



Fuel Line Newsletter

THANK YOU TO OUR ADVERTISERS:

ISSUE 14

FEBRUARY 2021



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PETROLEUM GROUP

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Defending South Carolina's Heating Oil Market

by: Rich Carrione

SCCPMA members are known for delivering many products and services. Gasoline, alcohol and tobacco, food, lottery tickets, you name it. But you may not realize that our membership also delivers home heating oil to customers all across the state. There are literally dozens of heating oil delivery companies who provide home heat and comfort to nearly 20,000 South Carolinians all across the state.

Our heating oil dealers used to have a significantly larger share of the home energy market, but significant erosion has occurred at the hands of aggressive utilities, HVAC contractors targeting our customers for conversion and negative federal perceptions of fossil fuel use. The heating oil market in South Carolina has seen better days, and the future is uncertain. But one thing is a certainty; SCCPMA will continue to fight on behalf of oil dealers and muster every resource to protect the oilheat customer base in our great state. It's what we've been doing in the past and what we'll be doing in 2021.

A small heating oil state doing big things

Thanks to funding made available through the National Oilheat Research Alliance (NORA), SCCPMA has been developing programs aimed at helping dealers put more money in their pockets and convince customers that heating oil remains a smart home heating choice. Since 2018, SCCPMA has partnered with Warm Thoughts Communications to develop and execute the *Oilheat South Carolina* program. Warm Thoughts is the nation's leading marketing firm specializing in the residential energy industry, having executed some of the most successful energy-focused campaigns here in the south and across the country. Warm Thoughts is also a proud member of SCCPMA! South Carolina is a small state in comparison to heating oil-rich states in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, but SCCPMA has been able to leverage the best practices in developing our local campaign that any state effort would be proud of.

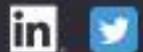


There are two primary planks to the *Oilheat South Carolina* program. The first plank is a robust communication effort aimed at getting our customers to think more positively about heating oil, ultra-low sulfur fuel, high-efficiency equipment and other critical topics. The effort strategically utilizes NORA funding to influence existing heating oil customers so they think twice about switching to another fuel. Program components include a customer-

[Continued on page 6](#)

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2021 Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY

14 Valentine's Day

MARCH

26 **SCCPMA Associate Member Appreciation Day**
 NWTf Palmetto Shooting Complex
 535 Gary Hill Road, Edgefield, SC 29824

MAY

12-14 **EMA Day on the Hill Conference**
 The Mayflower Hotel
 1127 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036

20-21 **S.E. Petro-Food Marketing Expo**
 Sheraton Convention Center
 2101 N. Oak Street, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

JULY

17 **SCCPMA Board Meeting**
 17-21 **SCCPMA Annual Convention**
 20 **SCCPMA Membership Meeting**
 The Marriott Resort & Spa @ Grande Dunes
 8400 Costa Verde Drive, Myrtle Beach, SC 29572

AUGUST

17 **HazMat Training**
 8:30 AM - 12 PM **SCCPMA Headquarters**
 1809 Gadsden Street, Columbia, SC 29201

26 **SCCPMA Planning Conference**
 10 AM - 2 PM **The Hall @ Senate's End**
 320 Senate Street,
 Columbia, SC 29201

OCTOBER

4-5 **EMA Fall Meeting**
InterContinental Chicago
 505 North Michigan Avenue,
 Chicago, IL 60611

5-8 **NACS Show**
McCormick Place
 2301 S King Drive,
 Chicago, IL 60616

21 **SCCPMA PAC Golf Tournament**
 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM **Cobblestone Golf Club**
 Blythewood, SC

NOVEMBER

9 **Fishing Tournament**
 Charleston, SC



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Defending South Carolina's Heating Oil Market

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facing website (www.oilheatsouthcarolina.com), search engine optimization, blog postings, a robust social media campaign, pay per click advertising and customer newsletters created for distribution by oil dealers.

The second plank of the program is the South Carolina heating oil equipment rebate program. Rebates are made available to South Carolina homeowners when they choose to upgrade to a new heating oil system or tank. The rebate process is super-easy for dealers to engage with and super-simple for customers to secure. Rebates serve two purposes. They provide an incentive for homeowners to upgrade to new equipment. But even more importantly, they help us get more customers to pay attention to us, so that we have an opportunity to influence their thinking.



How Heating Oil Companies Can Leverage These Tools in 2021

Take Advantage of Equipment Rebates – The rebates are doubling in 2021! Homeowners can receive up to \$1,000 when they install a new heating oil tank and system. This can be the difference between closing a deal and losing the sale. And for our heating oil dealers, the process to secure rebates is super easy. We know that many dealers don't perform installation work, but that's ok. You can work with local HVAC contractors in your area who will install the system for you. Your customer can still receive the rebate benefit and you'll keep the customer.

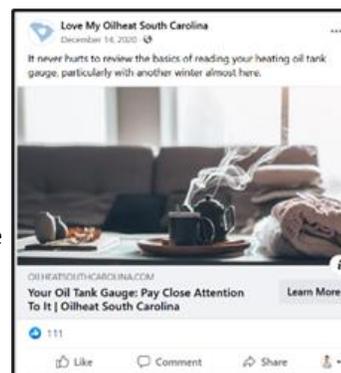
Distribute *Efficiency Matters* to your Customers – The state-specific customer communication pieces are developed twice a year (the next issue will be ready at the end of February). Each Efficiency Matters newsletter puts a spotlight on important pro-oil topics and also promotes the value that heating oil companies deliver to their customers each and every day. They are completely free to SCCPMA members, so if you aren't already distributing them to your customer base, consider doing so this year.



Follow our Facebook Campaign and Share Posts – The *Love My Oilheat South Carolina* social media campaign is continuing, which means new posts and new content targeting your customers. You can take advantage of this content also, by following the page and then sharing or using the posts on your own Facebook pages.

Link to the Website and Repurpose the Content – Oilheatsouthcarolina.com has new content on a regular basis, in the form of monthly blogs. We encourage dealers to visit the site regularly and utilize the content we make available for their customers. You can also link to the site, which will improve your own site's performance and will increase the chances that your customers will be exposed to helpful pro-oil information.

Oilheat South Carolina is supporting South Carolina businesses and helping thousands of heating oil customers recognize the benefits of staying with oil. We are excited about the results that have been generated over the last 3 years, and we expect to see increased activity in 2021. If you have any questions about *Oilheat South Carolina* or are interested in learning more about the communication tools and equipment rebates that are available to you, please don't hesitate to contact me directly at 973-632-8793 or at rcarrione@warmthoughts.com.



Rich Carrione is the Director of Association Operations at Warm Thoughts Communications, the nation's leading marketing firm specializing in the residential energy industry. Rich oversees statewide and regional outreach efforts in the energy industry across more than 15 states. He is a member of the NORA energy efficiency subcommittee and a Board Member of the National Energy & Fuels Institute (NEFI). Rich is a New Jersey native, but has ties to the Palmetto State through his membership in the Pi Kappa Phi, a fraternity founded at the College of Charleston.

THERE IS STILL TIME TO SIGN UP FOR THE SCCPMA ASSOCIATE MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

March 26 @ 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Venue: NWTf Palmetto Shooting Complex
535 Gary Hill Road, Edgefield, SC 29824



This event's sole purpose is to recognize and thank our associate members for all the support they provide our marketer members and our association throughout the year.

This will be a fun event that you don't want to miss! All SCCPMA companies will receive two complimentary registrations, with the ability to add up to two more registrants to a waiting list. **Once all SCCPMA companies have had an initial opportunity to register, we will begin allowing those on the waitlist to attend for a charge of \$70 each.**

The maximum number of shooters that we can accommodate is 160 — Don't Delay and Register Today! This is a SCCPMA member-only event.

Even if you've never shot sporting clays or you are just a novice, don't worry, each team will have a guide to assist and help you learn the sport. We will be providing two boxes of shells to shoot at 50 targets while protecting your ears with earplugs and your eyes with safety glasses. Please note that the safety glasses will NOT help you hit more targets! A delicious BBQ dinner will be served compliments of Cheerwine.

Once all SCCPMA companies have had an initial opportunity to register, we will begin allowing those on the waitlist to attend for a charge of \$70 each.



SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY

- 1:00 PM – Check-in/Warm-up
- 1:45 PM – Safety Talk
- 2:00 PM – Clay Shoot Begins
- 5:00 PM – BBQ Dinner/Awards

ATTENDEE 1 AND 2 REGISTRATIONS

ADDITIONAL / WAIT LIST REGISTRATIONS

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Paid Leave Tax Credit Available

Beginning April 1, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act (FFCRA) required employers to pay sick leave and expanded medical and family leave to employees affected by the coronavirus. The mandate applied to companies with fewer than 500 employees and included partial exemptions for small companies with fewer than 50 employees. The FFCRA paid leave mandate ended on December 31, 2020. Employers are no longer required to provide paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave. However, Section 286 of the Relief Bill ("Extension of Credits for Paid Sick and Family Leave") allows employers to take a payroll tax credit for providing FFCRA leave into the first quarter of 2021 for two purposes:

To recover costs for providing mandatory FFCRA leave in 2020 - If an employee took FFCRA-required leave in 2020, then the employer can take the appropriate tax credits in 2021; and

To recover costs providing voluntarily FFCRA Leave in Q1 of 2021 - If an employer elects, voluntarily, to provide paid leave to an employee for an FFCRA-qualifying reason in Q1 of 2021, then it can take payroll tax credits for providing such leave.

Employers who choose to voluntarily provide FFCRA leave between January 1, 2021, and March 31, 2021, and seek the tax credits, must keep accurate records and comply with limits on paid leave imposed under the original FFCRA. Those paid leave limitations (80 hours of emergency paid sick leave and twelve weeks of paid emergency family and medical leave) roll over to the period from January 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021

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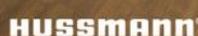
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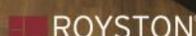
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Paid Leave Tax Credit Available

during which voluntary payments of FFCRA leave qualify for the tax credit. In other words, there is no new “bank” of FFCRA paid leave available to an employee during the voluntary extension period ending March 31, 2020. The payroll tax credit only applies to payments made for benefits that the employee has **left over** after December 31, 2020. Employers will not receive tax credits for benefits provided in excess of statutory limits.

The amount of employee leave eligibility subject to the tax credit also depends on which 12-month period an employer uses for the purpose of measuring availability of leave (calendar year, fiscal year, a 12-month period measured forward from use of leave, or a rolling 12-month period measured backward from use of leave).

EMA will provide additional information once the IRS publishes guidance on the tax credit. In the meantime, employers who choose to provide voluntary payments should consult their accountant or tax preparation professional.

EMA Staff Contact: Mark S. Morgan Regulatory Counsel mmorgan@emamerica.org (703) 281-6600.

Source: Energy Marketers of America (EMA) Weekly Review, January 8, 2021.



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Dispatching into the *Future*



Posted by [Fuels Market News](#) | January 6, 2021

By Brian Reynolds

The future is automation to the highest degree possible. The problem with a total reliance on automation, as it applies to the petroleum industry, is that petroleum is a commodity and supply disruptions happen constantly with little to no notice. Automation often can't cover every supply nuance during a disaster—weather related or otherwise. So, having an in-depth knowledge of the product and important one-on-one relationships is equally essential. You had better be good at talking on the phone and know how to make friends!

Another thing about information technology is that frequently there are dissimilar systems and databases that create the need for customization.

To this day there are 100s of different formats that should be standardized into a simple CSV or Excel file. One of the most sought-after pieces of information is a bill of lading (BOL), which is the basis for invoicing. A BOL is not an invoice, but a document that simply states how many gallons (net and gross) are on board a delivery truck.

You still have BOLs printed on paper and handed to the delivery driver, then further mailed to the company bookkeeper. This one document can hold up invoicing for several days and is problematic when

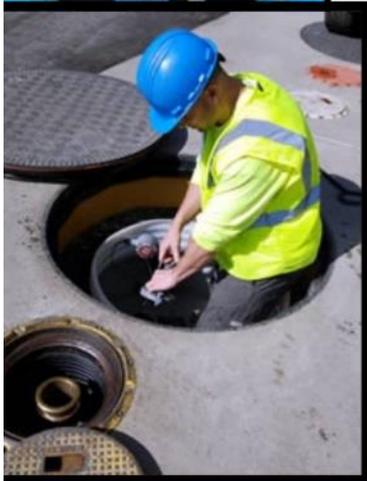


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Dispatching into the Future

actual payment terms to the oil company are usually around 10 days. A driver may lose the BOL or hand it to a store clerk who may misplace it.

There are some electronic BOL offerings in the industry, but they tend to be limited to specific terminals, involve scanning solutions (which require a motivated and reliable driver), or involve sophisticated algorithms to try and match numbers and fields from different data formats. Some of the latter work fairly well, but they are still subject to mistakes and take time. There are services, for a fee, at many loading terminals in the U.S. where an eBOL can be made available

Standardizing a file format whereby an oil company supply terminal emails or FTPs a simple document would be revolutionary to the petroleum industry.

So, what are the next big developments (hopefully) that are going to take place in the next 5–10 years to impact the petroleum supply chain? Here is my take:

- Standardizing an eBOL file format by the major oil companies
- Standardizing and conversions of current database formats
- Standardizing delivery truck electronic data communications with onboard GPS tracking and the integration of Geocode (electronic GPS address)
- Converting existing back office technologies to true web apps and full capabilities using hand-held devices
- Bluetooth and cloud-based technologies within a convenience store
- Better embracing of KPI metrics for truly understanding not only profits but losses. Losses are not always clearly understood with petroleum due to temperature and other forms of loss. The cost for accurately determining losses can be more expensive than the loss itself. Fuel losses typically can be 100 to 200 gallons before an investigation occurred. This is also why the BOL is critical to understand how much product was delivered.

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Dispatching into the Future

What are the capabilities that future supply chain employees will need as these advances move into the industry? A new breed of logistic experts focused on technology and automation is being eased into the petroleum marketing industry, and the dispatcher role may start looking different soon. I will always maintain that understanding technology will forever be part of the game, but equally important is people-handling skills, and that is something I believe you are born with and perfect over time.

The skill set required is not that of a programmer but a good systems operator that can utilize systems completely. An investment in employee user group attendance and constant training is paramount to success. Also, dispatchers typically aren't buyers or negotiators, but sometimes that is unavoidable. Having a real-time working knowledge of a company's needs for credit and allocation is extremely important. In today's environment, successful marketers rely on high volume, and it isn't uncommon for marketers to have credit needs in billions of dollars per year.

Source: <https://fuelsmarketnews.com>

A promotional graphic for a webinar. On the left, a portrait of Jackie Baxley, a woman with curly red hair wearing a blue top and a necklace, is framed in a yellow border. The background is dark with water droplets and a green wavy pattern at the bottom left. The text 'NEW WEBINAR!' is in yellow, and 'EPCRA, TRI REPORTING, AND PFAS' is in large white letters. Below that, 'W/ JACKIE BAXLEY' is written in white. At the bottom left is the 'HRP' logo. At the bottom right is a red button with the word 'WATCH' and a hand icon pointing to it.

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MAY 20-21, 2021

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The 2021 Southeast Petro-Food Marketing Exposition has been moved from March 3-4, 2021 to **May 20-21, 2021 – SAME LOCATION!**

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Help Protect Your Business Against Social Inflation

In recent years, insurance claim amounts have risen sharply, fueled by an increasing tendency for juries to award plaintiffs massive sums when a business is the defendant. This phenomenon is known as “social inflation.” Social inflation is spurred by growing public distrust and negative sentiment toward businesses. These emotions, combined with a jury’s desire to secure perceived justice and compensation for plaintiffs it feels are wrongly injured, is resulting in higher punitive damages being the norm. This is particularly true when the litigation centers on a company driver involved in a vehicle crash.

So what does this mean for business owners? More uncertainty. Potentially higher insurance premiums brought on by more expensive losses industry-wide. A riskier business landscape. While there is no way to predict the outcome of a trial with certainty, you can help reduce the chances that your business will experience a catastrophic verdict.

- **Strengthen your policies** — especially your company driving policy. Prohibit mobile device use and other distractions, and remind employees to check their speed, avoid driving fatigued, and focus on the road while operating company vehicles or driving for business purposes.
- **Enforce your policies.** Without enforcement, you could appear more negligent to a jury, potentially leading to higher damages.
- **Train — and retrain — your employees.** Introduce company policies and best practices to employees upon hire and regularly review them with your staff. Present the information in fresh, memorable ways to increase retention.
- **Go beyond the minimum.** Create policies that follow federal, state, and local regulations, but don’t stop there. Consider prohibiting additional risky behaviors, where allowed by law. Going above and beyond what’s mandated could help prove your business is committed to helping keep your drivers safe on the road.
- **Don’t rest on your insurance policy.** Rising claims amounts aren’t just a problem for insurance companies. The amount a jury decides a business owes a plaintiff might exceed that business’s policy limits — and even its umbrella if it has one. If that happens to you, could you cover the excess amount and still keep your business afloat?
- **Make safety a cultural value.** If you can show that safety is among your foremost concerns, this could help support your defense against a claim of negligence, possibly reducing any potential settlement amount or jury award.

It’s easy to emphasize the dollar amounts — after all, seven- or eight-figure sums are huge and, in most cases, unprecedented. But what’s really important is preventing injuries and deaths. Our current environment is an opportunity to help protect your bottom line and employees. Evaluate your policies, look for opportunities to reduce distractions, strengthen your safety culture, and help make the road a safer place.

This article is for general information and risk prevention only and should not be considered legal or other expert advice. The recommendations herein may help reduce, but are not guaranteed to eliminate, any or all risk of loss. The information herein may be subject to, and is not a substitute for, any laws or regulations that may apply. Qualified counsel should be sought with questions specific to your circumstances. © 2021 Federated Mutual Insurance Company.



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Michael W. Fields, Executive Director

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