

New Chairman's Address  
Kristin Macey (7/28/2016)

I am honored to be standing here before you as new chairman of the National Conference on Weights and Measures. Some of you may be aware that I began my weights and measures career as an inspector for the Colorado Department of Agriculture, with a territory that spanned from the Continental Divide, through Colorado Springs and all the way out to the Kansas border. I promoted to director of Colorado's weights and measures programs in 2002 until being whisked away to California in 2007. Today I stand before you as California's state director of weights and measures, so I guess my first "thank you" is to the Nominating Committee for making the timing of this acceptance speech in my old home town, and home state, very special for me.

Since I started in our business, there have been many changes to the words we use today. Uber was a foreign word that meant really super; a skimming device was a strainer one used to keep the soup clear during cooking; Friend was a noun, not a verb; Tweet was the sound made by a bird; and a weed was something bad you sprayed with herbicide. Some of the traditional words we used then are rarely used today: pivots and bearings; steelyards; and analog indications. However, some words and phrases in our vocabulary never seem to go away. Automatic temperature compensation and moisture loss allowance still mean the same and they are still active topics even after 100 years of discussion at the National Conference on Weights and Measures. So who knows – while specific words like Uber and credit card skimmers might fade away, we can rest assured that the general requirements and fundamental considerations in our handbooks that provide consumer protection and equity will be as commonplace one hundred years into the future!

This Conference is steeped in tradition, yet inevitably influenced by new ideas and technology. That is why my theme for this year is "Tradition and Technology: Finding the Right Balance." Just as weights and measures affects nearly every aspect of our daily lives, so does technology. Most Americans can't imagine a life that does not include a smartphone or computer. Technology has revolutionized the ways companies conduct business and develop competitive advantages in the marketplace. Some of these technology breakthroughs demand our immediate attention. Technology that catches on doesn't wait for us to do a careful analysis. Sometimes it creates de facto standards faster than we can codify them in the NIST handbooks.

Our standing committees are being strained by an ever growing number of agenda items for review. Our traditional "recipe" for adopting standards which has worked so well for decades suddenly seems sluggish. If our job is to set measurement standards that will address current marketplace needs, we must become more responsive and agile in our process. It's time for the Conference to re-examine the way we do business. I applaud Jerry Buendel for creating a Charter Team this past year to examine our standards setting process, and John Gaccione for taking on the role as team leader. I believe this introspection is important to the Conference for if we do nothing, there is real potential to denigrate the Conference's reputation as a standards setting organization.

One thing I am very cognizant of is the need for a thoughtful, deliberative process. That's why I'm going to ask the Charter Team to slow down a bit this next year before jumping to solutions. Our very own Darrell Flocken is trained in process analysis; he is a black belt in Lean Six Sigma. The Board of Directors and I will explore using him or another trained expert to conduct an orderly review of the problem areas identified before rushing to any next steps. A little more time to do the right thing won't hurt us. Look at what happened yesterday. We rolled out electronic voting 30 years after it was first discussed at the conference!

In addition to the Charter Team exercise, my other major goal for this year is to cement a solid relationship between the Conference and the Office of Weights and Measures within the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The Conference has a golden opportunity when the new chief Dr. Doug Olsen begins his duties in February, 2017. Don Onwiler, the Board of Directors, and I will be educating the chief about our organization. We will point to our tradition and the trusted relationship we had with Carol Hockert. As you heard from Dr. Willie May this week, Dr. Olsen plans to attend regional conferences and other events, so please make him welcome and help lead him to the broad network of stakeholders who will be critical to his education and success. It is my hope that we can inspire the new chief to continue and maybe even increase the level of services that NIST provides in the course of its mission to promote uniformity in U.S. weights and measures.

The National Conference on Weights and Measures' National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) embraces new technology by approving new device types for commerce. Its job is not to squash innovation, but to ensure that the new technology will work as advertised and be suitable for commerce. With the expansion of zero emission vehicles across the United States, I hope that this next year will see applications for NTEP to evaluate hydrogen fuel dispensers and electric charging stations. This is exactly why we have a provision for tentative codes in NIST Handbook 44.

My last major goal for this year is to stay the course for the good work the Professional Development Committee (PDC) is doing with professional certification exams for industry members and weights and measures officials. In addition to the training facilitated by the NIST training grants, these certifications will be our legacy to the next generation of weights and measures professionals. Over the last couple of years, the PDC Committee has risen to the challenge and developed a model field training program and exams suitable for different levels of competency. I look forward to the development of the basic competency examinations, and thank Ross Anderson for his efforts, guidance, and consistent approach to this process.

In closing, let me say that the National Conference on Weights and Measures has both a rich tradition and a bright future, and we can look with pride and confidence in both directions. All members have a vested interest in ensuring that the Conference continues as a recognized leader for its integrity and creativity in the standards setting process and I hope you stay actively engaged as we move forward. I thank you for the trust you have placed in me, and look forward to an exciting year with many new opportunities.

At this time I would like to make the following appointments:

To the Specifications and Tolerances Committee:

Josh Nelson, Oregon

To the Laws and Regulations Committee:

Hal Prince, Florida

Michelle Wilson, Arizona: to fill the vacancy caused by Ha Dang's resignation,

To the Professional Development Committee:

Marco Mares, San Diego County, California

Gene Robertson, Mississippi: to fill the vacancy caused Doug Killingsworth's resignation

Lori Jacobson, South Dakota: to fill the vacancy caused by Julie Quinn's advancement to the NCWM Board of Directors

Julie Quinn, Minnesota: to fill the Safety Liaison position

To the Nominating Committee:

Jerry Buendel, Washington, as Chair

John Gaccione, Westchester County, NY

Stephen Benjamin, North Carolina

Kurt Floren, Los Angeles County, CA

Joe Gomez, New Mexico

Charlie Carroll, Massachusetts

The Presiding Officers at the 2017 Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania will be:

Jack Walsh, Town of Wellesley, Massachusetts

Marc Paquette, Vermont

Tim Chesser, Arkansas

Loren Minnich, Kansas

The Sergeants-at-Arms at the 2017 Annual Conference will be Pennsylvania officials determined at a later date.