

# WMDA NEWS

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



**GAS TAX HIKES ARE ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA... SEE PAGE 2**

***UPCOMING WMDA AREA MEETINGS... SEE PAGE 7***

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**WMDA**  
 1532 Pointer Ridge Place  
 Suite G  
 Bowie, MD 20716  
 301-390-0900  
 Fax: 301-390-3161  
 Website: www.wmda.net

**Marta Gates**  
*Director of Operations*  
 301-390-0900, ext. 115  
 mgates@wmda.net

**Kirk McCauley**  
*Director of  
 Member Relations*  
 301-390-0900, ext. 114  
 kmccauley@wmda.net

**Tirika Williams**  
*Director of Finance  
 and Administration*  
 301-390-0900, ext. 113  
 twilliams@wmda.net

**Editor**  
 Marta Gates

**Marketing Director**  
 LaKisha Pindell

**Graphic Designer**  
 Frank Lang



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## EDITORIAL

by Roy Littlefield

### GAS TAX HIKES ARE ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA

In Annapolis, legislators ended the special session without raising the State motor fuel tax rate.

On Capitol Hill, legislators voted to extend the current motor fuel tax until March 2012.

Because of a tremendous grass roots effort, the motor fuel tax rate will not increase in 2011. But don't celebrate this short-term victory. There will be a major effort in 2012 to significantly raise the tax on both levels.

In Maryland, a governor's blue ribbon panel has recommended raising vehicle titling and registration fees and phasing in a 15¢ per gallon fuel tax over the next three years.

Specifically the commission is recommending to:

- Increase the vehicle registration fees by 50 percent (\$165 million);
- Increase the title tax from 6 percent to 6.5 percent (\$69 million);
- Raise mass transit fares and eliminate all "free ride" exemptions (\$25 million);
- Double emissions test fees from \$14 to \$28 (\$22 million);

- The future motor fuel tax increases to an index formula so that the tax can go up (never down) without a legislative vote; and
- Increase the motor fuel tax by 5¢ in 2012, 2013, and 2014.

Revenue raised by these recommendations would total \$772 million, or about \$28 million shy of the projected \$800 million shortfall.

Commission members, who rejected proposals to increase the general sales tax from 6 percent to 6.5 percent or increasing property taxes by about 2.24¢ on \$100 of value, said they could make up the shortfall by doubling miscellaneous fees for an additional \$34 million a year.

Governor Martin O'Malley is touting this as a jobs bill, and the increase is supported by county executives and the Maryland Chamber of Commerce.

On the Federal level, the matter is even more serious. Congress must pass a new 5-year Federal Aid Highway Bill by April 1, 2012.

Supporters of a major tax increase say that the Highway Trust Fund will go broke within a year if new monies are not raised. Proposals are being circulated to raise the Federal motor fuel tax rate to between 36¢ to \$1.00 per gallon.

Supporters to raise the Federal motor fuel tax rate significantly include the nation's governors, state highway transportation officials, and the powerful highway lobby.

On the state level, Maryland has a unique Transportation Trust Fund, used not only to fund the highways, but also to fund the airport (which is losing money), the Port of Baltimore (which is losing money), and two subway systems

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(which are both losing money). Governors over the years have also raided the Fund to balance budgets.

A majority of states have constitutional amendments to protect the integrity of their State Highway Funds – motor fuel tax revenues cannot be used on anything but highways. While the motor fuel tax is the major supporter of the Maryland Transportation Trust Fund, over 62% of the money in the Fund now goes to non-highway needs.

The system is broken, and should be addressed. Raising the tax fills a shortfall, but does not recognize that Maryland cannot sustain this type of program.

On the Federal level, numerous reports assert that the nation's roads, bridges, and infrastructure are in serious need of repairs. They argue that we have not made the investment over the years that was needed. And while the nation faces a challenged economy, many are calling for a huge investment in our transportation system.

While the diversion of fuel tax revenues on the Federal level is not as great as it is at the state level, we are approaching

25% of the money from the Highway Trust Fund now going for non-highway purposes.

As well-oiled lobby groups and political leaders push for motor fuel tax increases, there are too many groups that need to become more vocal to block the hikes.

The trucking industry has been especially hurt by the economy. Most goods are delivered by trucks. The impact on the trucking industry has increased the price of most services and goods.

Rising gasoline prices have hurt the average family. Is this really the right time to increase the cost of gasoline?

And what about distributors and service station dealers? This will increase your inventory and credit card fees.

President of the Maryland Senate, Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, described the fight over toll increases as a "flea" compared with what he said would be an "elephant-sized fight" on the gas tax. It could be. It should be. And we will be in the middle of it. ♦

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## AS I SEE IT

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

### THE SEMA AND AAPEX SHOWS IN LAS VEGAS

My sisters and I saved our money all year so that we could go to Vegas during the SEMA and AAPEX Shows (November 1 – 4). If you've never been to one, it is an overwhelming experience – the sheer size and glamour of the SEMA and AAPEX Shows is unbelievable. My youngest sister Marea flew in from Florida to go with us; it was her first time in Vegas, let alone going to AAPEX and SEMA.

Our first stop was the AAPEX Show at the Sands Expo Center. Let me tell you, I LOVE this show! I was supposed to be going as a tourist this year, spending time with my sisters and just oohing and aahing at the exhibits – but I ended up doing what I have in the past – talking with vendors about our Mega Trade Show. While my sister Melanie was standing in line to get Danika Patrick's autograph for her husband, and

my sister Marea was taking pictures of a Shelby, I was talking to vendors about WMDA and CAR.

I am particularly excited about a company called Wexco Industries with their AutoTex Pink wiper blades, and the AskPatty Certified Female Friendly Program. I spent a lot of time at their booth, and I was very, very impressed. When a customer buys a pair of the AutoTex Pink blades, a percentage goes to the National Breast Cancer Foundation. I know I was drawn to them right away, and when I got home, I ordered some for my car, and I will be getting them for my daughters' cars as well. I had to order them from Amazon, because they need local retailers. My sister Marea's husband is a sales rep with Auto Zone in Florida, she was going to bug him about them when she got home. She ordered some as

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well. Not the pink blades, but the black ones that have a little pink ribbon on them, what a terrific idea!

I found out more about the AskPatty Certified Female Friendly Program too; and I am working with them to have this certification program at our 2012 Convention. I think all of our members could benefit from becoming a certified Female Friendly Retailer. As a woman, I would prefer to go to a place that I felt would speak to me as a person. Women are the largest and fastest growing demographic of new car buyers in the US and Canada. This program was designed to attract, sell, retain, and increase loyalty with women. I will keep you informed on my progress with AskPatty. I truly believe this could be a real plus for WMDA/CAR members.

Anyhow, the SEMA Show at the Las Vegas Convention Center was a whole other world. It was HUGE! Several large buildings, upstairs and downstairs, tents outside, concept cars, custom vehicles, and wall to wall people! Everywhere we turned, there were models in skimpy clothes promoting a vendor and their booth, celebrities signing autographs, and cameras flashing all over the place. And people from all over the world, either attending or exhibiting, all sharing the universal translator – a smile.

Each section at the SEMA Show was dedicated to a segment of our industry – Performance Wheels and Tires, Racing & Performance, Hot Rod Alley, Trucks, SUVs & Off-Road, Restoration Marketplace, Tools & Equipment, Original Equipment Manufacturers, Mobile Electronics & Technology, Car Care & Accessories, Business Services, Restyling & Accessories, and New Products. I didn't really find any bites at SEMA; it is more geared toward the fabricators and modifiers, so I ended up being more of a fan – looking at the wheels, custom cars, and just being very impressed with the displays and booths.

Yes, I did get to do some tourist-y things this year with my sisters – we took a bus trip to Death Valley one day, and we fell in love with old Vegas on Fremont Street the next day. But the highlight for me will always be AAPEX and SEMA. I am hopeful that some of the other vendors I met and spoke with will bring their services and products to our 2012 Mega Show which will be in Ocean City on September 28 and 29. I have already started saving my money, because we plan on going again next year, and doing it all over again! ♦

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## KIRK'S KORNER

by Kirk McCauley  
Director of Member Relations

# YOU BETTER WATCH OUT... THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR COULD BE COMING TO TOWN

Over the last year I have been keeping an eye on New Jersey dealers that are being singled out by the U.S. Department of Labor for payroll audits. Sal Risalvato, Executive Director of New Jersey Gasoline, Convenience, and Automotive Association, has also been keeping us up to date.

The Wage and Hour division conducted 74 investigations in the state and oddly, 69 of those were BP branded locations. While this is odd in itself, I do not think for one minute that this will be limited to BP stations, or limited to New Jersey.

This action by the U.S. Department of Labor is a shot across the bow and should be taken as a warning to all service stations – no matter what brand, no matter what state. Wage and Hour division has collected over a million dollars in back pay for employees, conducted employee interviews, 24 hour surveillance of stations, and turning over information to the legal department for possible violations and litigation. They have poured through payroll records and found violations that you might not think are violations, but they do not meet the letter of the law in the way the wage was recorded and computed. (A statement from Sal is included later in this article.) All of this from 74 stations, c-stores and bay stations, with small and large payrolls.

Every business needs to have a professional look at the way their payroll is done, records are kept, and the hours they show are recorded (8,760 hours in a year, so you can't be a 24/7 location and show 7,000 hours paid)

Please do not let this shot across the bow turn into a boarding party – pay your employees by the book and keep good records; and if you do get inspected, they will be on their way quickly with no fuss.

### **Statement from Sal Risalvato, Executive Director of NJGCA**

*I want to be clear that most of the violations that were found were due to the way that wages were computed*

*and not because employees were shorted wages. Although employees were paid the wages that they expected, [the Department of Labor] has found that additional wages should be paid because of the improper method of computation."*

*The Department of Labor recently conducted two seminars for NJGCA members to demonstrate how to properly compute employee wages and avoid violating FLSA.*

*"An employee that works 50 hours a week and is paid a salary of \$500 for the week will be deemed to have been paid improperly and, therefore, the employer will be found to owe this employee \$50 in additional wages for hours worked past 40 hours," Risalvato said. "However, the same employee, if paid \$8.75 per hour and \$13.12 per hour after 40 hours, would have a gross pay of \$481.20, yet be deemed to have been paid properly and not be owed any further wages.*

*"Unfortunately, it is a customary practice for small businesses without payroll departments and human-resources personnel to simplify the computation of wages by computing the amount budgeted for that position in a lump sum form of salary, rather than breaking down the straight time and over time."*

*He added, "I agree that employers who did not pay their employees at least the minimum wage of \$7.25 as required by law should be required to pay the additional wages that their employees should have been paid. However, I am confident that very few minimum-wage infractions were found, purely because even in difficult times it is impossible to find workers willing to accept wages below the hourly minimum."*

I would like to thank Sal for keeping us in the loop, and I would like to wish all our members and potential members a safe and wonderful holiday. ♦



# 2012 WMDA AREA MEETINGS

Thursday, January 5	Anne Arundel County Area Sponsored by <b>PPC Lubricants</b>	Double -T Diner	12 Defense Street, Annapolis
Tuesday, January 10	Montgomery County Area Sponsored by <b>PPC Lubricants</b>	Seibel's Restaurant	15540 Old Columbia Pike, Burtonsville
Thursday, January 12	Baltimore Area Meeting Sponsored by <b>Carroll Independent Fuels</b>	Double -T Diner	6300 Baltimore National Pike, Catonsville
Tuesday, January 17	Western Maryland Area Sponsored by <b>Spigler Petroleum Equipment</b>	Double -T Diner	5617 Spectrum Drive, Frederick
Thursday, January 19	Eastern Shore Area Sponsored by <b>PPC Lubricants</b>	Holly's Restaurant	108 Jackson Creek Road, Grasonville
Thursday, January 26	Prince George's County/Southern Maryland Sponsored by <b>PMG</b>	Rip's Country Inn	3809 Crain Highway, Bowie

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9:30am - 11:30am**

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**2012 will be an especially challenging year for our industry on the legislative front. We need to address current laws that are expiring or that will be targeted for change.**

**We have new endorsed programs that can save you money, and A, B, C Operator training...so much to discuss!**

**We will bring you up-to-date on these issues and more. Please take time out of your busy schedule to attend. Area meetings are the best opportunity for WMDA to discuss local issues with our members – to tell you what we are doing, and to hear what is on your mind.**

**Join us for breakfast at any of the above locations. If you can't make the meeting in your area, please come to one of the other meetings.**

**Because these are breakfast meetings, please be sure to RSVP to Marta Gates at [mgates@wmda.net](mailto:mgates@wmda.net) or call 301-390-0900 ext 115 so that we can have a seat for you!**



## CAR TALK

by Ken Quasney  
CAR Committee Chairman

### ONE DOWN AND MORE TO GO!

Some of you may or may not know about our new endorsed Oil program. The CAR committee spent months working on an Oil Program through WMDA/CAR and finally we have the deal through PPC Lubricants.

Currently PPC is supplying our members with MAG1 and Castrol's full line of products. If you're looking for fighting grade oil with GL-5 specs, then MAG1 is the best deal we have found. Currently PPC is selling to our members only for \$6.99 a gallon/\$1.75 a quart for Synthetic Blend 5w30 in bulk. They are also offering Castrol oil at the best price we have found anywhere. I would urge everyone to look into it. Only members of WMDA/CAR will get oil at this price. If you need equipment, PPC will even help with that. You will need to ask your salesman about the equipment. Many of our members have already signed up with this program and are very happy with the service PPC is giving us. Call Gene Nace at 717-215-7253 for more information.

Now for other programs. The CAR committee is working on other programs such as Parts and Uniforms. We have met with six parts suppliers in our area. We have had several meetings with each. Again, we are looking for the best deal for our members. There have been many issues through this process but negotiations are going well at this point. I am hopeful we

should have an endorsed parts supplier early next year.

We are looking for something that is only offered through our membership. Whatever the offer, it has to be real. One of the problems is finding a supplier that covers our entire area. We may have to find several different suppliers for particular areas. Everyone at WMDA/CAR feels the same. There is strength in numbers. However, any association has to have the best interest of its members first and foremost. With all of our endorsed programs there will be no doubt **MEMBERSHIP PAYS**. Those words (Membership Pays) come directly from President Rick Agoris and we couldn't agree more.

#### UNIFORMS

This is another program we are working on. We think everyone will be surprised at some of the offers we have already had. Again, we are looking for the best deal to suit our members. Here are some of the issues we have with uniforms:

1. Automatic renewal: we want a contract that does not include automatic renewal.
2. Setup fees: we are looking for absolutely no setup fees at signup.
3. New employee setup fees: we all know this is where we get hit. You hire a new employee, get the bill and your stunned what it cost to put a new employee in uniforms. We are working on that.
4. Delivery fees: This has been another area that we have been taking advantage of.

Other issues such as mats, environment fees, water fees, executive wear, emblems, contract length, rags and the list goes on. Our mission is to tear down these items one by one and negotiate the best deal we can for our **MEMBERS**.

# CAR

Council of Automotive Repair

A Division of the WMDA

## MORE TO GO

We will be working on other programs in the future as we move forward. I have said this countless times, "United we stand, divided we fall." There definitely is strength in numbers.

**WARNING!!!** Some non-endorsed suppliers do not like what we are doing. Please, take what they say about our programs with a grain of salt. We know some of our members have built a relationship with their suppliers over the years. Remember one thing – we are doing what is best for our members and they are doing what is best for themselves. We have no other agenda but to strengthen the independent repair industry in our area. Please take a few minutes to read our vision statement below.

### The Council of Automotive Repair Envisions:

- Organizing independent automotive repair shops so that they will become the overwhelming choice for repairs by the motoring public in Washington DC, Maryland, and Delaware.
- Providing its members with the tools and member services necessary to achieve better profitability and security within their businesses.
- Supporting its members by providing technical and management training at a discounted rate.
- Providing its members with a legislative voice on Local, State and Federal issues affecting the independent automotive repair industry.
- Providing its members with the reputation for higher standards of quality and professionalism by recognition of the C.A.R. affiliation by the motoring public in Washington DC, Maryland and Delaware.

The Council of Automotive Repair envisions a united membership, working in unison to give strength to the independent automotive repair business.

### CAR Committee Members:

- Frank Eberle (Eberle Automotive)
- Billy Hillmuth (Hillmuth Certified Automotive)
- Steve Powell (Thoroughbred Auto Care)
- Walt Eger (Walt Eger's Service Center)
- Clyde McLaughlin (Chesapeake Imports)
- Lewis Schnauble (Schnauble Automotive)
- Ken Quasney (Auto Sense)

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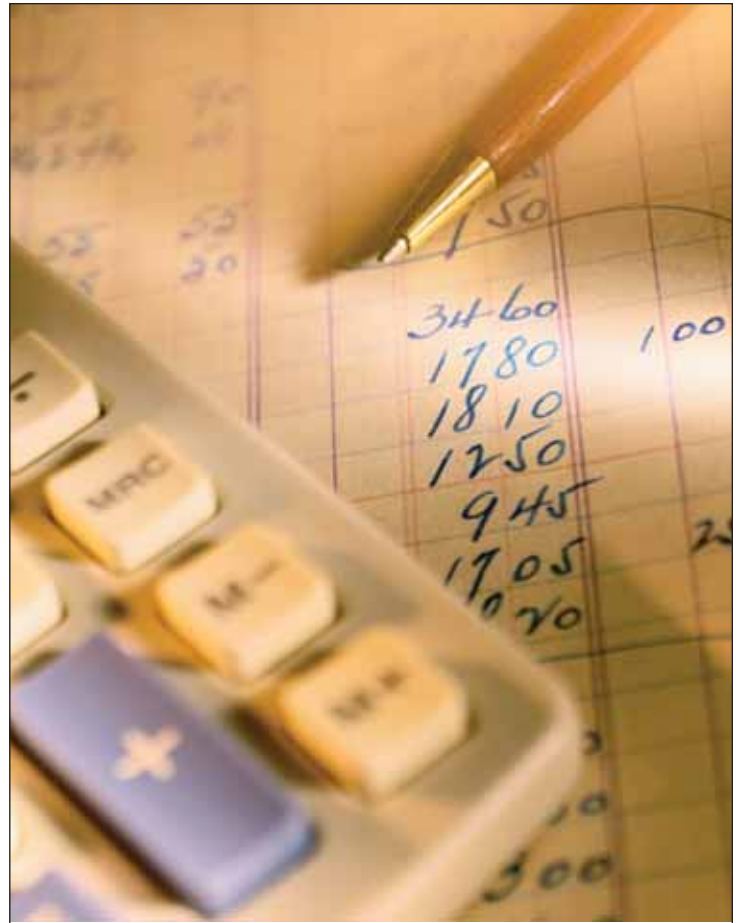
## PROFIT FACTOR

by Kereakos Zuras  
WMDA Board Member

### 13 RED FLAGS TO BOOKKEEPING FRAUD

Take these warning signs of fraud seriously and get actively involved in your daily bookkeeping.

1. Has your bookkeeper/manager asked for signature authority on your checks?
2. Does your bookkeeper's/manager's lifestyle seem inconsistent with their earnings?
3. Does your bookkeeper/manger frequently take records home to work on or work in the office when no one is around? (Fraudulent activities are more easily accomplished when no one else is around.)
4. Does your bookkeeper/manager refuse to go on vacation?
5. Does your bookkeeper/manager seem to resent or get defensive when you ask questions?
6. Does your bookkeeper/manager have access to your credit card information and receive mail-order packages at work?
7. Are your accounting records in a mess?
8. Do you receive frequent tax delinquency notices that your bookkeeper/manager explains away as government error?
9. Does your bookkeeper/manager insists that he or she handle activities for which other departments are normally responsible: including picking up the daily mail (for fear that something could arrive that would tip-off management), acting as the sole go-between with the company's financial contacts (banks, auditors, creditors, etc.) and working with police when items or money are found missing.
10. Does your bookkeeper/manager continually misfile important items such as payroll receipts, deposit records, supplier correspondence and estimates?
11. Do your deposits frequently seem too small. As an owner you should always carefully monitor income and deposits, comparing sales receipts against actual amounts put into the bank?
12. Does your bookkeeper/manager show signs of a drinking, drug, or gambling problem or family financial problems?
13. Has your bookkeeper/manger suggested replacing or getting rid of the outside accounting firm, saying they can handle the duties of the independent accountant and "save the company the added expense?" ♦





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