

# NOZZLE & WRENCH

WMDACAR

VOLUME 25/ISSUE 1  
JANUARY 2026

AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WASHINGTON DC, MARYLAND & DELAWARE SERVICE STATION & AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR ASSOCIATION

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- >> The Importance of Having All Agreed Upon Terms of a Contract Reduced to Writing
- >> Updated CAFE Standards Aim to Boost Efficiency Without Driving Up Costs
- >> EPA Climate Rules Repeal Could Trigger Major Legal Battle and Long-Term Policy Shifts

***The New Tire Fee is \$5.00 per tire for the first sale of a tire in Maryland. Revenue from the New Tire Fee, less the costs of administration, go to the Transportation Trust Fund.***

## KIRK'S CORNER

# Tire Recycling Fee and New Tire Tax



By Kirk McCauley, Director Of Member Relations & Government Affairs

**This new tax revenue will go to Transportation Trust Fund** and Recycling Fee will go to scrape tire removal and recycling program management.

### From Comptroller's Office:

Technical Bulletin 61 explains the rate increase for the tire recycling fee that goes into effect January 1, 2026; from \$0.80 to \$1.00 per tire for the first sale of a tire in Maryland. The bulletin also explains the New Tire Fee enacted during the 2025 legislative session, which also takes effect January 1, 2026. The New Tire Fee is \$5.00 per tire for the first

sale of a tire in Maryland. Revenue from the New Tire Fee, less the costs of administration, go to the Transportation Trust Fund.

[Technical Bulletin No. 61 on Tire Fees.](#)

For more information about this and other 2025 changes to Maryland Taxes, please visit our [Tax Updates webpage.](#)

While retailers will see these charges as a line item on purchases (tire wholesalers are required to list these charges separately), they should list recycling fee as a separate line item on retail sale to consumers, not required, but saves consumer tax on \$6.00 per tire, I urge you to read Bulletin 61 to be up to date on retailers requirements. In cases where you might buy online and fees and taxes are not on invoices, retailer is responsible.



## Minimum Wage Alert Howard County January 01, 2026

Small employers go from \$15.00 to \$15.50 - Link below for posters required by Maryland.

[Maryland Minimum Wage and Overtime Law - Employment Standards Service \(ESS\) - Division of Labor and Industry](#)

Continues on page 4

# Parts Authority™

## Auto Parts Super Stores

**“The Answer Is Yes!”®**

- WMDA Preferred Parts Supplier
- Aggressive and competitive pricing
- “SHOT-GUN” and scheduled deliveries to most MD, VA and DC areas
- Experienced parts professionals to answer your calls and questions
- Online cataloging/ordering websites

➤ [www.nexpart.com](http://www.nexpart.com)

➤ [pai.turboii.com](http://pai.turboii.com)

➤ [imcparts.com](http://imcparts.com)

**Annapolis**  
Maryland  
(410) 268-6615

**Baltimore (Mainline)**  
Maryland  
(410) 664-8100

**Frederick**  
Maryland  
(301) 990-1600

**Glen Burnie**  
Maryland  
(410) 691-3784

**Laurel**  
Maryland  
(240) 459-3902

**SE Washington D.C.**  
Washington, DC  
(202) 582-1300

**Arlington**  
Virginia  
(703) 528-1871



**Baltimore (Kelso)**  
Maryland  
(443) 673-3438

**College Park**  
Maryland  
(301) 474-1030

**Gaithersburg**  
Maryland  
(301) 990-1600

**Hyattsville (Kenilworth)**  
Maryland  
(301) 779-8700

**Rockville (Stonestreet)**  
Maryland  
(301) 424-6270

**NW Washington D.C.**  
Washington, DC  
(202) 829-6315

**Hanover**  
Maryland  
(800) 874-8925

**Lutherville-Timonium**  
Maryland  
(410) 769-0833

**Rockville (Wyaconda)**  
Maryland  
(301) 424-2010

**Norfolk**  
Virginia  
(757) 962-4647

**Richmond**  
Virginia  
(804) 354-0766



PRESS #9 FOR SPANISH HOTLINE



[www.partsauthority.com](http://www.partsauthority.com)

[my.partsauthority.com](http://my.partsauthority.com)

JOIN THE TRADE  
ASSOCIATION THAT  
PUTS MONEY IN  
YOUR POCKET

**WMDA**

**WMDA  
CAR**

**SERVING THE  
SERVICE STATIONS,  
CONVENIENCE &  
REPAIR BUSINESSES**

*Over \$245,000 in Rebates  
to members in 6 months*

**Join today at  
[wmdacar.com](http://wmdacar.com)**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### KIRK'S KORNER

Tire Recycling Fee and New Tire Tax.....Cover

### NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Legislative Update: Updated CAFE Standards Aim to Boost Efficiency  
Without Driving Up Costs.....16

Editorial: EPA Climate Rules Repeal Could Trigger Major Legal Battle and  
Long-Term Policy Shifts.....18

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

The Importance of Having All Agreed Upon Terms of a Contract Reduced to Writing.....11

Every January, the Same Familiar Phrase Resurfaces: New Year, New Me.....12

Energy Market Update: January 2026.....14

WMDA/CAR Endorsed Membership Benefits & Service Providers.....20

## ADVERTISERS' INDEX

Carroll Motor Fuels.....9

Erie Insurance/Clark Insurance Agency.....19

Parts Authority..... Inside front cover

Petroleum Marketing Group.....9

Spigler Petroleum Equipment, LLC.....11

The Wills Group..... Back cover

**WMDA/CAR**  
1532 Pointer Ridge Place  
Suite F  
Bowie, MD 20716  
301.390.0900  
[wmdacar.com](http://wmdacar.com)

**Swapna Sripada**  
*Director of Operations*  
301.390.0900, ext. 115  
[ssripada@wmdacar.com](mailto:ssripada@wmdacar.com)

**Kirk McCauley**  
*Director of Member  
Relations and  
Government Affairs*  
301.390.0900, ext. 114  
[kmccauley@wmdacar.com](mailto:kmccauley@wmdacar.com)

**WMDACAR**  
[wmdacar.com](http://wmdacar.com)

Continued from cover page

## How should my business respond as the supply of pennies disappears?

### U.S. Department of Treasury

As pennies fall out of circulation, merchants will need to round transactions either up or down to the nearest five cents. However, states require sales tax to be calculated on the sale price rounded to the nearest penny. How states and localities will amend their sales tax laws is the right and responsibility of those jurisdictions. Recent guidance from the National Council of State Legislators gives some indication how states may adapt. The NCSL's November 21, 2025 report entitled *Elimination of the Penny: Cents-able Considerations* states: "The most recommended form of rounding is symmetrical rounding whereby if the final digit of the total transaction amount (including taxes) is 1, 2, 6, or 7 cents, the amount is rounded down to the nearest multiple of five. If the final digit is 3, 4, 8, or 9 cents, the amount is rounded up. Transactions totaling exactly \$0.01 or \$0.02 might be rounded up to \$0.05. Rounding rules would not apply to payments made via electronic methods, checks, gift cards, or other non-cash instruments."

Full Article from Treasury [Penny Production Cessation FAQs](#) | [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#)

WMDA/CAR has been asked by several members how to manage lack of pennies with one member told by his bank they are out of pennies. While the advisory from treasury is the best guidance, we must remember states set sales tax rates and how they are charged on sales. I'm sure guidance will come from States and DC on how to manage taxes on sales very soon.

## Shake up in Maryland House Leadership Continues

New House Speaker Joseline Pene-Melnyk, former chair of House Health and Government Operation Committee, is shaping house committees and committee leadership to her liking.

As speaker she has Stripped Chair of Economic Matters Committee C.T. Wilson and Vice Chair Brian Crosby out of leaderships positions and changed Chairs and Vice Chairs in other committees. Speaker has split her old committee into 2 standing committees, Health Committee and Labor, Elections

and Government Committee. This will change bill assignments on labor bills from Economic Matters to a new Labor committee.

Maryland House of Delegates' new Speaker has used power of the speaker to mold committees and Delegates that control those committees to her liking and vision.

Maryland Matters has a good article by Steve Crane, listing changes to committee assignments and leadership roles.

Peña-Melnyk unveils House leadership shake-up, expands standing committees - Maryland Matters

With all the Change your voice is more important than ever, in last month's Newsletter I asked you all to set account up so you could send in written or testify in person. Below is a tutorial on signing up and Witness Guidelines for House & Senate

[mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Information/VideoTutorials/2026SenateWitnessGuidelines.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Information/VideoTutorials/2026SenateWitnessGuidelines.pdf)  
[2025HouseProtocolGuidelines.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Information/VideoTutorials/2025HouseProtocolGuidelines.pdf)

Legislative Tuesday will begin Tuesday February 3, @ 9am. Session will have been in 2 weeks, and we should have a better feeling for Maryland 2026. Look for link from Swapna by "Opening Your Emails" - LOL Numbers matter to legislators, our online briefings are quick and bring you up to date, voice your opinions, ask questions, be part of our legislative work group.

Do not let Legislators run your business, Squeaky wheel gets the oil. New Years Resolution, I will Participate! ■



# TRAINING DAY

SAT., FEB. 21, 2026

Training Classes 8:00 am-5:00 pm / Breakfast, lunch & snacks included with fee  
Lincoln Tech of Columbia / 9325 Snowden River Parkway, Columbia, MD

**Registration:** 7:00 a.m. onwards  
**Breakfast:** 7:15 a.m. onwards  
**Lunch:** 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.  
**WMDA/Car Members:** \$249/person\*  
**Non-Members:** \$299/person\*

**ALL-DAY SESSIONS: 8 a.m.-5p.m.**

- 1 Combustion, Carbon and Carnage... Diagnosing Difficult Fuel and Oil Deposit Related Driveability Concerns**  
*Presenter: Gary Smith*
- 2 Pressure Waveform Acquisition and Analysis, From the Inside Out**  
*Presenter: Brandon Steckler*
- 3 Electrified Vehicles Hybrid/EV Safety**  
*Instructors: Larry Cardell*

**MORNING SESSIONS: 8 a.m.-Noon**

- 4 Core Electrical Theory**  
*Presenter: TBA*
- 5 Taking the Blind Spot Out of Calibration (8am-11am)**  
*Presenter: Steve Dawson*
- 6 Skill Development Process**  
*Presenter: Michelle Wood, ATI*

**AFTERNOON SESSIONS: 1 p.m.-5 p.m.**

- 7 Electrical Class - Intermediate**  
*Presenter: TBA*
- 8 Advanced Sales**  
*Presenter: Michelle Wood, ATI*
- 9 Motor Oil 101**  
*Presenter: Reit Lubricants*

✓ **BREAKFAST** 7:15 a.m.-onwards  
✓ **LUNCH** 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Attendee 1: \_\_\_\_\_ ALL DAY # \_\_\_\_\_ MORNING # \_\_\_\_\_ AFTERNOON # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Attendee 2: \_\_\_\_\_ ALL DAY # \_\_\_\_\_ MORNING # \_\_\_\_\_ AFTERNOON # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Attendee 3: \_\_\_\_\_ ALL DAY # \_\_\_\_\_ MORNING # \_\_\_\_\_ AFTERNOON # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Attendee 4: \_\_\_\_\_ ALL DAY # \_\_\_\_\_ MORNING # \_\_\_\_\_ AFTERNOON # \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**REGISTRATION FEES**

Member Registration \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$249/ea.  
 Non-Member Registration \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$299/ea.  
 Total Amount Due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (\*Breakfast, Lunch & Snacks included with registration)



**PAYMENT INFORMATION**

Check Enclosed (Payable to WMDA)  
 Bill my credit card:  Visa  MasterCard  American Express  
 Account # \_\_\_\_\_ CVV Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Exp.Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Address Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Account Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
 or  Checking this box is my electronic signature

**REGISTRATION FORM SUBMISSION OPTIONS:**

**Mail (by February 13):** WMDA, 1532 Pointer Ridge Place, Ste. F, Bowie, MD 20716  
**Email:** [ssripada@wmdacar.com](mailto:ssripada@wmdacar.com) **Fax:** 301.383.2725 **Tel:** 301.390.0900

# TRAINING DAY 2026 SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## ALL-DAY SESSIONS: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

### 1. Combustion, Carbon and Carnage...Diagnosing Difficult Fuel and Oil Deposit Related Driveability Concerns

**Presenter: Gary Smith (8 hours)**

- This class looks at how fuel and oil depositing play a MAJOR role in getting the diagnosis RIGHT THE FIRST TIME on these modern close tolerance, fast-fuel controlled GDI vehicles.
- Learn the HOW and WHY behind deposit fouling and translate this with your scan and scope data via the BASELINE diagnostic approach.
- This is an eye-opening class for techs, advisors and shop owners alike, and talks about critical knowledge that the OEMs are NOT teaching today...
- Learn how adding this diagnostic strategy to your mix can save time, prevent unnecessary parts replacement, and have LESS DRIVEABILITY COMEBACKS.
- A Must-See class for all shops that work on driveability concerns.

*PM session will be fully Hands-on.*

*For: Technicians, Advisors & Shop Owners*

### 2. Pressure Waveform Acquisition and Analysis, From the Inside Out

**Presenter: Brandon Steckler (8 hours)**

The course objective is to take the pressure-transducer novice to a whole new level. The goal is for someone with lab scope/engine mechanical-operation knowledge, to gain the ability to capture pressure waveforms (from the intake manifold/tailpipe and in-cylinder) and be able to use the information to make diagnostic-decisions. The course will cover transducer functionality with both absolute transducers as well as delta transducers. It will touch on the benefits and characteristics of both types of transducers and how they can be used to gain an edge. Diagnostic-approach will be carried out using a real world example case study from my own library.

The afternoon portion of this 8 hr class will contain hands-on demonstration leveraging both the absolute and delta transducers. I will demonstrate on a live-vehicle, how to perform the following acquisitions.

- Cranking in-cylinder, intake, and tailpipe capture (Known-good and faulted)
- Misfire identification through tailpipe pulse analysis
- Proper scope set-up and waveform acquisition/storage
- Waveform analysis and annotation
- Misc. Requests from attendees (Q+A)

Attendees leave with confidence to invest in the tooling and to perform pressure testing and analysis to improve accuracy and efficiency.

*PM session will be fully Hands-on.*

*For: Technicians*

### 3. Electrified Vehicles: Hybrid/EV Safety (Hands-on)

**Instructors: Larry Cardell (8 hours)**

Safety is the top priority when working with hybrid and electric vehicles. Coverage includes shutdown and power-down procedures, proper use of PPE, and safe handling of high-voltage batteries and components. Learn to identify hazards, avoid technician errors, and apply industry-recommended protocols to ensure safe and compliant repairs.

*For: Technicians, Service Advisors*

## MORNING SESSIONS: 8 a.m.–Noon

### 4. Core Electrical Theory

**Presenter: TBA**

#### Core Electrical Theory

- Fundamental Terms: Defining Voltage (pressure), Amps (volume/flow), and Resistance (restriction).
- Ohm's Law & Watt's Law: Understanding the mathematical relationship between voltage, current, and resistance to predict circuit behavior.
- Circuit Types: Identification and properties of series and parallel circuits, which are the building blocks of vehicle wiring.
- Magnetism & Electromagnetism: Basic principles that allow motors, solenoids, and alternators to function.

#### Essential Diagnostic Tools

- Digital Multimeter (DMM/DVOM): Hands-on training for measuring voltage, resistance, and continuity safely.
- Test Lights: Proper use of basic test lights for quick power and ground verification.
- Wiring Diagrams: Introduction to reading automotive schematics, identifying symbols, and understanding color codes.

#### Major Vehicle Systems

- Batteries: Basics of battery chemistry, maintenance, and testing for state of charge and health.
- Starting Systems: Overview of starter motor operation, relays, and solenoids.
- Charging Systems: Basic alternator function and checking for proper charging voltage.
- Circuit Protection: Identifying and testing fuses, fusible links, and circuit breakers.

#### Shop Safety

- Safety Procedures: Safe handling of electrical components, avoiding short circuits, and proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

*For: Technicians, Entry Level & up*

### 5. Taking the Blind Spot Out of Calibration (8 a.m.–11 a.m.)

**Presenter: Steve Dawson, Hunter Engineering**

Whether you are subletting or calibrate in-house, Learn what you need, how to communicate, the real story on space requirements, the risks and liabilities, and how to be profitable. All while ensuring your customers are safe and happy!

*For: Techs, Service Advisors and Shop Owners*

### 6. Skill Development Process

**Presenter: Michelle Wood, ATI**

This training focuses on communication mastery and core shop processes. Advisors learn how to adapt their communication styles, collaborate effectively with technicians, and manage workflow to improve efficiency and customer experience.

*For: Service Advisors & Shop Owners*

*(Continued on next page)*



# TRAINING DAY 2026 SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## AFTERNOON SESSIONS: 1p.m.–5 p.m.

### 7. Electrical Class – Intermediate

*Presenter: TBA*

#### Advanced Diagnostic Testing

- Voltage Drop Mastery: Beyond the definition, students learn how to perform “live” circuit testing on both power and ground sides to find high resistance.
- Intermittent Fault Detection: Strategies for capturing “ghost” electrical issues that only happen occasionally, often using Min/Max peak detect modes on a digital multimeter (DVOM).
- Introduction to Lab Scopes: A rapid overview of setting up an oscilloscope, making connections, and interpreting voltage/current waveforms.

#### System-Specific Troubleshooting

- Schematic-Based Diagnostics: Intensive practice in using wiring diagrams and color-coding to trace circuits through modules and connectors.
- Relay and Solenoid Testing: Advanced methods to determine the “bias state” of relays and test coil efficiency.
- Network & CAN Bus Basics: A fast-paced update on serial data communication and diagnosing modern vehicle networks.

#### Component Analysis

- Advanced Sensor Diagnostics: Specific testing procedures for speed sensors, cam/crank correlation, and oxygen sensors.
- Electric Motor Testing: Evaluating the health of window motors, wipers, and other actuators.
- Parasitic Draw: Efficient methods for identifying which module is draining a battery when the vehicle is off.

*For: Technicians, B-level & up*

### 8. Advanced Sales

*Presenter: Michelle Wood, ATI*

Designed to refine sales and customer engagement skills, this class teaches advisors how to overcome objections, maximize repair approvals, and build long-term customer loyalty that extends beyond a single visit.

*For: Service Advisors & Shopowners*

### 9. Motor Oils 101 (1 p.m.–4 p.m.)

*Presenter: Reit Lubricants*

Details coming soon.

*For: Techs, Advisors & Shopowners*

The logo for WMDA CAR features the letters 'WMDA' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below 'WMDA', the word 'CAR' is written in a white, bold, sans-serif font with a blue outline, set against a yellow background.

## 2026 UPCOMING EVENTS

FEB. 3-APR. 14	<b>LEGISLATIVE TUESDAYS</b> – via Zoom <i>(Link will be sent separately)</i>
TBD	<b>GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING</b> <i>(Information coming soon)</i>
JUNE 9	<b>8TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING</b> at Renditions
OCT. 15	<b>MAFCAS 2026</b> at Maryland Live

# TRAINING DAY

## SAT., FEB. 21, 2026

8:00 am–5:00 pm / Lincoln Tech of Columbia  
9325 Snowden River Parkway, Columbia, MD

## SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

WMDA/CAR's Training Day 2026 is the leading educational program for automotive repair and maintenance shops in the Washington DC, Maryland and Delaware area. Training for owners, managers and technicians from the industry's leading experts.

### PLEASE CHECK DESIRED SPONSORSHIP:

**SIGNATURE SPONSOR - \$3,000**

#### FRIDAY, FEB. 20:

**Happy Hour Sponsor (5:30-7:30 pm) - \$1,500**

*Meet & Greet for all event sponsors, Shop Owners and Industry's leading coaches*

#### SATURDAY, FEB. 21:

**Continental Breakfast Sponsors - \$1,000**

**Hot Lunch Sponsors - \$1,500**

**Morning Break Sponsor - \$500**

**Afternoon Break Sponsor - \$500**

**Event Supporter - \$300**

**Door Prize Donation** \_\_\_\_\_

### ALL TRAINING DAY SPONSORSHIPS INCLUDE:

- ✓ Company name on all marketing materials.
- ✓ Company name and logo on Training Day signage.
- ✓ One Tabletop Display (Includes 6' table & 2 chairs)
  - We require a Tabletop

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### PAYMENT INFORMATION

Total Amount Due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check (Payable to WMDA)

Bill my credit card:  Visa  MasterCard  American Express

Account # \_\_\_\_\_ CVV Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Account Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Address Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

or  Checking this box is my electronic signature

We will provide a Door Prize (list donation in left column)

### SUBMIT FORM VIA:

EMAIL: [ssripada@wmdacar.com](mailto:ssripada@wmdacar.com)

MAIL: WMDA, 1532 Pointer Ridge Place, Suite F, Bowie, MD 20716

[www.wmdacar.com](http://www.wmdacar.com)

# WMDA CAR



**SERVING THE SERVICE STATIONS,  
CONVENIENCE & REPAIR BUSINESSES**  
Join today at [wmdacar.com](http://wmdacar.com)

## **CIF CARROLL<sup>®</sup>** MOTOR FUELS

- DEALER FRIENDLY
- 24/7/365 FUEL DELIVERY
- GAS STATION & C-STORE DESIGN
- SITE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT
- STATION BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
- COMPETITIVE BRANDED & UNBRANDED PRICING
- STATION MAINTENANCE & CONSTRUCTION SERVICES
- COMPLETE SITE BRANDING
- ROBUST DEALER PORTAL



877-235-0223  
[WWW.CARROLLBRANDEDFUELS.COM](http://WWW.CARROLLBRANDEDFUELS.COM)

# Petroleum Marketing Group, Inc.

**Quality  
Branded and  
Unbranded  
Supply**



**Marketing  
Programs for  
Branded and  
Unbranded  
Locations**



**Economical  
Re-imaging and  
Competitive  
Pricing  
Programs**



**Reliable Fuel  
Delivery  
24/7**



**Fuel Inventory  
Services**



**Internet Based  
Credit Card  
Reporting**



**Exclusive Circle K  
Branding for  
Stores**



2359 Research Court  
Woodbridge, VA 22192  
[www.petromg.com](http://www.petromg.com)

# PMG

Contact Mike Natale  
413-478-4272

# The Importance of Having All Agreed Upon Terms of a Contract Reduced to Writing

Brought to you by Lynott, Lynott & Parsons, P.A.

**To avoid possible disputes with a fuel supplier**, a gas station operator should make sure that all terms of the supply agreement are included in a clearly written agreement. The importance of this is illustrated by a recent case decided in federal court in Maryland (*Ezzat v. AmeriGas Propane, L.P.*, 2024 WL 4169974). While the case dealt with a propane supply agreement and not a motor fuel supply agreement, the decision provides insight as to how courts may decide a similar dispute between a dealer and motor fuel supplier.

Mautaz Ezzat, a builder who lived in Ellicott City, Maryland, was a retail propane customer of AmeriGas. He first purchased propane for his newly built residence in 1993 from Petrolane, a predecessor company of AmeriGas. He had a written agreement with Petrolane that was renewed every year, and he received standard pricing. This process continued after Petrolane was acquired by AmeriGas. However, this changed in about 1998 when, according to Ezzat, he reached an oral agreement with AmeriGas that when he was building a home that was not serviced by a gas company, he would refer the client to AmeriGas in exchange for “cut-rate pricing” on the supply of propane to Ezzat at both his residence and his vacation home at Deep Creek Lake, Maryland.

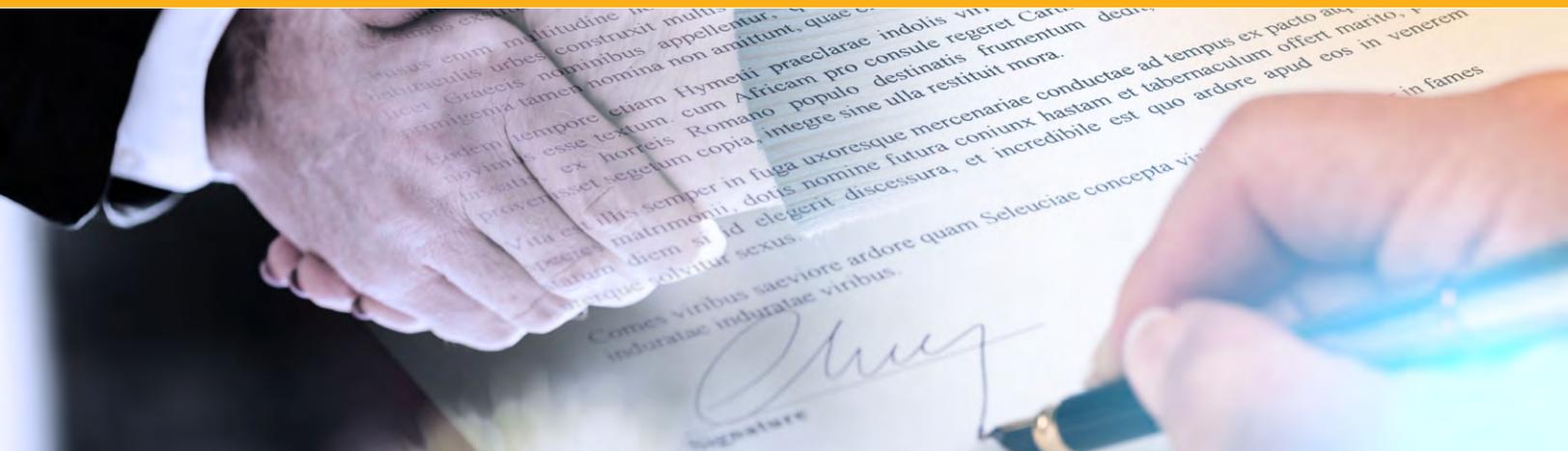
In 2000, Ezzat signed an AmeriGas Propane Supply Agreement and Equipment Lease for his residence and vacation home. This written agreement included special pricing provisions but made no mention of referral of customers to AmeriGas in exchange for pricing considerations. Ezzat testified that they had to “redo” the paperwork every year, but that the annual “renewals” did not alter the parties’ pricing agreement, which was set out in the Propane Supply Agreement and Equipment Lease.

All apparently went well for the next 20 years, but problems arose in 2020. Ezzat complained that he was being “grossly over-billed,” while AmeriGas countered that his account was past due. In January 2021, Ezzat ran out of propane at his home, and he was advised that no additional propane could be delivered until the account was brought current.

Eventually, AmeriGas provided additional propane to Ezzat, and the Propane Supply Agreement and Equipment Lease was renewed for another year. However, Ezzat did not bring his account with AmeriGas current, and in November 2021 AmeriGas cancelled the Propane Supply Agreement and Equipment Lease and ceased the delivery of propane to Ezzat. In response, Ezzat filed suit.

*While the case dealt with a propane supply agreement and not a motor fuel supply agreement, the decision provides insight as to how courts may decide a similar dispute between a dealer and motor fuel supplier.*





Ezzat claimed that he and AmeriGas agreed that his reduced pricing “shall continue each year in perpetuity,” and that AmeriGas breached the contract by canceling his propane delivery and terminating the reduced-price agreement. AmeriGas denied this claim and filed a motion for summary judgment, asking the court to dismiss the lawsuit.

The court found that the Propane Supply Agreement and Equipment Lease was the full agreement between the parties, and that it did not provide for

reduced pricing forever. There was no language in the contract documents that stated that the reduced pricing offered to Mr. Ezzat would continue in perpetuity. The written agreement specifically provided that “AmeriGas could change the amount it charged Mr. Ezzat for the supply of propane gas.” The court found that the language of the agreement was controlling, “regardless of Mr. Ezzat’s subjective understanding or intent.”

The lesson from the Ezzat

case is that gas-station owners with contracts (e.g., fuel supply agreements, property leases, third-party service contracts) should make sure that the terms—especially pricing, duration, renewal, termination—are clearly stated. In this regard, it is helpful to have experienced counsel review the documents to identify any potential problems. Verbal or “handshake” deals can lead to disputes, and if a dispute ends up in litigation, the court will look to the language in the contract to decide the outcome. ■

## Spigler Petroleum Equipment

443-471-7600

is here to support all your station's needs

### Sales

Encore 700's  
with Flex 6

Passport  
with self-checkout systems

Veeder-Root  
TLS Systems

Express  
Food Ordering

&  
Much, Much More



and now

Pump & Tank,  
Environmental compliance



### Service

Locally owned  
&  
Operated

Loyalty Service  
Plans

25+ Certified  
Technicians

Servicing -  
MD, VA, DE,  
PA, DC, and WV

# Every January, the Same Familiar Phrase Resurfaces: New Year, New Me.

Brought to you by Tim Jancius, Spigler Petroleum Equipment, LLC



By Tim Jancius

**It is well-intentioned**, but within the petroleum and convenience industry, lasting success rarely comes from reinvention. More often, it comes from refining proven practices, strengthening systems, and building on experience earned over time.

The past year presented no shortage of challenges. Dealers navigated rising costs, evolving compliance requirements, labor pressures, and continued uncertainty across the broader energy landscape. Yet many businesses did more than simply endure. They

remained operational, protected their assets, served their customers, and maintained continuity in an environment that demanded constant attention. That level of performance was not accidental.

As the new year begins, it is worth recognizing what worked and focusing on how to build upon it.

## Progress Is Rarely Accidental

Dealers who managed uncertainty effectively tended to share common habits. They emphasized preparation over reaction, invested in training rather than deferring it, and viewed maintenance as a strategy rather than a cost. They understood that compliance is not only a regulatory obligation, but also a safeguard for their business, their people, and their customers.

Strong relationships also played a role. Dealers who stayed connected with service providers, vendors, and industry peers were better positioned to respond quickly when issues arose. Clear communication and informed decision-making proved to be advantages that could not be replaced by shortcuts.

## Refinement Over Reinvention

Growth does not always require expansion. In many cases, it begins with strengthening the foundation already in place.

Improved preventive maintenance planning, better documentation, clearer service expectations, and thoughtful purchasing decisions often yield greater long-term returns than singular large investments. Incremental improvements, applied consistently, reduce downtime, limit unexpected costs, and create stability.

The same principle applies to technology. New tools and systems can add value, but only when implemented with intention and supported by training.



*As the new year begins, it is worth recognizing what worked and focusing on how to build upon it.*



The most successful dealers are not those who adopt every new solution, but those who select the right ones and integrate them effectively into daily operations.

### **The Importance of Staying Connected**

An often-underappreciated strength of this industry is the network that supports it. Trade associations such as WMDA play a critical role in keeping dealers informed, represented, and prepared.

Through legislative advocacy, education, and communication, associations help ensure that independent businesses remain informed and engaged as policies and regulations evolve. Staying connected allows dealers to anticipate change rather than react to it, and reinforces the importance of having a unified voice when it matters most.

That value is not always visible day to day, but it becomes especially clear during periods of transition or regulatory pressure.

### **Defining “Stronger Results”**

Looking ahead, stronger results do not require taking unnecessary risks. They come from clarity, preparation, and consistency.

Areas that continue to deserve attention include equipment health, ongoing training, regulatory awareness, and communication with trusted partners. These fundamentals may not generate immediate

recognition, but they remain essential to long-term success and operational reliability.

A focus on these areas positions dealers to respond effectively to challenges while maintaining control over costs and expectations.

### **Moving Forward With Confidence**

The petroleum and convenience industry has always evolved. While the conversation surrounding energy continues to shift, the need for well-maintained, compliant, and efficiently operated sites remains constant. Communities depend on them, and experienced dealers understand the responsibility that comes with that role.

The coming year presents an opportunity not to start over, but to move forward with confidence, building on lessons learned and systems already in place. For those working alongside dealers every day — including organizations such as Spigler Petroleum Equipment — the focus remains steady: supporting safe, reliable, and efficient operations through preparation, knowledge, and partnership.

A new year does not require a new identity.

It calls for the same focus — applied with greater clarity — to achieve stronger results. ■

# Energy Market Update: January 2026

[The Shipley Energy Commercial Solutions Team](#) is excited to share the January Energy Market Update to inform you of trends, weather, and other factors impacting the energy market.

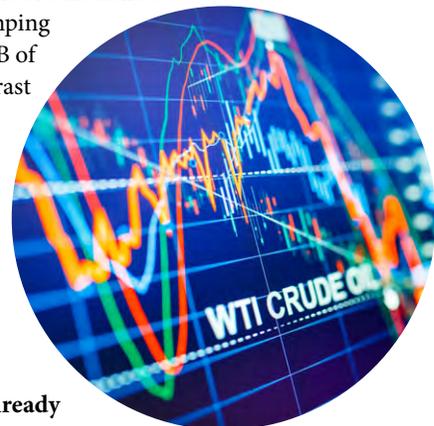
## Petroleum & Refined Products

*Energy markets remained quiet heading into year end, expect volatility to pick up in January:*

The WTI crude and [RBOB](#) lows have held since our last note. Over the past 13 of 14 years, WTI crude has rallied during the final two weeks of the year, typically reflecting a seasonal short-covering rally that often coincides with the equity markets' "Santa Claus rally." On average, [refined products](#) tend to bottom seasonally in December, while crude oil seasonally bottoms more often in February. That said, there are many crosscurrents pulling and pushing on hydrocarbon energy markets. For example, a prominent bearish theme is the exceptional amount of global crude oil supply currently on hand, which is partly being offset by growing economic demand and ongoing, albeit tempered, geopolitical risks involving Russia, Ukraine, and **Venezuela**.

In regard to Venezuela, the US is selectively rolling back sanctions and oil sales to the US to begin immediately. 30-50 millions bbls would be the first tranche of sanctioned oil which is around ~3 months of sanctioned supply or 1 month of total supply. Venezuela is pumping around 500K-1M per day and would need \$50-100B of investment to get up to 2-3M bbls per day. For contrast the US is pumping ~13M bbls per day and total global supply is estimated at 83M bbls per day. The point being, although Venezuela has some of the largest reserves in the world, the amount of time to achieve 2-3M bbls per day is significant while early estimates expect an increase of yields of 300K bbls per day over next 1-2 yrs. **Our view is that Venezuelan oil is not expected to "flood" the already oversupplied global market and that OPEC to counter supply swings but adds to the already bearish market sentiment.**

The hydrocarbon energy complex has also fallen out of favor among investors, though we believe that in 2026, Wall Street will begin to rebalance and increase allocations to S&P 500 energy names, which could have an indirect positive effect on futures prices. On the contrary, 2026 is an extremely important year, as midterm elections take place in the fall. Although a new Fed chairman will be nominated—who is expected to maintain downward pressure on interest rates—inflation will need to remain contained, as we know



*...although Venezuela has some of the largest reserves in the world, the amount of time to achieve 2-3M bbls per day is significant while early estimates expect an increase of yields of 300K bbls per day over next 1-2 yrs...*



fuel prices are one of the most prominent “kitchen table” issues on the campaign trail. Our consensus view is that we expect shorter-term rallies but do not anticipate sustained moves in crude oil above \$70.

We expect equities to experience sell-offs in Q1, with typical seasonal February weakness, which could finally push **WTI crude below the \$50–52 per barrel level and drive RBOB into the \$1.55–1.74 and HO \$1.71 – 1.89 area**. Most bear markets typically end with a crescendo washout, and depending on market volatility, the low \$40s range is certainly not out of the question, given how quickly volatility and gamma risk can accelerate, driven by large commodity trading advisors (CTAs) and hedge funds. When you consider historical context, RBOB in the mid-\$1.50–1.75 range and ULSD (HO) at \$2.15 are significantly below their 20-year averages. Based on historical trends, the 20-year average range for RB is \$2.20–\$2.40, while for HO it is 2.40–2.70. Use these averages as upside resistance targets for the first half of 2026.

#### **Institutional sentiment:**

##### **2026 Oil Market Surplus Expected:**

Both UBS and Goldman Sachs anticipate a significant supply surplus in 2026 (up to ~1-2mb/d or more), driven by non-OPEC growth and potential OPEC+ production increases, pressuring prices downward amid subdued demand growth.

**Bearish Price Forecasts for Brent:** UBS lowered its 2026 average to ~\$62/bbl (from higher prior estimates), expecting lows around \$60/bbl early in the year; Goldman recommends shorting spreads, forecasting averages in the mid-\$50s due to the “last big supply wave.”

**WTI Forecast Lower:** UBS projects ~\$58/bbl average for WTI in 2026; overall market consensus aligns with prices in the high \$50s to low \$60s.

**Geopolitical Risks Provide Upside Potential:** Disruptions (e.g., Russia, Venezuela, Iran, Middle East tensions) could support prices or cause spikes, but OPEC+ spare capacity (~4mb/d) is seen as capping major rallies.

**Downside Risks from Positioning and Demand:** Extremely bearish investor positioning and slower non-OPEC+ restraint could push prices into the mid-\$50s, though improving balances later in the year offer limited recovery.

**Longer-Term Stability:** Beyond 2026, slowing non-OPEC supply growth supports higher prices above \$70. ■

# Updated CAFE Standards Aim to Boost Efficiency Without Driving Up Costs

*The revised rules are designed to gradually increase fuel economy for new cars and light trucks while taking into account current technology, consumer demand, and market conditions.*



By Roy Littlefield IV

**The Service Station Dealers of America** and Allied Trades (SSDA-AT) has welcomed the updated Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, saying the changes reflect a more realistic and workable approach to improving fuel efficiency.

The revised rules are designed to gradually increase fuel economy for new cars and light trucks while taking into account current technology, consumer demand, and market conditions. This approach better aligns efficiency goals with the realities facing

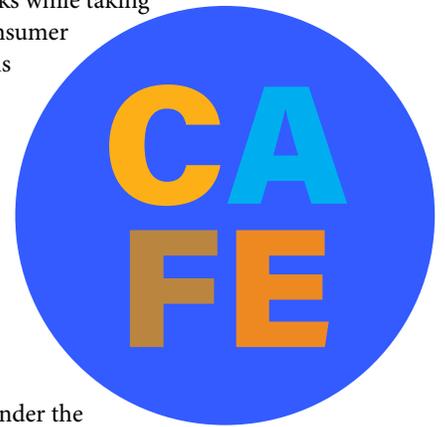
automakers, fuel retailers, and small businesses, and helps avoid unintended consequences that can result from overly aggressive targets.

The updated standards aim to balance progress on fuel efficiency with vehicle affordability. By setting achievable benchmarks, the rules help limit cost pressures that could otherwise be passed on to consumers and provide greater certainty for manufacturers planning future vehicle lineups.

Maintaining vehicle choice remains a key consideration under the revised framework. Drivers rely on a wide range of vehicles to meet everyday needs, from personal transportation to commercial use. The updated standards recognize how vehicles are used in practice and preserve flexibility for consumers to choose the options that work best for them.

The new regulation resets the model year 2031 fuel economy target to approximately 34.5 miles per gallon, replacing the previous 50.4 MPG goal. It also eliminates remaining electric vehicle credits, reclassifies SUVs and crossovers as passenger cars, and removes fines for original equipment manufacturers that do not meet benchmark targets. These changes contribute to a more predictable and stable regulatory environment.

Overall, SSDA-AT views the updated CAFE standards as a practical step forward that supports efficiency and innovation while maintaining affordability, choice, and stability across the automotive and fuels marketplace. ■



WMDACAR

# TRAINING DAY

SAT., FEB. 21, 2026

Lincoln Tech of Columbia / 9325 Snowden River Parkway, Columbia, MD

**BREAKFAST  
& LUNCH  
INCLUDED!**

**Full-Day Training with  
the Industry's #1 Coaches  
at One Low Price!**

*For Technicians, Service Advisors and Shop owners*

## **ALL-STAR LINE-UP OF COACHES:**

**Gary Smith • Brandon Steckler • Larry Cardell  
Michelle Wood • Steve Dawson**



WMDA/CAR MEMBERS: \$249/PERSON  
NON-MEMBERS: \$299/PERSON



<https://wmda.memberclicks.net/td26>

# EPA Climate Rules Repeal Could Trigger Major Legal Battle and Long-Term Policy Shifts



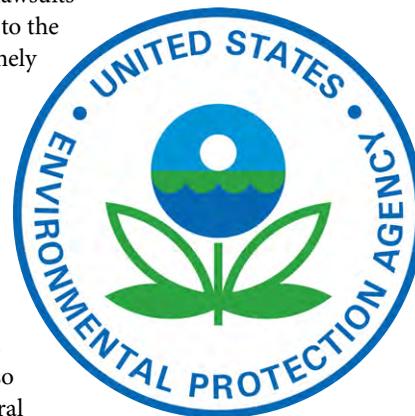
By Roy Littlefield III

**The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** is moving closer to finalizing the repeal of the endangerment finding and other pivotal climate regulations, a decision that is expected to spark significant legal challenges. The endangerment finding, which has underpinned federal authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions for nearly two decades, has been a cornerstone of U.S. climate policy. Its potential repeal marks a major shift in the federal approach to addressing climate change.

Legal experts anticipate that lawsuits challenging the EPA's action will quickly make their way to the D.C. Circuit Court, the federal appellate court that routinely handles cases involving federal regulations. From there, some of the most consequential cases are expected to escalate to the Supreme Court, raising the possibility of decisions with far-reaching implications for environmental policy in the United States.

One potential outcome of these legal battles could be restrictions on the EPA's authority to regulate greenhouse gases without explicit congressional approval. Such a ruling would not only affect the current administration's ability to set climate policy but could also tie the hands of future administrations, limiting the federal government's flexibility to respond to evolving scientific findings and environmental challenges.

Advocates for the repeal argue that it aligns federal regulations with current economic priorities and reduces what they see as regulatory overreach. Critics, however, warn that weakening or removing these rules could stall progress on climate change, making it harder for the United States to meet emissions targets



*Legal experts anticipate that lawsuits challenging the EPA's action will quickly make their way to the D.C. Circuit Court...*



and international climate commitments.

The forthcoming legal proceedings are likely to involve multiple states, industry groups, and environmental organizations, each bringing different perspectives and stakes to the debate. Analysts predict that the outcomes of these cases could shape the balance of power between Congress and federal agencies for years to come, establishing a new precedent for how environmental regulations are enacted, challenged, and enforced.

As the EPA finalizes its repeal, stakeholders across the political and environmental spectrum are preparing for a period of intense legal scrutiny. The decisions that emerge from the courts could define not only the nation's approach to climate policy but also the broader authority of federal agencies to address emerging public health and environmental issues without direct legislative action. ■



Erie Insurance®

**Clark Insurance Agency, LLC**

Henry T. "Buddy" Clark IV  
14418 Old Mill Rd Suite 101  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772  
P:301-574-9494  
buddy@clarkinsurancellc.com  
www.clarkinsurancellc.com



**WMDA CAR**

**SERVING THE SERVICE STATIONS,  
CONVENIENCE & REPAIR BUSINESSES**

**Join today at [wmdacar.com](http://wmdacar.com)**

# WMDA CAR

## WMDA/CAR ENDORSED MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS & SERVICE PROVIDERS

*Be sure to check out these companies endorsed by WMDA/CAR.*

### ATM MACHINES

Intelicom, Inc.  
Larry Shapero  
1-877-666-6269  
[intelicom@verizon.net](mailto:intelicom@verizon.net)

### INTELCOM, INC.

### AUTO PARTS SUPPLIER

Parts Authority  
Michael Ground  
202-829-6315  
[mground@partsauthority.com](mailto:mground@partsauthority.com)



### CONVENIENCE STORE PRODUCTS

Century Distributors, Inc.  
Bill Stamos  
301-212-9100



*Century Distributors, Inc.*

### CREDIT CARD PROCESSING

TalusPay  
Marcy Grimm  
301-421-4111  
[mgrimm@taluspay.com](mailto:mgrimm@taluspay.com)



### ELECTRICITY PROGRAM

Sprague Energy (MAAGIC)  
Mike Jahangani  
603-531-2620  
[mjahangani@spragueenergy.com](mailto:mjahangani@spragueenergy.com)



### LEGAL SERVICES

Lynott, Lynott & Parsons, P.A.  
James L. Parsons, Jr.  
301-424-5100  
[jparsons@llplawfirm.com](mailto:jparsons@llplawfirm.com)



### WEBSITE DESIGN & MANAGEMENT

Mays & Associates  
410-964-9701  
[it@ad-mays.com](mailto:it@ad-mays.com)



take control of your online story

### OIL BUYING PROGRAM

REIT Lubricants Company  
**Chevron/Havoline**  
Jamie Atkinson  
800-423-3624 | 443-309-9929 cell  
[jatkinson@reitlube.com](mailto:jatkinson@reitlube.com)



H.N.Funkhouser & Co.

Mark Conner  
1-800-343-6556  
[mconner@hnfunkhouser.com](mailto:mconner@hnfunkhouser.com)



**H. N. Funkhouser & Co.**  
*Quality Petroleum Products Since 1932!*

### WMDA/CAR LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY INFORMATION

WMDA/CAR  
Kirk McCauley  
301-390-0900, ext. 114  
[kmccauley@wmdacar.com](mailto:kmccauley@wmdacar.com)



## LET YOUR MEMBERSHIP WORK FOR YOU!

*Simply participate in all of the programs for which you are eligible and you will  
save or make enough to pay for your membership in WMDA/CAR!*



# The future of fuels retail begins with **you.**

With nearly 100 years of experience in the industry, the Wills Group is one of the most trusted fuels network partners, with nearly 300 locations across the Mid-Atlantic region.

## Why work with the Wills Group:

We aim to be the preferred choice, working in partnership with our customers to offer superior value.

### Key benefits:



Custom solutions  
Partner approach  
for best value



Industry-leading  
fuel brands  
Lowest fuel prices



Flexible credit  
and EFT terms  
No hidden fees

## Three ways to work with us:

### Self Service

- Best and lowest fuel cost
- Guaranteed fuel supply
- Upfront delivery costs with negotiated rates

### Flexible Growth

- All Self Service benefits
- Site upgrade assistance
- Cash grant options

### Wills Advantage

- All Self Service & Flexible Growth benefits
- Management of fuel system upgrades
- Splash In ECO Car Wash franchise opportunity

Fuels network  
brands and  
companies:



Exxon™

