

NEWS RELEASE

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PSC Recognizes National Weights & Measures Week

BISMARCK, ND – The North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC) is recognizing Weights & Measures Week March 1-7, 2022. The week is observed to educate about a program that for hundreds of years has been working behind the scenes to protect both buyers and sellers from malfunctioning weighing or measuring devices or unfair practices. These dates are designated every year to commemorate President John Adam’s signing of the first United States weights and measures law on March 2, 1799. This year’s theme is “For the Sake of Equity.”

“Inflation and supply issues have all of us paying more for goods and services ranging from groceries to gas for our vehicles,” said Commissioner Haugen-Hoffart, who holds the Weights & Measures portfolio. “It’s more important than ever we ensure weighing and measuring devices are accurate and customers are getting what they pay for.”

The Commission’s Weights & Measures Program ensures the equitable operation of commercial weighing and measuring devices in the state. This is accomplished through inspections, documentation reviews, licensing of service companies and registered service persons, and quality assurance testing. Additionally, the Commission maintains all working standards used to inspect the accurate operation of weighing and measuring devices.

“Ensuring the accuracy of commercial scales is vital to fair commerce,” said Commission Chair Julie Fedorchak. “These measuring devices are baked into businesses of all kinds, from frozen yogurt shops to grain elevators. Our staff works to ensure the accuracy of these devices so consumers and businesses alike can count on them.”

Almost everything we buy is sold by weight, volume or measure. As of June 30, 2021, there were 24,722 commercial weighing and measuring devices operating in North Dakota. These devices were tested for accuracy, at a minimum of every 15 months, by three state inspectors employed by the Commission and almost 200 registered service persons employed by registered service companies. So what exactly do these inspectors do? In simple terms, they ensure that when you pay for 20 gallons of gas in your car, you actually receive 20 gallons. Every commercial weighing or measuring device in the state is required to be tested and certified to ensure that customers are receiving accurate readings when buying and sellers are receiving accurate readings when selling goods.

“Incorrect readings have huge impacts on large commercial transactions,” said Commissioner Randy Christmann. “But the PSC makes sure all devices are accurate, whether the impact is thousands of dollars or just a few cents. Equity is important to us.”

In addition to testing devices, the Commission also has a quality assurance (QA) program. The QA program reviews new installations for compliance, monitors the processes and test results of registered service persons, and performs onsite reviews prior to the approval of a permanent variance.

When a weighing or measuring device is inspected and certified to be working correctly, a seal is placed on the device stating “Tested and Approved.” If there was a problem with the device, a sticker will be placed that will designate that the device has a certain amount of time to be fixed, or that the device should not be used. Customers are encouraged to look for these stickers and report any problems or concerns to the Commission by calling 701-328-2400 or emailing ndpsc@nd.gov.

The North Dakota Public Service Commission is a constitutionally created state agency with authority to permit, site and regulate certain business activities in the state including electric and gas utilities, telecommunications companies, power plants, electric transmission lines, pipelines, railroads, auctioneers, commercial weighing devices, pipeline safety and coal mine reclamation.

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