



County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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WEIGHTS AND MEASURES WEEK

On March 2, 1799, President John Adams signed the first U.S. weights and measures law, aimed at protecting the marketplace from differing standards for gallons, feet and other measurements.

Since then, weights and measures officials have actively worked to protect consumers and ensure fair competition. Their work is commemorated every March 1-7 with National Weights and Measures Week.

Weights and measures responsibilities have expanded beyond testing scales and meters to include verifying the quantity of packaged commodities, checking labeling and advertising standards for petroleum products, performing point-of-sale inspections to ensure consumers are charged the right price and investigating consumer complaints.

In Santa Cruz County alone, inspectors will visit 1,200 establishments this fiscal year, conducting thousands of device inspections and price and packaging verifications. Their responsibilities include everything from gas pumps to consumer scales to water, gas and electric meters within mobile home parks.

“Our inspectors are highly trained individuals who play a critical role in assuring marketplace fairness,” Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner Juan Hidalgo said. “They play a largely hidden but important role in the local economy.”

In California, weights and measures inspectors must take examinations to obtain specific licenses that demonstrate their knowledge and assure consistent application of regulatory standards. The inspectors, regulatory agencies, the National Conference on Weights and Measures and the National Institute of Standards and Technology are constantly working



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to keep up with the latest developments in a rapidly changing marketplace. Some examples are the sale of natural gas, hydrogen and electricity as a fuel for motor vehicles and the use of global positioning systems by taxi and transportation network systems to determine charges for their services.

“Today’s inspectors are highly trained professionals who test complex commercial measurement devices, enforce regulations on how products in the marketplace are sold, test petroleum products for quality and investigate violations,” said Jerry Buendel, chairman of the National Conference on Weights and Measures.