RSGDA

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REPAIR SHOP & GASOLINE DEALERS ASSOCIATION
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Executive Order Issued on Right to Repair

President Biden recently issued an executive order addressing right to repair concerns and repair barriers. Biden signed the order as part of a plan to boost competition across numerous sectors, from healthcare to the auto industry, online platforms, and consumer devices. The order also aims for better regulatory support for independent automotive repair shops.

Right to repair remains a top priority for SSDA-AT. The association has been working with other industry groups and the FTC on this initiative.

SSDA-AT thanks the administration for recognizing the importance of right to repair to ensure consumers have access to the repair shop of their choice.

The order is aimed at promoting competition in the United States and is sure to give a boost to the right to repair movement.

News of the recent executive order are encouraging, and SSDA-AT is enthusiastic about the attention this is bringing to the issue. For years, SSDA-AT has pressed Congress for federal action with some interest but little movement.

SSDA-AT urges the Administration and the FTC to take strong actions to reduce anti-competitive barriers to repair for our industry so that we can continue to service our customer's vehicles.

SSDA-AT members continue to be challenged in providing repair maintenance without the proper information. Many of these issues facing the vehicle aftermarket were outlined in the recent FTC report entitled "Nixing the Fix, a Report to Congress." On June 30, SSDA-AT, Auto Care Association, along with five other automotive aftermarket trade groups, sent a letter to the FTC calling for the Commission to take action to address concerns outlined in their report.

SSDA-AT will work with the FTC on the executive order, and we will continue to explore options for federal legislation that would support the motor vehicle owner's right to repair. Right to repair remains a top priority for SSDA-AT members and a national law would provide for much needed clarity and direction in vehicle repair.

Last week, SSDA-AT had a meeting with the FTC to discuss next steps and possible actions to come.

New Mexico Becomes Second State to Make Gas Stations Liable for DUI

The New Mexico Supreme Court has found that gas stations have a duty not tosell fuel to drunk motorists.

In its ruling Monday, the New Mexico Supreme Court said that its decision makes New Mexico the second state, behind Tennessee, to hold gas stations liable for the drunk driving accidents of their customers.

Under New Mexico law, it was already illegal to sell alcohol to an inebriated person or to supply a drunk with a vehicle to drive, the court pointed out.

"A duty not to sell gasoline to an intoxicated person is consistent with liability for providing an intoxicated person with alcohol or a vehicle. Gasoline, alcohol, and the vehicle itself are all enabling instrumentalities involved in intoxicated driving," the New Mexico Supreme Court wrote in its opinion. "Gasoline is required to operate most vehicles today. Providing gasoline to an intoxicated driver is like providing car keys to an intoxicated driver. Accordingly, liability under negligent entrustment for the sale of gasoline to an intoxicated driver is consistent with New Mexico law."

The opinion in the 2011 wrongful death case -- Morris vs. Giant Four CornersInc. -- involves the legal doctrine of "negligent entrustment," in which owners of potentially dangerous goods should allow access to those goods only to competent people able to use them safely.

According to a legal account, Andy Denny drove his car until it ran out of gas near Tohatchi, New Mexico. He and his passenger walked to the defendant's gas station to buy gas and arrived intoxicated. Finding no empty gas cans for sale, he decided to buy a gallon of water, empty it and use it for gasoline.

"Initially, because they were intoxicated, the clerk working at the gas station would not sell anything to Denny or his passenger, but the clerk ultimately sold the gallon of water and a gallon of gasoline to Denny," the court record said.

The pair walked back to Denny's vehicle, drove back to the gas station, and bought 9 more gal of fuel. After dropping off his passenger, Denny returned to the highway, where he crossed the centerline and collided with another vehicle, killing the driver, according to the court record. Denny was arrested on charges of driving while under the influence, vehicular homicide and driving left of center.

Two other states -- California and Tennessee -- have considered applying "negligent entrustment of chattel" to selling gasoline to a drunk driver, the New Mexico Supreme Court said.

In 1988, a California appeals court ruled that a gas station could be liable for injuries caused by an intoxicated driver to whom the gas station had sold gasoline, "but its persuasive value is limited by the fact that the California Supreme Court ordered that it not be officially published, and it is therefore not the law of California."

However, in a 2005 published opinion, the Tennessee Supreme Court "squarely addressed" whether a gas station has a duty to refrain from selling fuel to a drunk driver or to help the driver pump gasoline. The court found that "selling gasoline to an intoxicated driver provides mobility to a drunk driver which he otherwise would not have had, thus creating a risk to persons on the roadways" and it "drew a parallel between selling gasoline to an intoxicated driver and selling alcohol to an intoxicated driver, which was prohibited by state law and store policy," the New Mexico opinion said.

--Reporting by Donna Harris

Federal Appeals Court Strikes Down Year-Round E15 Sales

Two years after the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) gave the greenlight to year-round E15 sales, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia reversed the move.

On July 2, the federal appeals court said the EPA overstepped its authority in 2019 when it removed the last remaining barriers to selling the 15-percent ethanol blend in the summer months.

Provisions of the Clean Air Act have prohibited the sale of certain fuels with a higher volatility from June 1 through Sept. 15 to limit smog, according to The Associated Press. Congress has allowed 10-percent ethanol, and the EPA in its 2019 ruling revised the interpretation of the exemption to federal law to include E15.

The court's decision said it's clear from federal law that Congress balanced "wide-ranging economic, energy-security, and geopolitical implications" and that the wording of the law "reflects a compromise, not simply a desire to maximize ethanol production at all costs." They concluded Congress did not intend to allow ethanol blends higher than 10 percent to be widely sold year-round, the news outlet reported.

Industry Reaction

However, the appeals court ruling — which came in response to a challenge by oil refineries — drew criticism from alternative fuel industry groups.

"We disagree with the court's decision to reject EPA's move to expand the RVP [Reid Vapor Pressure] waiver to include E15, a decision that could deprive American drivers of lower carbon options at the pump and would result in more carbon in the atmosphere," said Growth Energy, the Renewable Fuels Association, and the National Corn Growers Association in a joint statement.

"We are working to ensure the continuity of E15 sales through the 2021 summer season and beyond. This decision could impact summertime sales across all non-RFG areas where nearly two-thirds of retail sites offering E15 currently do business. If E15 in those markets were to end, summertime E15 sales would fall by 90 percent," the associations said

The groups added they are pursuing all available options and will work with the administration and Congress "to ensure that we have a solution in place before the 2022 driving season."

The Iowa Renewable Fuels Association (IRFA) also expressed its disappointment.

"We are very disappointed by today's decision to strike down EPA's rule that makes it easier to sell E15 year-round in all markets. It is still our view that the law allowing an

RVP waiver for blends containing 10-percent ethanol can and should be applied to E15, which does contain 10-percent ethanol, and a little more," said IRFA Executive Director Monte Shaw.

"There is no scientific or environmentally sound reason to erect arbitrary barriers to the sale of E15 in the summer months, which has lower combined evaporative and tailpipe emission than either E0 or E10. Today's decision really turned this section of the Clean Air Act on its head," Shaw added.

IRFA will also pursue "every legal, regulatory and legislative option" to reverse the decision.

"We are confident that as this issue continues to work its way through the legal and regulatory process, E15 sales during this summer's driving season will not be impacted. The key will be to find a solution by June of 2022 to ensure the rug is not pulled out from under fuel retailers across the country who have added E15 to their stations, banking on the certainty EPA provided to offer the fuel all year," Shaw added. "Ethanol producers will not abandon these retailers as we continue to find a path for E15 to be sold all year long."

American Coalition for Ethanol Senior Vice President Ron Lamberty said the oil industry's opposition to year-round E15 sales was an effort to maintain its 90-percent gasoline mandate.

"We continue to believe EPA's interpretation of the Clean Air Act holding E15 to the same gasoline volatility standards as E10 is consistent with congressional intent while reflecting the improvements in future motor fuels Congress anticipated," Lamberty said.

"EPA's ruling in 2019 cut the RVP red tape allowing more retailers to add the blend to their fuel slate and offer their customers a low carbon fuel with higher octane at a lower cost, and we'll continue to work with our industry partners, as well as administrative and legislative officials, to make sure this ruling doesn't set back the important growth of lower carbon options at the pump to help the Biden Administration decarbonize the transportation sector," he added.

EIA Does Not See US Gasoline Demand Exceeding 2019 Levels in 2021 or 2022

In the Short-Term Energy Outlook (STEO) released earlier today, the U.S. Energy Information Administration acknowledged strength in U.S. gasoline demand recovery but does not expect 2021 consumption levels to surpass 2019.

During the first half of the year, EIA said gasoline consumption averaged 8.5 million b/d, which represented the lowest first half of a year since 2001.

According to the STEO, first-quarter gasoline demand averaged just over 8 million b/d and 9 million b/d in the second quarter.

Meanwhile, according to OPIS demand data based on same-store sales at some 25,000 retail outlets throughout the country, first-quarter demand was 7.1 million b/d and on the second quarter jumped to 7.935 million b/d.

Impacts from COVID-19 are likely to be minimized, according to EIA, helping gasoline demand increase to 8.9 million b/d in the second half of the year.Overall, EIA sees gasoline consumption averaging 8.7 million b/d this year and growing to 9 million b/d in 2022. Either way, neither this year nor next year is expected to eclipse the 2019 9.3-million-b/d level.

Retail gasoline prices have been on the rise in 2021, and the government expects an annual average of $2.85/gal for gasoline in the U.S. This month, EIA expects retail gasoline prices to average $3.11/gal as increased refinery output and lower oil prices should start to erode prices. By December, EIA expects a retail gasoline price average of $2.76/gal.

On the other hand, distillate demand did not take as hard a hit in 2020 as gasoline and jet fuel did, EIA said. The government estimates distillate demand in June 2021 to be 70,000 b/d stronger than 2019. While the first half of 2021 did see consumption fall 200,00 b/d shy of the 2019 first-half average of 4.2 million b/d, EIA expects distillate demand to average 4.2 million b/d in the fourth quarter of 2021, which would exceed 2019 levels. A forecast 2022 consumption average of 4.3 million b/d for distillates would represent an all-time annual high.

EIA expects retail diesel prices to average $3.16/gal this year and $3.09/gal next year. "We expect that global economic activity returning to pre-pandemic levels will help drive diesel refinery margins higher during the forecast period than their multi-year lows in 2020," the STEO said.

--Reporting by Denton Cinquegrana,

Petroleum Futures Plunge: Rally or Else Time in Frenetic Monday Session

Petroleum futures are getting pummeled in Monday trading, and most observers believe the losses are tied to fears about the spreading coronavirus delta variant as well as collateral damage from stock indices that are also in freefall. The OPEC+ decision is getting some blame from casual observers, but the compromise was within expectations and is not the major driver for today's losses.

Incredibly, petroleum futures are now either threatening or dropping below numbers that are regarded as "rally or else" levels among technical experts. The "or else" is essentially a viewpoint that multiyear highs are long gone for 2021.

Examples:

--On West Texas Intermediate, trades as low as $67.40/bbl have been transacted in August, a far cry from the $76.07/bbl high number done earlier this summer. Top technical analyst Walter Zimmerman cites $68.55/bbl as a "must hold" level and sees another support level of around $65.35/bbl. Brent has already seen trades in September as low as $67.40/bbl, and the bullish case for Brent falls apart if $63.25/bbl is porous. Previous support between $69.65/bbl to $71/bbl has given way in a cascade of technical selling.

--RBOB traded for as little as $2.1320/gal in August, putting it more than a penny below key support at $2.1435/gal. This product can be impacted by tropical weather in July and

August, but the Atlantic Basin is eerily quiet at the moment and imports are still outpacing exports, sources say.

--Diesel represents the last member of the key contracts under technical assault. Prices scraped as low as $2.0056/gal earlier this morning, about 20cts/gal beneath numbers seen two weeks ago. The most significant support level was $2.0485/gal, and moving back above that price would take a considerable comeback Monday.

As 11 a.m. EDT approached, markets were under assault and approaching new lows. WTI was barely above the $67.15/bbl intraday low at $67.19/bbl, reflecting a $4.62/bbl drop. Brent for September slipped to $69.50/bbl, a $4.09/bbl loss on the day. RBOB was showing 12cts/gal losses at $2.1375/gal and ULSD was down 10.54cts/gal to $2.0079/gal.

Refiners were among the biggest losers in share prices on the New York Stock Exchange, with overall losses in the Dow Jones Industrial Average of more than 800 points.

--Reporting by Tom Kloza

NACS Today Said That Procuring Products Was A "Major Challenge"

The National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) today said that procuring products was a "major challenge" for c-stores in the second quarter, with the implication that the troubles could continue into the second half of the year.

Separately but related, OPIS has confirmed that the summer scramble for drivers to deliver the 50,000 or so transport trucks handling fuel is "not getting any easier" according to chain marketers.

The NACS survey found that 39% of convenience retailers cited "significant" levels of disruption across the supply chain in the second quarter. About 86% of respondents mentioned the disruption of at least 10% of their orders. Beverages represented the biggest challenge with 72% of retailers citing supply disruptions of packaged beverages and 67% seeing challenges with beer. About 79% of retailers saw delays with store equipment and hardware with 41% postponing equipment orders or new store construction and remodel problems because of the supply chain delays.

OPIS conversations with chain retailers indicate that the disruptions are consistently rearing up with fuel.

"It (the driver shortage) hasn't gone away. It's a daily grind," one large southern chain executive noted.

There are hot spots. The Pacific Northwest and Northern California were mentioned in previous OPIS coverage of transport truck difficulties, but new issues have popped up in Texas. Tank truck carriers just can't find enough drivers to handle deliveries of gasoline and diesel.

The NACS' survey addressed the question as to whether retailers believe supplies of all c-store needs will be smoother in the second half of 2021. The survey showed little confidence, with just 25% of retailers and 27% of suppliers confident that improvements come from July through December.

One silver lining in the disruptions: NACS' respondents mention a better level of collaboration between retailers and their suppliers, with about two thirds of supplier firms citing an improvement in supplier/customer relationships.

More detail on the NACS' survey can be found at: www.convenience.org/Research.

--Reporting by Tom Kloza,

Attacks on ATMS Rise in US

A rash of criminal gang attacks on store and bank ATMs that started in Texas last year has spread to other states, according to state and federal authorities.

The Texas Bankers Association's ATM Crime Task Force tallied at least 139 incidents over 12 months. "It is clear that this is a sample and does not constitute the full breadth of incidents," the task force said in a report.

According to police and media reports, similar smash-and-grab attacks on gas station ATMs have occurred this year in Connecticut, Ohio, Oklahoma and Virginia, in which a thief typically breaks into a store, attaches a chain to the ATM and uses a stolen vehicle to tow it off.

"Organized crime is the predominant source of ATM criminal activity in Texas, and approximately 95% of these groups are based in the Houston area," the Texastask force reported. "They have expanded their activities not only within Texas but into neighboring states."

Houston-based FBI officials said they made more than 50 arrests and are actively tracking about 150 suspects connected to crime rings. And Texas law enforcement agencies estimate Texas banks experienced close to $13 million incash losses due to recent ATM theft. Including the cost of damaged equipment, that figure skyrockets to $24 million.

An FBI report said that the number of U.S. ATM burglaries per year skyrocketed during the pandemic to 610 in 2020 from 381 in 2019. About a third of these burglaries last year were in Texas and half of the Texas incidents were in Harris County, the figures show.

The FBI report said ATM burglary represents a "low risk and high reward" for criminals, and it is "not a crime of violence and does not require a weapon." Typically, members of the theft ring research the target, noting the type of ATM, its location, local police presence and crime statistics, the bureau said.They steal vehicles - older-model Ford, Chevy or GMC trucks the night they steal the ATM. Once they've obtained the ATM, they switch vehicles and leave the stolen vehicle near the scene of the crime.

The hook-and-chain method of ATM theft is the most common. The theft occurs within two to 10 minutes from the time the suspects enter the property to the time they leave, the FBI said.

--Reporting by Donna Harris

Tabled For Next Year

The New York State Legislature's six-month-long 2021 session ended June 10, with several major threats to the convenience store trade being tabled until next year.

Flavored Tobacco Ban: The New York bill never got out of committee in either House even as this issue swirled in a number of other states.

New Tax on Carbon Emissions: This far-reaching climate bill would have hiked pump prices an estimated 55 cents per gallon, claimed the Business Council of New York State.

Packaging Material Recycling Burden: The Extended Producer Responsibility Act would have shifted recycling costs and logistics from municipalities to producers, as well as to retailers selling private-label products. One study estimated it would add $36 to $57 a month in grocery costs for the average New York family of four.

Further Upstate Minimum Wage Hikes: A bill proposed additional increases for each of the next three years, topping out at $15 an hour. The current upstate minimum is $12.50.

"Zone Pricing" Expansion: This bill would have added retailers to the motor fuel distributors already covered by the existing zone pricing law, requiring multi-site operators to charge the same price at all locations supplied from the same terminal.

Employee Lien: An employee claiming underpayment of wages would have been able to place a lien on their employer's property pending adjudication of the claim if this bill had become law.

Plastic Straw Rationing: This bill would have permitted foodservice establishments to provide single-use plastic straws only "when explicitly requested by the customer." NYACS opposes this unless the "request" is redefined to include customers taking a straw from a dispenser at a self-serve beverage fountain.

New York City Launches Program to Place EV Chargers on the Streets

New York City officials are touting a new effort to install 100 electric vehicle chargers on the streets of the 8.3 million-resident metropolis by October.

The instillation of the Level 2 chargers is part of a pilot program aimed increasing the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in the city, which has set a goal of being carbon neutral by 2050.

Currently, there are nearly 15,000 EVs registered in the city, with about 50% of EV owners parking their vehicles on the street, city officials said in an announcement about the program. About a third of those vehicles were purchased in the last year.

About 1,400 Level 2 charging plugs can already be found in the city and about 117 fast-charging plugs. Vehicles using Level 2 chargers can obtain an 80% charge in four to eight hours, while fast-charging stations provide an 80% charge in 30 to 60 minutes. Most of the existing charging stations are found in parking garages in the borough of Manhattan.

The pilot project is a collaboration between the city Department of Transportation (DOT), the Consolidated Edison electric utility and the FLO charging network. When kicking off the four-year program, city officials also announced new rules limiting parking at the charging sites to electric vehicles -- a critical step in a city where parking is always at a premium.

DOT Commissioner Hank Gutman said transportation is responsible for about 30% of greenhouse gas emissions in the city, with passenger cars responsible for most of that total.

"Now is the time to develop a robust, convenient and publicly-accessible charging network so that more New Yorkers can go electric," he said in the announcement.

The new chargers will be spread among they city's five boroughs, with locations selected based on "input from local elected officials and community stakeholders, geographic diversity, and projected demand for charging," according to the announcement. DOT and Con Edison will evaluate the performance of the charging stations during the pilot period.

Charging will cost $2.50 per hour from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and $1/hour overnight. City officials said the cost of a daytime charge will be about equal to fueling up at a gas station, with overnight charging about 60% less.

In addition to promoting electric vehicles, climate efforts by New York City include divesting its pension funds from fossil fuels, suing fossil fuel companies believed to be most responsible for climate change and committing to end the expansion of fossil fuel-related infrastructure in the city.

--Reporting by Steve Cronin

North Carolina & Juul Reach $40M Settlement Over Youth Marketing Claims

North Carolina became the first state to reach a settlement with Juul over concerns that its product attracts underage users.

Under a consent order reached with State Attorney General Josh Stein, Juul will pay $40 million and make changes to the way it conducts business. The $40 million, which Juul will pay to the state over the next six years, will fund programs to help people quit e-cigarettes, prevent e-cigarette addiction, and research e-cigarettes.

"For years, Juul targeted young people, including teens, with its highly addictive e-cigarette. It lit the spark and fanned the flames of a vaping epidemic among our children — one that you can see in any high school in North Carolina," Stein said in a statement.

The state will continue to fight the teen vaping epidemic and its efforts to prevent underage nicotine use, he added.

"This settlement is consistent with our ongoing effort to reset our company and its relationship with our stakeholders, as we continue to combat underage usage and advance the opportunity for harm reduction for adult smokers. Importantly, we look forward to working with Attorney

General Stein and other manufacturers on the development of potential industrywide marketing practices based on science and evidence," Juul said in a statement.

"In addition, we support the Attorney General's desire to deploy funds to generate appropriate science to support North Carolina's public health interventions to reduce underage use," the company added.

North Carolina sued Juul in 2019 for designing, marketing and selling its electronic cigarettes to attract young people and for misrepresenting the potency and danger of nicotine in its products.

As part of the consent order, Juul agreed to make several commitments about its business practices enforceable in North Carolina court. They include:

- No marketing that appeals to people under the age of 21;
- Not using most social media advertising, influencer advertising, outdoor advertising near schools, and sponsoring sporting events and concerts;
- No claims that compare the health effects of using Juul with the health effects of using combustible cigarettes in its marketing materials;
- No online sales to anyone not age verified by an independent verification system and making sure third-party sales partners do the same;
- No retail sales to anyone not age verified using a barcode scanner;
- Ensure its products are sold behind counters so shoppers cannot access them without a store employee's assistance;
- Maintain a retailer compliance secret shopper program in North Carolina to ensure these measures are followed and hold accountable retailers that fail; and
- No new flavors or nicotine content levels without authorization from the Food and Drug Administration.

"We seek to continue to earn trust through action. Over the past two years, for example, we ceased the distribution of our non-tobacco, non-menthol flavored products in advance of FDA guidance and halted all mass market product advertising. This settlement is another step in that direction," Juul said.

Supreme Court Rejects Challenge to FDA's Vaping Regulations

The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) regulation of electronic cigarettes and vapor products has withstood a legal challenge at the highest level.

On June 7, the U.S. Supreme Court said it would not hear the case of a Mississippi vape shop, Big Times Vapes Inc., and the United States Vaping Association, which called into question the FDA's regulatory authority over e-cigarettes and vapor products.

A federal district court and U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit previously ruled in the agency's favor. On appeal, the Big Times Vapes and the industry association sought to invoke the so-called non-delegation doctrine, a constitutional rule that says Congress must give clear guidance to an agency before handing off its legislative responsibilities, according to Bloomberg.

The Supreme Court has not invalidated a law as an unconstitutional delegation since 1935, it added.

Congress granted the FDA regulatory authority over tobacco products when it passed Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act of 2009. The agency laid the foundation for regulating all tobacco products, not just cigarettes and smokeless tobacco, when it implemented its final deeming rule in 2016. That rule extended its authority to e-cigarettes, cigars, hookah tobacco and pipe tobacco, as Convenience Store News previously reported.

In their appeal, Big Time Vapes and the United States Vaping Association said Congress violated the Constitution by giving the FDA such an open-ended grant of authority.

The Biden administration urged the Supreme Court to reject the appeal. It said Congress made clear that the FDA should comprehensively regulate the tobacco industry to protect the public, particularly children, from nicotine dependence, health risks, and false or misleading advertising, the news outlet reported.

Pennsylvania C-Store Owner Pleads Guilty to Food Stamp Fraud

The owner of an Erie, Pennsylvania, convenience store Tuesday pleaded guilty in federal court to conspiring to defraud the United States and to food stampfraud, according to an announcement from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Abdul Alquraishi, 54, owner and operator of The Lotto World, along with three co-defendants, allegedly exchanged food stamps for cash and allowed customers to pay off store credit with food stamps. Alquraishi also used customers' food stamp cards to buy items at various stores in the area, the announcement said.

The court set sentencing for Nov. 22, and the sentence could carry up to a 10-year prison term, a fine of $500,000 or both, the U.S. attorney's office said.

--Reporting by Donna Harris

DMV US Trucking Activity Falls in May Despite Rising Gasoline Demand, Group Says

Trucking activity in the United States saw a slight decrease during the month of May, despite increased demand for gasoline and continued strength in retail sales, according to data released Tuesday by the nation's largest trucking industry trade group.

The American Trucking Associations said its advanced seasonally adjusted (SA) For-Hire Truck Tonnage Index decreased 0.7% in May. That decline comes on theheels of a 0.6% decrease in April.

Activity, however, is well above levels seen during the same time last year, though ATA Chief Economist Bob Costello warned that the trucking industry continues to face challenges as it attempts to shake off the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As has been the case for some time, trucking's biggest challenges are not on the demand side, but on the supply side, including difficulty finding qualified drivers," Costello said. "One freight segment that is helping tonnage is gasoline as demand for travel, both commuting and vacation related, picks up," he said. "I'm also expecting retail freight to remain robust as inventories are at historic lows. As retail stocks are rebuilt, it will boost freight."

As OPIS reported in April, the industry has been facing a driver shortage that could impact gasoline supply in some areas during the summer. Hundreds of transport truck drivers were either laid off or found alternative driving gigs when the pandemic cut demand by as much as one-half last year, and many have not been replaced.

ATA's For-Hire Truck Tonnage Index is dominated by contract freight as opposed to spot market freight.

ATA, which represents a coalition of industry groups, says trucking serves as a barometer of the U.S. economy, as it represents 72.5% of tonnage carried by all modes of domestic freight transportation, including manufactured and retail goods.

--Reporting by Steve Cronin

Global Study Bullish on Hydrogen-Powered Autos

The global hydrogen fueling station market is expected to reach $2.67 billion by 2028, with a compound annual growth rate of 30.8% between 2021 and 2028, according to a new report from Fortune Business Insights, "Hydrogen Fueling Station Market, 2021-2028."

Fortune attributes the forecast growth to rising pollution and environmental regulation, which will boost demand for hydrogen-powered vehicles.

The hydrogen fueling market was $0.37 billion in 2020, the report said.

"The automotive market has suffered economically due to the lockdowns announced by the government agencies" during the COVID-19 pandemic, the research firm said. "Disruption in the supply chain, unavailability of materials, and reduced demand for vehicles were some of the factors that affected sales worldwide.

This further led to the market suffering from a lower growth rate of 28.9% in 2020. The market is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels once the industrial activities resume in the near future."

The report said the Asia-Pacific region is expected to "hold the highest position in the market" due to government support for advanced hydrogen fueling stations in China, Japan and South Korea, for example.

North America is expected to see "considerable growth" due to tax benefits and proactive research and development initiatives, the study said.

--Reporting by Donna Harris

Record Retrieval

DMV record retrieval is available to association members and affiliates at a cost of $12 per record. Additionally, you may order DMV certified paper abstracts of driver's license, vehicle registration, and vehicle title records for an additional fee of $2 per abstract. Please call 585-423-9924 or 716-656-1035.

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Lawley Declares Dividend for 29th Year

NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE STATION & REPAIR SHOPS, INC

Declared Dividend is 35%

In 2021* the New York State Association of Service Stations & Repair Shops, Inc. is proud to declare a dividend for the Workers Compensation Safety Group #536 of **35%**. This will be the 29th consecutive year that the group will pay the dividend.

In addition to this dividend, members have enjoyed as much as a **60%** savings on their premiums.

Checks will be processed March 15th and mailed directly to your address by The State Insurance Fund.

** Applies to Policy Term 5/1/19 - 5/1/20*

Further Details

Please contact:

Bill Adams at 716.849.8641 or by email at badams@lawleyinsurance.com if you have any questions or concerns.

NYSASSRS & Lawley Partnership