exxon Anne Arundel County Area
- Joe Parsley of Frederick Shell Western Maryland Area
- Ken Quasney of Auto Sense Repair Facilities



## PROFIT FACTOR

by Kereakos Zuras  
WMDA Board Member

### 10 MISSION CRITICAL STEPS YOU SHOULD TAKE NOW

As gas station/convenience store owners struggle to reduce costs, find new sources of revenue and operate more efficiently, they sometimes forget the basics.

Here are 10 things every business owner should consider as part of his or her downturn recovery plan:

1. **Stay on top of your cash situation.** Take time to prepare cash flow projections for the next 12 months and revise weekly if needed.
2. **Know your key drivers and manage them.** Keep a careful eye on areas that affect cash flow: pool margin, payroll, accounts receivable collections, and inventory turnover. How are you doing compared to

past performance and your peers? Watch key areas that affect profits, net and gross margins, labor and fixed asset utilization.

3. **Monitor accounts receivables closely.** Process invoices immediately, distribute an outstanding accounts receivable statement weekly and take action on late accounts immediately. Start with a polite but firm personal call and don't get off the phone without a commitment to a payment date. A few days improvement in collections will make a huge difference in cash flow.
4. **Insist on good financial data from your accountant.** Accurate, timely financial statements are critical in tight economic times. Don't accept excuses.
5. **Get funding now.** The worst time to get financing is when you are about to run out of cash. Arrange for loans and lines of credit. Your cash flow projections from tip one will help you figure out how to pay it back.
6. **Review your long term financing.** Are you financing long-term growth (or assets) with short-term funding such as a credit line? If so, see your bank about getting it changed. With record low interest rates, everyone should look at refinancing now.
7. **Have good advisors and use them.** Make sure you utilize the powerful resources WMDA provides for you.
8. **Don't turn financial decisions over to others.** There's no need to turn yourself into a CPA, but you must be able to read financial statements, talk with financial people and assess your company's performance.
9. **Understand and use break-even analysis.** Do you know your contribution margin? If not, you won't know how much more you need in sales when costs rise or prices fall. At the same time you'll know how much to cut when sales fall and analyze the need for expansion or capital decision.
10. **Stay close to your clients.** This will generate good will for you, give you a chance to spot new opportunities and provide an early warning in the event their industry isn't doing well.

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# HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT THE FUEL YOU ARE GIVING AWAY? CAN IT BE REDUCED?

by Garrett Brodie  
CROMPCO

Most positive displacement meters used in retail gasoline dispensers are manufactured so that as they wear over time from dispensing gasoline they give fuel away. As a result the manufacturers of the meters recommend that meters be calibrated periodically.

Although there are calibration standards for retail gasoline meters, it may not be good enough to just meet these standards. The typical weights and measures calibration standard for retail gasoline meters is +/- 3 cubic inches (in<sup>3</sup>) for every five gallons dispensed. A retail gasoline facility that has an average positive variance of 2.5 in<sup>3</sup> for every 5 gallons dispensed on the regular grade meters is giving away .5 in<sup>3</sup> per gallon which equates .002 gallons per gallon dispensed. If the facility pumps 2,000,000 gallons of gasoline per year this meter variance would cause 4329 gallons of fuel to be given away through the meters over the course of the year (see chart below).

In order to prevent this phenomena from happening the meter manufacturers have recently designed new meters that do not wear as quickly as the conventional positive displacement meters. The new meters use axial flow technology to register fuel as it travels through the meter; however until these meters are universal, gasoline retailers

should be cognizant of the fact that the positive placement meters are most likely having a negative impact on fuel inventory reconciliation. To combat this as precisely as possible alternate calibration methods can be utilized. When properly managed, fuel shrink can be minimized.

Many people in the retail gasoline industry view fuel shrink as the cost of doing business. Gasoline inventory reconciliation is an arduous task that is made more complicated by all of the variables that can cause losses. There are publications that cite statistics for fuel shrink. The statistics vary from .3% to .8% of loss per year. With the changing dynamics in the retail petroleum industry, convenience stores must purchase fuel from the manufacturer and resell it to the consumer. With the increasing price of gasoline, the cost of fuel in comparison to the profit margin make it necessary for retailers to more accurately keep inventory of gasoline and analyze variance reports to determine the cause of the loss.

There are existing standards of compliance in place within the various regulatory agencies. But these standards are not good enough for retailers. Retailers should no longer accept fuel loss as the cost of doing business... because the cost is too high. ♦

Site Volume			METER VARIANCE – PRODUCT "GIVE AWAY" or "HOLD BACK" – CUBIC INCHES											
Gallons per Year	Gallons per Month	Gallons per Day	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6
50,000	4,167	137	22	43	65	87	108	130	152	173	195	216	238	260
100,000	8,333	274	43	87	130	173	216	260	303	346	390	433	476	519
200,000	16,667	548	87	173	260	346	433	519	606	693	779	866	952	1,039
300,000	25,000	822	130	260	390	519	649	779	909	1,039	1,169	1,299	1,429	1,558
400,000	33,333	1,096	173	346	519	693	866	1,039	1,212	1,385	1,558	1,732	1,905	2,078
500,000	41,667	1,370	216	433	649	866	1,082	1,299	1,515	1,732	1,948	2,165	2,381	2,597
600,000	50,000	1,644	260	519	779	1,039	1,299	1,558	1,818	2,078	2,338	2,597	2,857	3,117
700,000	58,333	1,918	303	606	909	1,212	1,515	1,818	2,121	2,424	2,727	3,030	3,333	3,636
800,000	66,667	2,192	346	693	1,039	1,385	1,732	2,078	2,424	2,771	3,117	3,463	3,810	4,156
900,000	75,000	2,466	390	779	1,169	1,558	1,948	2,338	2,727	3,117	3,506	3,896	4,286	4,675
1,000,000	83,333	2,740	433	866	1,299	1,732	2,165	2,597	3,030	3,463	3,896	4,329	4,762	5,195
1,100,000	91,667	3,014	476	952	1,429	1,905	2,381	2,857	3,333	3,810	4,286	4,762	5,238	5,714
1,200,000	100,000	3,288	519	1,039	1,558	2,078	2,597	3,117	3,636	4,156	4,675	5,195	5,714	6,234
1,300,000	108,333	3,562	563	1,126	1,688	2,251	2,814	3,377	3,939	4,502	5,065	5,628	6,190	6,753
1,400,000	116,667	3,836	606	1,212	1,818	2,424	3,030	3,636	4,242	4,848	5,455	6,061	6,667	7,273
1,500,000	125,000	4,110	649	1,299	1,948	2,597	3,247	3,896	4,545	5,195	5,844	6,494	7,143	7,792
1,600,000	133,333	4,384	693	1,385	2,078	2,771	3,463	4,156	4,848	5,541	6,234	6,926	7,619	8,312
1,700,000	141,667	4,658	736	1,472	2,208	2,944	3,680	4,416	5,152	5,887	6,623	7,359	8,095	8,831
1,800,000	150,000	4,932	779	1,558	2,338	3,117	3,896	4,675	5,455	6,234	7,013	7,792	8,571	9,351
1,900,000	158,333	5,206	823	1,645	2,468	3,290	4,119	4,935	5,758	6,580	7,403	8,225	9,048	9,870
2,000,000	166,667	5,479	866	1,732	2,597	3,463	4,329	5,195	6,061	6,926	7,792	8,658	9,524	10,390
2,250,000	187,500	6,164	974	1,948	2,922	3,896	4,870	5,844	6,818	7,792	8,766	9,740	10,714	11,688
2,500,000	208,333	6,849	1,082	2,165	3,247	4,329	5,411	6,494	7,576	8,658	9,740	10,823	11,905	12,987
2,750,000	229,167	7,534	1,190	2,381	3,571	4,762	5,952	7,143	8,333	9,524	10,714	11,905	13,095	14,286
3,000,000	250,000	8,219	1,299	2,597	3,896	5,195	6,494	7,792	9,091	10,390	11,688	12,987	14,286	15,584

# FORM I-9 RULE FINALIZED

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued its final rule on the Form I-9, which took effect May 16, 2011. Employers must follow the newly finalized Form I-9 rule, which adopted an interim rule's changes to the Form I-9 process.

## The Final Rule:

- Prohibits employers from accepting expired documents
- Revises the list of acceptable documents by removing outdated documents and making technical amendments
- Adds documentation applicable to certain citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

The final rule's revisions affect these lists of acceptable documents that employees must present to verify their identity and employment authorization:

- "List A" documents, which show identity and employment authorization
- "List B" documents, which show identity only
- "List C" documents, which show employment authorization only

Employers use the Form I-9 to verify that every new hire is either a U.S. citizen or that he/she is authorized to work in the United States. Employers must complete the Form I-9 within three business days after the new employee begins work, and must use documents from the newly hired employee that provide evidence of the employee's identity and employment eligibility.

Employers face civil and criminal penalties for knowingly hiring, referring, recruiting or continuing to employ individuals not authorized to work in the United States.

## Best Practices:

- Employers should use the most current version of Form I-9, which bears the revision date of 08/07/09 and an expiration date of 02/02/09.
- A potential employee is not required to provide a Social Security number, unless he/she is employed by an employer who participates in E-Verify, which requires employers to provide Social Security numbers. An employer may not ask a potential employee to provide the employer with a specific document with his/her Social Security number on it. This may constitute unlawful discrimination.
- All documents used for I-9 verification must be unexpired, with some exceptions:
  1. Permanent Resident Cards (Form (I-551), if they have been extended under the limitation circumstances.
  2. Individuals under Temporary Protected Status may sometimes present employment authorization documents that contain an expiration date. But these individuals may continue to work after that expiration date if the Department of Homeland Security temporarily extended the validity date of the employment authorization documents through a notice published in the Federal Register.

The USCIS makes the "Handbook for Employers, Instructions for Completing the Form I-9 (M-274)" at [www.uscis.gov/files/form/m-274.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/m-274.pdf) available for employers to consult for additional information on completing the Form I-9. The USCIS updated the handbook in early 2011. ♦



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