

SIGMA WEEKLY REPORT

October 23, 2006

ULSD CONVERSION DEEMED SUCCESS

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Stephen Johnson said the October 15 retail start of the ultra-low sulfur diesel program constitutes “a tremendous success story for our nation.” Speaking at the American Petroleum Institute (API) Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, Johnson reiterated that the virtual elimination of sulfur from diesel fuel “the single greatest achievement in clean fuel since lead was removed from gasoline over 25 years ago.” As the days and weeks pass, SIGMA is still interested in hearing your concerns and other feedback on the [ULSD](#) program. Please contact SIGMA Counsel Greg Scott via e-mail at gscott@kelleydrye.com. SIGMA will also be presenting a education session at the [Annual Meeting](#) in Chicago on ULSD. In a follow up session to “ULSD: A Marketers Checklist” held in San Antonio, TX, panelists Tim Crowe, CITGO; David Dobbins, Pilot Travel Centers; Bruce Blaise, Kenan Advantage Group; and Andy Wood, Petro Stopping Centers, will be sharing their thoughts on the ULSD rollout. This interactive session will take place on [Saturday, November 11](#) from 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm at the Fairmont Hotel. [Register](#) today!

VISA PUBLISHES INTERCHANGE RATES

In response to Visa’s release of default interchange rates this past week, Mallory Duncan, chairman of the Merchant’s Payment Coalition (MPC) made the following statement: “This announcement by Visa begins to shed a much-needed spotlight on the excessive interchange rates merchants and consumers are forced to pay on virtually every credit or debit card transaction. It is evident that Visa has felt the pressure of congressional scrutiny and merchant outrage over these anti-competitive practices, since as recently as September they maintained that these fees were already available. The release of these interchange rates brings to light the need for further transparency.” The Merchant’s Payment Coalition, of which SIGMA is a member, is a group of about 20 trade associations representing retailers, restaurants, supermarkets, drug stores, convenience stores, gas stations, on-line merchants, and other businesses that accept debit and credit cards. MPC is fighting for a more competitive and transparent card system that works better for consumers and merchants alike. The coalition’s member associations collectively represent about 2.7 million stores with approximately 50 million employees.

QUIET ON THE HILL

Not much to report from Washington this week. With the mid-term elections 3 weeks away, most of the attention has been focused on the Foley scandal and poll predictions. With the outcome so uncertain, the elections will make for some great conversation at SIGMA’s [Annual Meeting](#) in Chicago—especially when political analyst Chuck Todd gives his take on November’s events at the [Annual Awards Luncheon](#) on Sunday, November 12 at the Fairmont Hotel. According to Todd, “the 2006 elections were supposed to be nothing more than a forgettable halftime show as the two parties prepared for an epic showdown for control in 2008. But something happened on the way to oblivion that made 2006 a significant election cycle. The fallout from ‘06 won’t just be a table-setter for ‘08, but instead will lead to potentially big changes in the direction of both parties and the country.” Make sure you don’t miss this luncheon event!

UL SUSPENDS LISTINGS FOR E85 DISPENSERS

On October 5, Underwriters Laboratories (UL) announced they are suspending the use of its mark on components for fuel dispensing devices that specifically reference compatibility with alcohol blended fuels that contain greater than 15 percent alcohol. The reason? According to UL, research indicates that the presence of high concentrations of alcohols with blended fuels makes the fuels more corrosive, which may result in the fuel chemically attacking some of the materials used in fuel dispenser components. This may degrade the dispenser’s ability to contain the fuel. For now, marketers should talk to their local electrical and fire code inspectors, who make the ultimate decision on whether a fuel pump can be used. SIGMA will be discussing this issue at the Legislative Meeting in Chicago on Saturday, November 11, from 9:00 – 12:00 p.m.

ANNUAL MEETING HOTELS

At this time, the Fairmont Hotel is sold out. Further, due to a city-wide meeting in Chicago, many of the surrounding hotels are sold out as well. If your plans have changed and you do not need your room anymore, PLEASE call Mary Alice Kutyn at soon as possible at 703-709-7000. If you are attending the Annual Meeting and are still looking for accommodations, please call Mary Alice as well. We will try our best to help you! [Last minute details](#) for the meeting in Chicago can be found on our website, www.sigma.org.