

Accurate News

"Accurate News" is a publication of Accurate Labs
Stillwater, OK 74074

Main Office: 505 S. Lowry ■ Stillwater, OK 74074
405-372-5300 ■ FAX: 405-372-5396
Toll Free-Stillwater 1-800-516-LABS
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Oklahoma City: 405-236-5333 ■ Tulsa: 918-307-1115
Enid: 405-237-5353 ■ Wichita: 316-683-1123
Toll Free-Tulsa 1-877-907-LABS
January-March 2001

Accurate Celebrates 10th Anniversary

December saw two open houses held in celebration of Accurate's 10th year in business. One was held December 8th in Stillwater and the other was December 15th in Tulsa. Many of our customers, vendors, and friends dropped by to share some holiday snacks and to tour our facilities. We appreciate all those who took time out of their busy schedules to visit with us.

Accurate has come a long way in its short life span. Just ten years ago Dr. Ali Fazel started a small laboratory with the thought of helping small customers that needed service. The larger labs often ignored these customers, as Dr. Fazel himself found out while trying to deal with them. His aim, both then and now, was to provide great service to every customer. To this day we try to treat every customer as our most important customer.

Right from the start Dr. Fazel's goal was to provide support to those who were concerned with helping the environment. That is why three years ago he began another service called Accurate Training Center. He recognized that water and wastewater plant operators and lab technicians were not getting the training they needed to do their job right. Since starting ATC we have provided training for about a thousand operators. Many of them have returned for continuing education and now make ATC their center for training. Several cities have even decided to make ATC their primary training resource.

Of course, this enterprise would not have been successful had it not been for our loyal customers. We appreciate those customers who have recognized the ex-

tra service and quality we have been trying to provide and have stayed by our side during thick and thin. We hope to continue this relationship for many years and that it remains beneficial to all.

We Have "Crossed Over The Line"

Accurate Training Center has crossed over state lines and received authorization in Kansas and Arkansas to provide the operator and laboratory certification classes to the respective states.

We are looking forward to serving these two great states in addition to Oklahoma in the years to come.

ATC has had the privilege of having some of the Arkansas operators in our classes already for the year 2000, with others already signed up for the year 2001.

We are looking forward to seeing more "from across the border" from Kansas and Arkansas.

Clarke Hodson
Training Administrator

Question-of-the-Month

Can you answer the following question?

Who can receive a 20% discount on their Accurate Training Center Tuition?

The answer can be found in this issue.

Lab Adds Staff

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, we have experienced a strong increase in sales during 2000. The upsurge began in March and has continued unabated right through the end of the year. As a result of this growth, we have added about half a dozen to our staff during the last few months. This should help alleviate some of the slow turn times we suffered through lately. Of course, our customers suffered right along with us, and for this we apologize.

Historically, trying to size staff to meet demands has been one of the toughest activities in the laboratory. We have always attempted to solve the problem by being proactive, i.e. hiring people in advance of need. Of course, this is expensive because it means productivity will be low until the workload increases. However, it is the only way we know how to be ready all the time. Unfortunately, our forecast was pessimistic. Our actual growth during 2000 has been significantly higher than we predicted. This left us struggling to hire and train people during one of the tightest labor markets we have ever seen.

We hope that those people we have added to our staff will be up to speed and helping us increase productivity by the time you read this. Although we have given up trying to look in the "crystal ball" we are none the less trying once again to be proactive. We will try very hard to keep up with demand while keeping our turn times down during 2001.

George Drye
Laboratory Manager

What's a HEM?

There has been some confusion over the use of the terms HEM and SGT-HEM versus Oil and Grease/TPH/Animal Fat. Let me try to explain these terms and how we will be using them from now on.

First, the HEM means hexane extractable material. It is what method 1664 uses in place of the term "O&G." The previous oil and grease method used Freon as the extractant, and it should have been called Freon extractable materials. Even though there may be some technical differences between O&G and HEM, we can now think of them as the same.

SGT-HEM means silica gel treated HEM. This simply means we take the extracted sample (now in hexane) and pass it through silica gel. What passes through is called SGT-HEM. It is also referred to as Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons. So you can think of SGT-HEM

as TPH. The other fraction we can report is called Animal Fat. It is just the difference between the HEM value and the SGT-HEM value.

Most of our customers still refer to the tests as O&G, TPH, and Animal Fat. However, the proper names for the test are really HEM and SGT-HEM. We will attempt to standardize the use of these terms over the next few months and try to also get our customers to use the terms consistently. This may take quite some time. Until we all get on the same page with these new test names we will have to try a little harder to communicate!

Ken Crawford
QA/QC Coordinator

Are All BTEX Created Equal?

One of the tests we get a lot of requests for is BTEX and TPH. This test looks for petroleum hydrocarbons and particularly for the BTEX compounds that are a fingerprint for gasoline. There are multiple methods for these tests and this causes a lot of confusion. See if the following take some of the confusion factor away.

Methods 8015/8100/8021 are the ones most commonly requested for GRO/DRO/BTEX at UST sites, spills, and situations where remediation is being considered. There are times when these same materials need to be tested in an NPDES or wastewater scenario. This might happen when the effluent from a stripper is being sent to the local sewer. Here the methods 602/603 might be requested. 602 is BTEX and 603 is TPH. Essentially there is very little difference in the laboratory between these methods. However, the distinction can be very important to make sure regulatory compliance is met.

There is one more method that is commonly requested in relation to these pollutants. Method 8260 is a volatile organic method, using GC/MS, that can be used to identify and quantify the BTEX compounds with a higher degree of confidence than the usual methods. It is often requested when the matrix being tested is groundwater and contamination is suspected. Also, it can be used as confirmation when the sample has a lot of interference and there is difficulty analyzing it by GC. Although it is theoretically possible to do GRO and DRO TPH by GC/MS, most labs do not have their instruments calibrated in such a way as to do this. TPH is more commonly done only by the previously mentioned GC methods.

David Kidd
Organics Manager

Tulsa Lab Growing

Has it really been two years since Accurate opened in Tulsa? Time has flown by since November of 1998. The city of Tulsa and the surrounding area of northeastern Oklahoma have been very good to us. We grew from two employees to five and added to our analytical capabilities as well as our route pickup services. Our sales have gone up at a dizzying rate, at times growing even faster than we thought possible.

It has been our good fortune to add several wonderful people to our staff. Joining Mike Butler and Tom Van Hensbergen are Vernon Seaman, Paul Rutherford, and Sandi Lindsey. These folks have added tremendous experience to our effort in Tulsa. In fact, our staff has a combined experience of about fifty years! I have received many compliments from our customers in the area about how much they like working with our staff there. I am very proud of what we have accomplished in our short time in Tulsa and I hope this is just a sample of what is to come.

In fact, it is our intention to continue to grow and develop our services in Tulsa. We have no doubt that over the next few years we will add more analytical capabilities and staff there. It is also our hope to serve not only the northeastern Oklahoma area, but parts of Arkansas, Kansas and Missouri as well. Right now, our only limiting factor is space available in our Tulsa facility. We are in the process of seeking a remedy to this and hopefully, within a few months, we will have a plan which will allow us to continue the growth we have experienced during the last few years.

George Drye
Laboratory Manager

Accurate Training Center has their Year 2001 Class Schedule Calendar Available

If you have not received your Accurate Training Center Class Schedule Calendar yet, call Clarke Hodson and ask him to send you one. It is quite easy to do. Just call 1 - 800 - 516 - LABS (5227).

The calendars are "FREE" and they sure come in handy when you are looking for that special class you need to take so you can pass the ODEQ Certification Exams.

Clarke Hodson
Training Administrator

Accurate Training Center Provides 20% Discount

Accurate Training Center is providing a special 20% discount offer to those operators who have had their Operator and / or Laboratory licenses for a number of years and would like to refresh their knowledge on their current licenses.

The operator will receive a 20% discount on any of Accurate Training Center's 3 - Day Operator Classes or 4 and 5 - Day Laboratory Classes in which he currently holds a valid license or on a class below the current license.

The operator must be enrolled for the full duration of the class to receive the discount. For further information, call Clarke Hodson at 1 - 800 - 516 - LABS (5227).

Is Your Cyanide Available?

We have tried to keep you informed over the last few issues about the new method for cyanide, Method 1677. This method does not replace Total Cyanide. However, in many cases it may be a more appropriate method. It is more closely related to CATC (cyanide amenable to chlorination) or WAD (weak acid dissociable cyanide) than Total Cyanide.

We purchased the instrument early this summer, but due to an extremely busy season we did not get it up and running until recently. By the time you read this we hope to have MDL studies, correlation studies, and such done, and we should be ready to run samples for customers. The price for this new test will be \$80.00 per sample versus \$50.00 per sample for TCN. Of course, for those customers with many samples, we may be able to offer a reduced price.

This test should be useful for those industries that have a history of positive cyanide in their wastewater even though there does not appear to be a source for cyanide in their process. It also should help those municipal treatment plants that occasionally see cyanide in their effluent even though there is none in their influent. Method 1677 does not appear to suffer from as many interferences as the previous methods. A positive result using 1677 should indicate that there are actually cyanide species in a sample.

If you think this method might be useful please do not hesitate to give us a call. We are anxious to start putting this new tool to work for you.

Ricky McIntyre
General Chemistry Manager



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505 S. Lowry St.
Stillwater, OK 75074

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Accurate Training Center Another Successful Year

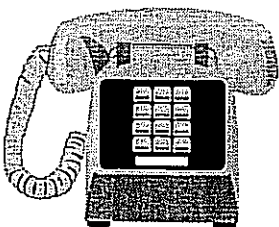
Accurate Training Center had a very successful year in 2000. We want to thank all the Municipalities, Rural Water Systems, Industries, Businesses, Indian Tribes, and Individuals who participated in our training classes. With out their support we could not provide the quality training though out the year.

We are looking forward to providing another full year of classes to the operators and personnel in the state of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Arkansas.

Thank you for using Accurate Training Center for all of your training needs.

Clarke Hodson
Training Administrator

Accurate Labs will pick up your samples along seven statewide routes. Please call.



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