



### Spirit® Welcomes Rob Underwood, PMAA's new President



Rob Underwood, a veteran staff member of the Petroleum Marketers Association of America (PMAA) since 2007, will take the reins as the new President of PMAA effective May 16, 2015. Underwood replaces outgoing president Dan Gilligan, who has set his sights on retirement after running the organization since 1998.

Underwood brings to his new position keen insights into the regulatory landscape at the national level and ideas on how to put that understanding to work for the state petroleum marketer associations that comprise PMAA. In his current position, he has racked up numerous successes in helping defeat regulatory proposals that run counter to the interests of petroleum marketers, including a 2011 proposed mandate requiring that tanker truck wet lines be retrofitted, at considerable cost to the truck owners. "That mandate

would have been a direct hit on our industry," Underwood recalls. "Not only would it have been a significant cost burden to petroleum marketers nationwide, but we argued that it would have resulted in more deaths (by DOT's own prior admission) during the retro-fit installation of purging devices in existing equipment than would be saved from wet line rupture due to traffic accidents. That's the kind of success that we can feel proud of here at PMAA, and it's a good example of the way our organization looks after the interests of our member associations and their marketer members. That's the good work we'll be continuing as we go forward," Underwood said.

Underwood outlines his intentions to strengthen PMAA's scope and reach by empowering its member state associations. "Because we're a federation of associations, the strength and stability flow both ways," he affirms. "The more effectively we can speak for our member associations at the federal level, the more successful they can be at the state level and the more successful their members can be. To that end, we plan a strong and effective government relations campaign on a national scale that will ensure a stable business environment that allows marketers to thrive."

Underwood cites a potential increase in the corn-based ethanol mandate as a primary concern for the industry, and an issue he expects to be focusing on as he steps into his new position. "A mandate to ramp up the ethanol percentage could have a significant negative impact on marketers, in terms of both underground storage tank (UST) infrastructure

and motor fuels markets," he points out. "As it is, the majority of retail fuel sites are not UL certified to handle ethanol percentages above E10, and the compliance costs to handle E15 could have a direct negative impact on them. So we'll be continuing to highlight our concerns to Congress and the EPA in an effort to ensure that the mandated level of ethanol is set at a reasonable level to avoid chaos in the motor fuels marketplace, and so that fuel station owners—the majority of whom are small businesses and not major oil companies—aren't put under undue pressure that makes it difficult for them to be successful."

Underwood, a native of Alabama, spent most of his early life in the Atlanta area, and graduated from the University of Georgia with a BA in political science. He took up golf as a teenager, and worked at a golf course through his high school and college years. "It was a great gig for me," he reminisces. "I loved being outside, and around golfers, and of course, I was able to play for free when I wasn't working." After completing his degree, Underwood worked for U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-GA). From there, he moved to the position of government relations staffer at PMAA.

Underwood is very enthusiastic and supportive of the Spirit® brand as both an effective option for marketers in search of branding solutions and as a positive for PMAA. "I believe the brand is a critical part of PMAA, and we want to be sure we're doing everything we can to help our Spirit® licensees prosper and do well. I'm looking forward to its future success."

### State Executive Profile

#### William J. Fleischli, Sr. – Illinois Petroleum Marketers Association/ Illinois Association of C-Stores



Bill Fleischli, head of the Illinois Petroleum Marketers Association/Illinois Association of C-Stores, has deep roots in the state of Illinois. "I grew up in Springfield, graduated from high school here, and came back to the area after college," he reminisces. After acquiring his degree at St. Louis University, where he majored in biology, education and sociology, Fleischli began his career as a high-school biology teacher and basketball coach. Then, in 1981, he switched to state government, first as personnel director in the governor's office, then on to various administrative and lobbying positions including director of government affairs for the state department of transportation. "I enjoyed coaching but it was evident that advancement in that field would likely necessitate a move, and I wanted to stay in Springfield," he recalls. "I really enjoyed my years in state government. Then in

1994, the position as head of the IPMA came open and I applied for it. I had worked with the organization during my time at the state department of transportation, and knew and liked the people involved with it."

In the beginning Fleischli was certain of his ability to run the organization, but he admits that he had a lot to learn about petroleum marketing. "Initially I thought it would be all about helping gas station owners and that would be the extent of it," he remembers. "But this industry is much deeper, broader and more complex than I ever imagined, and so for me it was a real on-the-job learning experience. And all these years later, I'm still learning. The extent to which petroleum marketers and related concerns are affected by regulations and taxes is phenomenal; it's very complicated and I truly enjoy being involved in it."

*Continued on page 2*

*Continued from page 1*

One of the issues preoccupying Fleischli these days is the extent to which the state leans on various elements of the motor fuels industry for revenue to fund infrastructure maintenance and improvements. “We all know that good roads, bridges and transportation infrastructure are critical to the health of the state and its citizens, but our industry is absolutely tapped out as a source of revenue, and it’s important that our legislature and executive administration understand that,” he says. “Right now taxes on gasoline and cigarettes are so much higher in Illinois than in Missouri, Indiana and Iowa that people plan trips over the state lines specifically to make those purchases. It’s hurting our industry in so many ways, and it’s important that our state legislature identify and develop other ways to fund these necessary improvements.”

Another issue of continuing concern is a possible E15 mandate, along with the adjustment of sales tax incentives favoring E15

rather than E10. Fleischli believes that such a mandate and incentives are premature, given that automotive technology as well as fuel transportation and storage capabilities do not yet accommodate the higher percentage of ethanol in blended fuels. “Most cars out there now can’t run on E15,” he asserts, “and if that fuel blend causes problems for a vehicle, the blame falls back on the place where the fuel was purchased. It’s a big liability issue for our members.” In addition, Fleischli maintains that the costs of upgrading underground storage tanks and other fuel-delivery equipment in order to meet certification requirements for blends up to E85 leaves members at a big disadvantage. “It would be better to wait for the technology to catch up, and this is the ongoing issue for us,” he states.

Fleischli embraces the challenge of helping to educate decision-makers at the state level. Most lawmakers are genuinely well-intentioned about the legislation and regulations they advance, he believes. “And it’s our job simply

to make sure they understand all the possible effects. The repercussions on small businesses can be enormous, and we want to ensure a healthy business environment that allows our members to thrive.”

In addition to lobbying, Fleischli enjoys interacting with IPMA/IACS members, and helping them to navigate the landscape of laws and regulations affecting their businesses. “A background in education can come in pretty handy at such times,” he quips.

Fleischli appreciates the Spirit® brand as an attractive branding option for the 500+ members of the association. “I was very impressed with it when it was put together,” he says. “It came at just the right time, and with the logo, the credit card program, really the whole package, it was just brilliant. And it keeps getting better and better. It’s a very good thing to have to offer petroleum marketers in Illinois.”

## Federated Insurance Risk Management Tip:

### An Impossible Skill

As you’re reading this article, are you doing something else at the same time? Maybe you’re eating, listening to the radio, or even planning your day. You might think you’re multitasking, but—and this may come as a surprise—you’re not. Scientists have learned that our brains don’t process more than one stream of information at a time.<sup>1</sup>

When you read, your brain absorbs the information it receives through the act of reading. You may be conscious of the radio in the background, but, to be fully aware of the song that’s playing, your brain drifts to the music for a few seconds. When that happens, you no longer comprehend the words on the page. The time “away” is so fleeting that you may not realize you’re not fully focused on the original task of reading, leading you to believe you’re multitasking.

Knowing what you know now about your brain’s inability to process simultaneous activities, do you still think you can multitask behind the wheel? Keep in mind that, during the time your mind wanders from focusing on driving to focusing on a distraction, your vehicle may have traveled hundreds of feet. And, depending on the duration of the distraction,

the trip could involve events much more disastrous than just “unconscious” driving.

Employers whose employees drive on behalf of the company have a responsibility of ensuring their employees are safe drivers. They need to understand the gravity of a distracted driving incident, and the potential risk to others, themselves, and their employer—and possibly their job.

Explain the three kinds of distractions to your employee drivers, then work together to devise ways to avoid them.

- **Visual** – anything that takes your eyes off the road, both inside and outside the car.
- **Manual** – anything that takes your hands off the wheel. Two hands are much better than one for making corrective maneuvers.
- **Cognitive** – anything that takes your mind off driving. This is known as inattentive blindness. It’s often what happens when you drive somewhere and don’t remember the drive itself.

As much as we’d all like to believe we can multitask, our brains simply are not wired to do so. Being distracted while reading is relatively harmless; being distracted while driving is not. When you’re focused on driving, it could help you avoid the guy in the next lane who isn’t.



1. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/carolkinseygoman/2011/04/26/the-myth-of-multitasking/>; contributed by Carol Kinsey Goman

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