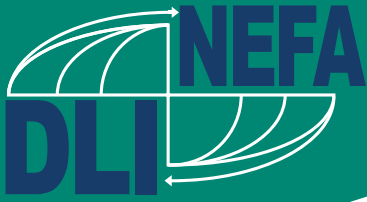


Headlines & More



North East Fabricare Association
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MA DEP Inspections On The Rise



Drycleaners throughout Massachusetts have been subjected to inspections from the Department of Environmental Protection over the past 6 weeks, and there are more to come.

The inspections are focussed on record keeping, wastewater disposal, and compliance with hazardous waste regulations.

“It is imperative that all drycleaners take a close look at their compliance history”, offered Peter Blake, NEFA Executive Vice

President. “Make sure your perc purchase log, record of leak checks and your temperature readings are all up to date. If you haven’t done so, download a 2015 Compliance Calendar from the NEFA Website (nefabricare.com). You should also have the latest copy of your Environmental Results Program (ERP) filing. The DEP will be verifying the information from that report.”

The DEP is trying to ascertain the compliance level of small businesses like drycleaners. In addition to verifying information on the ERP forms, they are following up on drycleaners who have stopped filing under ERP, or have never even filed. At least 3 NEFA members have reported inspections, and there have been at least 10 others.

“The DEP is doing a routine check on the industry,” observed Blake. “They are looking at overall compliance with the Environmental Results Program, as well as attempting to determine what companies should be complying with the Toxic Use Reduction Act and haven’t been filing. NEFA has compliance tools available, and we have been able to help the NEFA Members with the DEP Inspections.”

TOXIC USE REDUCTION ACT

Any Massachusetts drycleaner that uses more than 1000 lbs of perc (74 gallons) and employs 10 or more full-time equivalent employees is subject to Toxic Use Reduction Act regulations. This includes filing an annual report and filing a TURA Plan every two years. The TURA Fee for drycleaners is \$2,995 per year.

“There are currently only a handful of drycleaners currently filing under TURA,” continued Blake, “and the DEP feels the number should be more. In a brief review of ERP information, it looked like the number should be almost doubled. If you feel you should have been filing in the past -- or are now subject to TURA -- call me IMMEDIATELY at 603-635-0322. NEFA can help in the process, but non-filing can be a severe problem.”

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

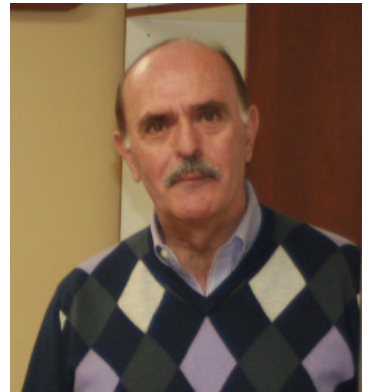
Looking Ahead to a GREAT 2015!

IT IS TIME TO LOOK FORWARD AND LEAVE THE PAST IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR. WE NEED TO LOOK TO THE HORIZON FOR NEW AND FRESH IDEAS.

I recently came across this quote and it got me thinking of NEFA and the role we can play in your success:

"Whether we want them or not, the New Year will bring new challenges; whether we seize them or not, the New Year will bring new opportunities."

~Michael Josephson, whatwillmatter.com



John Dallas, NEFA President

NEFA is striving to be a resource for our members. We are working hard to provide you the tools to succeed and answer the challenges, as well as the resources to take advantage of those opportunities that lie ahead. We all need to keep looking forward and seeing what is out in front for our businesses and our industry.

I am really excited about the Round-table Luncheon we had at Fall Fest in November. Based on that program alone, NEFA is in a great position to help our members grow and prosper. We were able to really brainstorm ways NEFA and DLI can play a larger role in our member's success. We are developing some new marketing tools, some new educational opportunities, and looking to make Fall Fest 2015 even better than last year's. I know how difficult running a small business can be. I know the sacrifices we all have to make to make our businesses successful. That is why I am so excited about NEFA and what we are able to bring to the table.

NEFA has always been our watchdog for regulatory issues and government pressures, but it also continues to grow and adapt to our needs. The new Headlines&More, the updated website, e-mail blasts, and other communications vehicles serve to remind us how hard NEFA works for our members. I know our members are looking ahead to some of the unique programs and services DLI and NEFA have to help us rise to the latest challenges and to help us take advantage of the new opportunities we have to grow our business.

As small business owners, we all need to seize those opportunities. We need to take advantage of the resources we have available to us. We need to use our membership in DLI and NEFA, and the programs that we can all use. We can't sit passively on the sidelines, we need to act, react and keep moving forward. I think 2015 is starting off strong and I am excited about what lies ahead. I know the Board and the staff have some terrific programs and services coming throughout the year.

John Dallas

Fabricare House

781-337-4495 / JohnD3473@aol.com

The Case For A Variable Rate

Submitted by Intelligent Energy, NEFA Allied Trade Member



OF THE TWO BASIC RATE PLANS AVAILABLE FOR NATURAL GAS, FIXED AND VARIABLE, FIXED RATES ARE GENERALLY MORE POPULAR.

Fixed rates lock in a price per therm, ensuring a more stable bill and easier budgeting. A variable rate, on the other hand, changes every month depending on market conditions. It might end up being higher than a fixed rate, or it might end up being lower. It isn't possible to tell in advance.

In the past, some business owners had to choose a variable rate simply because they weren't in a position to commit to a fixed rate, which requires a contract for a certain period of time. Perhaps they planned to sell the business or were worried they would have to close or move. It wouldn't make sense to agree to a contract under those circumstances.

However, in recent years, variable rates have become a more attractive option for many business owners. Why?

Since the new widespread availability of shale gas, natural gas

prices have decreased significantly and have seen much less fluctuation. While severe price spikes are still possible, of course, the market has been much less volatile. In turn, business owners have enjoyed much more consistent variable rates.

Contract options for variable rates can stabilize prices further as well. Most people who are on variable rates just use a supplier's basic variable service. However, that might not be the best option, as the price is the same for all customers and must cover a wide range of usage patterns and locations.

Business owners who plan to stay on the variable rate should consider a contracted variable rate. Suppliers will customize a price for each individual account and present a specific formula for determining the rate each month. This is often cheaper than using basic variable rate services.

While a contracted variable rate usually has a term requirement, just as a fixed rate does, the plan still retains most of its flexibility. Business owners can lock in a fixed rate if market conditions begin to change, or they can even choose a short-term fixed rate for their busiest seasons.

The best option for budgeters is still a fixed rate. But variable rates have a lot of advantages that savvy business owners can use to get great options for their natural gas plans.



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DLI Announces Clean 2015 Speaker Lineup



CLEAN 2015 IN ATLANTA RUNS APRIL 16-19 CLEAN 2015.

This year DLI's speaker lineup is focused on

helping drycleaners increase profits through improved marketing strategies and better understanding of relationships with employees and customers.

All sessions will be held in Room B314 except for the Problem Garment Parade, which will be held in the educational area on the show floor. DLI will also host it's Membership Reception in conjunction with the Textile Care Allied Trade Association the evening of Friday, April 17 at the Hilton Garden Inn Rooftop Ventana from 5:30-7 p.m.

Remember, attendees can register online at www.CleanShow.com by March 31 to save \$50 on the registration price and avoid standing in the on-site registration line. The DLI Education Schedule:

IS GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE WORTH IT?

With Carolyn Nankervis, Thursday, April 16, 8:30 - 9:45 a.m., Room B314

Great customer service has a huge positive impact on your bottom line. Learn how to spot weaknesses and reward excellence as Carolyn Nankervis, DLI's shopping partner company CEO, shares insights and data from the drycleaning industry.

HOW TO SELL TO THE #SELFIE GENERATION

With Ricardo Gonzalez, Friday, April 17, 8:30 - 9:45 a.m., Room B314

Learn how to get American 25-35 year-olds to recognize the value of your services and do business with you. As the quantity of ads your prospects increases, marketers are turning to behavioral psychology for an edge over competitors. DLI's Social Media Coordinator, Ricardo Gonzalez will explain why customers switch companies and make purchases. He'll also show how it all applies to selling drycleaning to an Internet-connected generation.

BOILER ALERT

With Ted Heiderscheit, Friday, April 17, 1-2 p.m., Exhibit Floor Educational Area

Is your boiler working for you or against you? Ted Heiderscheit, Director of Loss Control will show how you can get more work out of less energy and lower your insurance costs by maintaining maximum energy efficiency in your production facility.

WASH, DRY, FOLD – PROFIT

With Beverly Blank, Saturday, April 18, 8:30 - 9:45 a.m., Room B314

You have to clean more than suits and formalwear to succeed in

today's market. See how some of your fellow industry professionals are expanding their services to accommodate the changing needs of today's customers. Beverly Blank, a leading expert on wash, dry, fold services will spotlight a natural diversification for drycleaners to attract more revenue.

PROBLEM GARMENT PARADE

With Brian Johnson, Saturday, April 18, 2:30-3:30 p.m., Exhibit Floor Educational Area

Preventing claims not only stops payouts, it increases customer confidence in your business. Claims are not a necessary part of drycleaning. Brian Johnson, DLI's Director of Education, will show how you can identify and prevent common claim-causing garment problems.

POLICING EMPLOYEE POLICIES

With Kylie Luff, Sunday, April 19, 8:30 - 9:45 a.m., Room B314

Kylie Luff with Seay Management Consultants will explain the value of implementing and enforcing company policies.

For more information on any of these events, call DLI at 800-638-2627.

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The Blind Spot

Written by Peter Blake, NEFA Executive Vice President



EVEN THE BEST BUSINESSES AND THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE CAN HAVE A BLIND SPOT. THE TRICK IS TO EVALUATE YOUR BUSINESS AND CONTINUALLY LOOK AT YOUR BUSINESS WITH FRESH EYES -- AND UNCOVER YOUR BLIND SPOT

Most plant owners arrive early, come in the back door near production and go to the office, or walk the plant floor. We get so entrenched in the day to day operations, and the need for increased quality and production, we are all too frequently blind to what is happening in the front of the store.

When was the last time you came in the front door, and really looked at the front call office? When you get used to seeing the same things day in and day out you begin to take things for granted and look without really seeing. Before you know it paint is starting to look old. The lights bulb needs to be replaced, the store starts to look cluttered. It is a long slow progression, but if you don't really see, you all too often don't realize how things look to the customer.

I feel there are three, basic core tenets to marketing your busi-

ness: a good website, a positive customer service experience, and a clean, bright, receptive call office. Only after you have those three basics can you begin to really structure a marketing program.

Two of those three key elements are often the owners "blind spot". Take a look at your business with a fresh pair of eyes. Walk in the front door, and not only look around, but "See" what your customers see as if they are walking in the door for the first time. Does it match the service you want to give your clientele?

DLI SECRET SHOPPER PROGRAM

DLI has developed a program that can help you. It is a service that will call your store and evaluate the effectiveness of the experience. DLI has also partnered with Marketwise Consulting Groups to offer In-store evaluations.

This is an excellent opportunity to identify and fix weaknesses in your services. Do you really know what service your customers are receiving? Do you know the impressions made on a new customer?

In this day and age we can't afford to lost customers unknowingly. We need to know and experience what the customer sees, and this is just one effective tool open to members. Don't be blind to the reality of your business. Open you eyes and minds and take a fresh look at your business.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION...

Minimum Wage Increases

Information supplied by Seay Management Consultant



AS THE NEW YEAR APPROACHES SEVERAL STATES ARE IMPLEMENTING HOURLY MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES.

Several NEFA states have raised the hourly minimum wage effective

January 1, 2015. Connecticut's new minimum wage is now \$9.15 per hour. Massachusetts has raised its minimum to \$9.05. New Jersey's new minimum is now \$8.38. New York is now \$8.75 -- and it will be raised to \$9.00 on December 31, 2015. Rhode Island is now \$9.00. Vermont has also raised its minimum wage to \$9.00/hour.

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, the current federal minimum hourly wage is \$7.25. If there is a state or local law offering a higher minimum wage, the employer is required to pay the higher

rate. As of January 1, 2015 the hourly minimum wage for federal contract workers will be \$10.10.

In conjunction with the above increases there are requirements to display an updated state minimum wage poster. Posters are important because:

- They are required by state and federal regulations.
- They provide evidence and documentation of your good faith intent to comply with the government's regulations.

If you would like assistance in receiving an update of your state minimum wage poster at no charge, please contact our office at admin@seay.us or call 888-245-2520.

MINIMUM WAGE RULES & REGULATIONS

Seay Management Consultants has compiled a summary of minimum wage requirements for all NEFA states. This information is now posted on www.sefa.org. Please take the time to visit the website and read the wage requirements for your state.



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Fall Fest '15 Planning Underway



FALL FEST '14 WAS ONE OF NEFA'S STRONGEST PROGRAMS EVER, AND THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR THIS FALLS' PROGRAM IS ALREADY UNDERWAY.

NEFA is looking for your input to make this year's event even bigger, better and stronger than ever before. NEFA is currently scouting potential sites on Boston's South Shore, Mystic, CT and Providence, RI. Where would you like to see the event held? If you have any information and or places you would like to suggest -- call Peter Blake at the NEFA Office (603-635-0322).

CONFERENCE TOPICS AND SPEAKERS

Traditionally, NEFA has been able to bring some of the top industry names from around the country to the Northeast for Fall Fest. The Fall Fest Committee is now looking for new speakers

and topics that NEFA members would like to explore. This is a great opportunity for NEFA members to make their voice heard, and to help shape the Fall Fest Convention.

"We are committed to making Fall Fest a terrific conference," commented NEFA Executive Vice President, Peter Blake. "We want to make it as valuable and meaningful as possible. We are constantly looking for new names, new topics, and things that will help our members succeed. Now is the time to contact us and let us know what you would like to see on the program. Now is the time to let us know what speakers you have heard about -- and would want to see added to the program."

Planning Ahead

NEFA will be looking to hold the event during early November and will again feature table top exhibits from some of the best allied companies the industry has to offer.

Keep watch on future issues of Headlines&More as well as www.nefabricare.com for updates. Take advantage of this opportunity to help shape the convention program so you will derive the most benefit. Contact NEFA with your suggestions!



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Industry Continues to See Progress with CT Fund



THE CONNECTICUT DECD RECENTLY HELD ITS SECOND SUMMIT ON THE STATUS OF THE CONNECTICUT REMEDIATION

FUND WITH INDUSTRY MEMBERS.

Peter Blake of NEFA and members of the Hartford County Laundry and Drycleaning Association (HCLDA) recently met with Representatives of the DECD, the Department of Revenue Services (DRS), Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and concerned drycleaners to explore progress and changes with the Drycleaner Remediation Fund.

Early on in the meeting it was clear: progress is finally being made. There have been four different applicants that are very close to receiving funding. That is the first new funding activity since 2009. Receipts volume has increased over 30% to approximately \$200,000 per quarter.

The DECD revealed that there is \$1.7 million currently in the fund, \$600,000 of which is already committed. That allows for the four new awards, and applications are still coming in.

"The train is moving again," offered Tim Sullivan, the State Director who oversees the program, "and we are moving forward. This is a work in progress. We continue to chip away and make progress. We have embraced more transparency, and have appreciated the increased communication with industry leaders. We are not done, but we are doing a better job and are proud of what we have accomplished over the last 10 months."

"This was a great meeting", offered NEFA's Peter Blake. It really is terrific progress, and I look forward to continuing the momentum. The reality, however, is that the program is oversubscribed, and under funded. The key is to get more money into the fund. I anticipate the DRS being VERY aggressive in investigating potential fee evaders."

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

NEFA has also learned that the DRS has begun to investigate potential non-payers of the 1% mandatory surcharge. Everyone that is involved in the sale of retail drycleaning must pay a 1% gross receipts surcharge to the DRS on the dryclean-

ing. This includes all tailors, laundromats, laundries who sell drycleaning, but have the work done elsewhere. NEFA has already become aware of at least three businesses that are facing penalties for non-filing. If you have questions, or if you are concerned about your filing history -- you are urged to contact NEFA.



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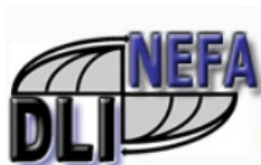
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