

MONTANA *Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association Report*



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MPMCSA Executive Director



Greetings from the Big Sky State!

Summer is always especially sweet on the heels of a legislative session. Sunshine and fresh air are a welcome remedy after the breakneck pace the biennial session is known for. The 2023 Montana Legislative session came to close with the official sine die on May 2nd. This session presented unique challenges. Managing the budget surplus proved more difficult than expected and the final weeks were the most emotionally charged in recent memory. It is safe to say that everyone, legislators and citizens alike, were happy to wrap things up.

MPMCSA fared well through the session. We worked very closely with members, consultants, and the DEQ to again address the Petroleum Tank Release Compensation Board and Fund including its funding and structure. We were able to successfully work with the bill sponsor to change the language of the bill and protect the collective interest of the group. SB 334 passed both chambers and has been signed by the Governor. It will ensure there is a minimum fund balance of 1.5 million dollars and has a language requiring all stakeholders to meet sooner in the remediation process. This is intended to ensure earlier participation and a more timely process.

In addition to SB 334, our association worked on over 200 bills over the course of the session. Some of the highlights included working closely with the Lieutenant Governor regarding this administration's "Red Tape Relief" initiative. There were many bills related to tobacco, alcohol, and retail that we worked on and were able to protect the interest of our members. We worked on HB 60, sponsored by Representative Loge, which creates a fee for EV users to be used for infrastructure in place of gas tax money.

In May the MPMCSA again participated in the EMA Day on the Hill. Kary Tonjum, current WPMA President, Roger Schmechel, Montana EMA Director, and I made the trip to meet with colleagues from across the country. We were able to spend time with Congressman Matt Rosendale and Congressman Ryan Zinke to discuss a number of key issues facing our members including the EPA gasoline bulk plant vapor recovery and the Credit Card Competition Act. We also met with the Chief of Staff for Senator Daines and the Environmental Policy Director for Senator Tester.



Our annual convention and trade show was a huge success again this year. We spent three days in the beautiful Fairmont Resort and Hot Springs in June. Day one included trap shooting, golf and a social hour. The winner of the trap shooting was Mike Burback, and Sal LoMagro took second. We had a beautiful morning on the golf course. Golfers were subjected to a few new challenges along the way that resulted in some great photo ops. The winning golf team was Mike Piatchek, Scotty Koehler-Owens,



Brad Nelson, and Jerry Dryer. Hole prizes for longest drive and closest to the pin for men were Art Schmidt and Clint Burk respectively.

Amy Berry took the prize for longest drive for women. If you are planning to attend in 2024, I suggest you keep an eye out for a flashy outfit. Mine was so popular, we will have a "best-dressed" prize next year.

Our annual members meeting on Wednesday included a business and financial overview, legislative update, and 2024 conference planning. It was decided to return to Fairmont. We also had annual elections for the state board. Scott Curry will serve another year as State President and Cole Mort as Vice President. Dirk Cooper, Chris Rindal and Greg Tabish were each reelected for another two-year term as board members. Newly elected board



MPMCSA continued



members include Lucci Tuttle and Elisa Toms. Kary Tonjum and Steve Haase are both stepping down from their positions on the board. We thank them for their time and service.

Following the meeting we welcomed a number of important guest speakers. The morning started with Speaker of the House Matt Regier sharing his experience regarding the 2023 legislative session. He highlighted some of the successes of the session as well as some of the challenges they faced. Representative Kerri Seekins-Crowe also shared her experiences from her time in the legislature.



She stressed the importance of grassroots efforts to connect with your local representative outside of a session and commended MPMCSA for its strong relationships across the states.

Congressman Matt Rosendale joined the group via Zoom to highlight his work representing Montana in DC. The meeting was timely as the standoff over the budget and the debt ceiling had just ended the week before with passage of the Fiscal Responsibility Act lifting the debt ceiling until 2025.

Wally Jemmings, Brownfields Coordinator for the DEQ addressed the group regarding accessing and utilizing Brownfields funding. Sal LoMagro from Federated Insurance talked about Federated's triple protection plan as well as strategies for employee retention. Lieutenant Governor Kristen Juras joined us after lunch to share her experience with the 2023 session. She spearheaded the "Red Tape Relief" initiative looking to reduce unnecessary regulation across all state agencies. The work included legislators from both parties and was overall considered successful.



employee of Central Montana Propane. MPMCSA took a few minutes to honor and thank Jeff Smith for the years of service and dedication he has given to the industry and the association. He will be sorely missed, but we wish him the best in his retirement. As always, there was fabulous participation in both the live and silent auctions. We are very grateful for the donations of auction items and for the group's ongoing dedication to the scholarship fund.

I would like to personally thank the WPMA staff for their efforts in preparation and execution of the conference. We hope to see everyone again June 4th and 5th, 2024.



Dinner on Wednesday night, including the presentation of our scholarship winner and the live and silent auctions, is always a good time and did not disappoint again this year. The winner of the MPMCSA scholarship for 2023 was Kaitlin Fester from Lewistown. Kaitin's father is an



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