

# Accurate News

"Accurate News" is a publication of Accurate Labs  
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July-September 2001

## Another Unfunded Mandate

We are all familiar by now with situations where the government tells us we have to do something but doesn't offer to provide any monetary assistance. Most of those instances affect us all in a sort of general way that is hard for us to put our finger on. Since the cost is spread around we don't really feel it. Well, if you are a customer of a certified environmental laboratory, there is a new unfunded mandate that you will probably notice in the near future.

The EPA never actually certified labs directly. They let the states have authority over labs. Although there may have been some similarity between different state's certification programs, each state was really free to develop its own program. As a result of this, it became very chaotic for labs to maintain certification in multiple states. In response to this, the EPA and other agencies formed a group called the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference, or NELAC.

Over a period of several years this group developed guidelines for laboratory accreditation. The idea was that if a laboratory could pass an audit using these guidelines, they would be able to achieve certification in any state that was a member of the NELAC program. While the goal of this group was quite admirable, several things did not work quite as they had planned. First, the acceptance was not as widespread as had been hoped. Many states have not joined the program yet. Second, there was never a good agreement on exactly how to apply the guidelines to labs of different sizes. Right now, the approach seems to be to disregard the size of the lab and apply the same "rules" to every lab.

Many of the guidelines developed during this process, while high-minded, have proven rather onerous for most labs. Since there is only one set of guidelines, smaller labs are being forced to comply with documentation and validation requirements that previously had only been applied to much larger labs. While the result of this may be positive in the sense that quality will be raised in all labs, there will, no doubt, be an eventual cost to the customer. Our estimate is that these guidelines will result in at least a 30-40% increase in the actual time and manpower required in our laboratory. Other labs may be impacted even more harshly, especially the smaller labs. At some point, these costs will have to be passed on to the customer. Most environmental labs are existing on single digit profit margins as it is. There is no way these labs can "absorb" this kind of cost increase and remain solvent.

The ODEQ, which is Accurate's main certifying body, has chosen not to become a true NELAC state for at least several more years. However, they have also chosen to use the NELAC guidelines in auditing the environmental labs in Oklahoma. This becomes, then, an unfunded mandate. While they cannot force you, the customer, to pay for their requirement; that will be the long-term result. Another, perhaps unintended result of this, is that many labs may be forced out of business if they are unwilling or unable to comply. This also will have the effect of causing prices to go up due to lessened competition.

George Drye  
Lab Manager



## Hey ALS... I Need....

Are you tired of looking through catalogs for your chemicals and lab supplies? Try calling Accurate Laboratory Supply (ALS).

ALS can obtain almost everything you could ever want for your laboratory – many times up to a 5% – 10% discount and / or FREE shipping and handling.

In many cases, ALS can order your supply needs, deliver them, set them up and show you how to use them. If anything ever goes wrong with the order, ALS is there to make it right.

Many of ALS clients have realized how easy and convenient it is by placing their order with ALS and have ALS deliver the order on route. Quite a number of ALS clients have been doing business with Accurate Labs & Training Center already. So, this is a one stop shopping for many of you.

ALS is *The Full Service Laboratory Supply Company*. Find out what ALS can do for you. Call Ron at 1-800-516-LABS (5227).

Ron Fazel  
ALS Manager

## New Technology to Help Metals Lab

Our metals department is the proud owner of a new mercury analyzer. It is a state of the art instrument made by Cetac, and is capable of parts per trillion analysis. It still uses cold vapor technology, but employs a gas liquid separator and a longer cell to enable analysis of samples to as low as about 10 parts per trillion. The instrument also is capable of higher throughput, which allows for higher repetition of analysis, and thus more confidence in the data. It should also speed analysis for faster turn times.

We also received approval directly from EPA region VI to use a new digestion technology which will speed sample prep for this method. We will use the Hot Block digestion system from Environmental Express. A faster prep combined with faster analysis will allow us to run this test more frequently, thus reducing turn times. This is our constant goal, in the metals department, as well as the rest of the lab...to increase service to our customers using the best technology and the best people.

Jason Hardaway  
Metals Section Manager

## Pretreatment Classes

Accurate Training Center is sponsoring a Pretreatment Class on July 24 – 26, 2001. The class is an excellent class for anyone working for a city or industry in the Pretreatment capacity or would like to learn more about Pretreatment. The tuition is \$95 per day. Lunch is included in each full day of tuition.

We will have three guest speakers representing the cities, industries, and the state. The class will cover perspectives of Pretreatment from each of the city, industry, and state. It will also cover rules and regulations, inspections, sampling and preservation, testing, chemical identification, and chain of custody.

Please call Clarke Hodson at 1-800-516-LABS (5227) by July 1, 2001.

## DMR-QA on the Way

As many of you are aware DMR-QA Study 21 is planned to happen throughout July and August. As the information you have received states, you need to contact your commercial lab and inform them what your analytical data needs are. From your contacts, I am revising my DMR Client database, assuring the correct individuals will receive our NSI DMR Report. Here is the timetable of DMR events;

- > Accurate Labs will receive DMRQA 21 Study in the 1<sup>st</sup> week of July
- > Accurate will run the evaluation samples and fill out the DMRQA 21 result sheet
- > The result sheet will be faxed to you (our client) who has contacted me stating your need for this analytical data. This will be done around the 1<sup>st</sup> week of August.
- > You (our client) will transfer the laboratory and analytical information that you need, fill out the DMRQA 21 forms that were sent to you.
- > You will mail this information to our vendor NSI, 7517 Precision Drive, Suite 101, Raleigh, NC., 27617, Phone (800) 234-7837
- > NSI will grade our analytical results and pass all of your documents to the federal regulators
- > NSI will also send you a copy of the results so you can pass them onto the State DMR Coordinators

If you have any questions please contact me and I will be happy to assist you.

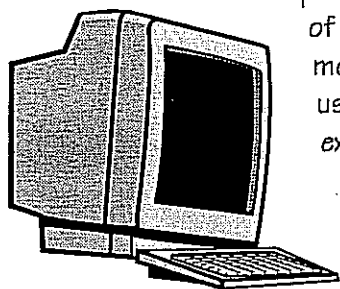
Ken Crawford  
QA/QC Coordinator

## LIMS Almost Ready!

As you may recall from past articles, Accurate purchased a Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) last fall. We have been in the process of modifying and customizing it since then. By the time you read this article, we should be implementing this software in our Stillwater facility and in Tulsa shortly thereafter.

Any one who has ever installed new software on their computer can appreciate the number of things you have to learn and the "bugs" that often accompany a new program.

This is especially true of LIMS software. Although most LIMS programs can be used "out of the box," to some extent, they are really only effective after they have been modified to fit each individual laboratory. After each modification the program has to be put through



a trial run to make sure the change works as intended (and doesn't have negative and unintended consequences elsewhere in the system). This is what we have been doing since we purchased the LIMS.

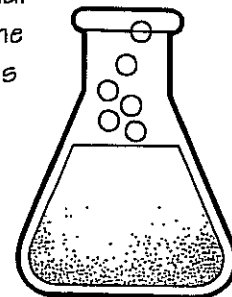
What will the LIMS do for us, and for our customers? The LIMS has the potential to speed all aspects of data management from sample login to report generation, to invoicing. The software also allows the laboratory to track samples better, assign tests to the correct analyst, recall old data quickly, chart QC results, and many other activities that are difficult if not impossible with a manual system. It also allows many different people in the laboratory, within the bounds of administrative security, to have access to various amounts of data, customer information, methods and procedures, and many other kinds of information.

We know that we will have a few snags along the way. What software have you ever used that didn't? However, we don't expect any major problems and we know we will continue development of this program for months to come. In fact, most LIMS tend to be works in progress. The more people see what a LIMS can do, the more they see new potential applications and the more they demand of it.

George Drye  
Laboratory Manager

## Arsenic Rule in Limbo?

The USEPA announced a nine month delay for the new arsenic (in drinking water) standard. The new effective date is February 22, 2002. A panel of experts under the National Academy of Sciences is to review the EPA's interpretation of the previous arsenic report, as well as any new research data. They will also work with the National Drinking Water Advisory Council to prepare a new proposal for comment on a range of arsenic standard options from 3 to 20 ppb.



## Lab Needs Your Information

Accurate has been approached by Robert Mullins of the ODEQ Enforcement Division of Water Quality with the following information. All Drinking Water Samples must have a valid location code number as well as the mandatory information, which is usually supplied by you. If the sample has no location code number (not location description) we must reject the sample. Accurate must have the following information for all Drinking Water analysis such as Nitrate, Lead, Copper, Total Coliform and Fecal Coliform water samples; Client Name, Date and Time of Sampling, Location code, PWS #, Location Description, Analysis desired, & Residual Chlorine. Analysis such as Fluoride needs the above information and a plant Fluoride value. I was told that all Drinking Water Systems received correspondence about location codes in the past 5 or 6 months addressing the mandatory use of your systems location codes.

Accurate must comply with the needs of the ODEQ and will start rejecting Drinking Water Samples if the Chain of Custody is missing information. If you have any questions that deal with the Chain of Custody's or analytical aspects of your Drinking Water Samples please call me. If you have questions dealing with location codes or the ODEQ Drinking Water Program call your local ODEQ field representative or Robert Mullins at (405) 702-8100.



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## John Russell to the Rescue!

In order to better serve our customers who call in needing assistance we have added John Russell to our customer service department. John has been Accurate's field services supervisor for 7 years now and many of you are probably familiar with him. He will retain his current position while adding many new duties. Please feel free to ask for John if you need help in obtaining sample status, a new report copy, a change in analysis or reporting, bids and quotations, or any other general customer service issue. John can, of course, be reached at 1-800-516-5227 or by email at [John@accuratelabs.com](mailto:John@accuratelabs.com). He is available to assist customers of both our Tulsa and Stillwater laboratories.

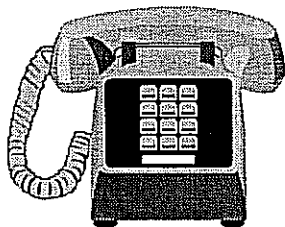
## Accurate Web Pages

Good things come in packages of three. Accurate is now a package of three - Accurate Labs, Accurate Training Center (ATC) and the newest one - Accurate Laboratory Supplies (ALS).

Be sure to check out Accurate Labs & Training Center's Web Page at [www accuratelabs.com](http://www accuratelabs.com).

ALS Web Page can be viewed at [www accuratesupplies.com](http://www accuratesupplies.com).

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



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