

Issue #4: New Audit Data Is On The Way...How Your Help Will Get It There Faster

I'm Larry Hennessy, the Vice President and General Manager of TAB. I'd like you to know that we have heard your demands and would like to assure you that numbers from the new audits are on the way! Getting the new DEC's out to the marketplace quickly is our top priority. In prior TAB Briefs, we talked about the new audit methodology and emphasized several benefits including more consistent and accurate DEC's. TAB is on track to deliver DEC's for all of our operators in all of our markets by the end of 2003. That means in 2003, we will be contacting all plant operators to finalize and verify their audits; a process that has traditionally transpired over a three year period. However, TAB will not be able to accomplish this critical objective unless the plant operators do their part.

I'd like to take a moment and discuss the audit process in greater detail. As a member of TAB, you need to be aware of some of the challenges we face and how we're meeting these challenges. For over two years, auditing under the old methodology was suspended. During that time, we began the development and implementation of the new audit methodology. The first phase of this transitional audit is now virtually complete. Namely, the gathering and defining of count stations and the assigning of traffic counts to those count stations.

We're now in the second and final phase of the transitional audit. This entails the assignment of plant operator panels into these count stations. In order to finalize this procedure, we've developed and incorporated a new centralized database-oriented procedure, complete with proprietary mapping and auditing software. This new procedure paves the way for tremendous cost and time saving opportunities.

Plant cooperation is essential to complete this final phase on schedule. Because this is the first time TAB is employing our new database-centric audit procedure, data cleansing is necessary. Clean data makes this process a breeze in comparison to working with old and/or incomplete data. When a plant's data are incomplete, the audit requires significantly greater time and resources from both the plant operator and TAB. Once the data cleansing is done, the time demands on our plants in future audits will be significantly reduced.

This year we have nearly 250,000 panels to audit nationwide. Given our manpower, we've calculated spending five minutes per panel to finish by the end of the year. Five minutes is a very realistic time



Larry Hennessy gives direction to Sean McCarthy, Technical Director and Dan Merrill, Data Analyst

allotment if TAB is provided good data and completely unrealistic to meet if we are provided with bad data. We have developed a new communication vehicle for plant operators called TAB Audit Notes. Today, along with this issue of TAB Briefs, our entire membership has been e-mailed TAB Audit Notes under a separate cover. TAB Audit Notes will specifically address instructions and other auditing issues. This debut TAB Audit Notes outlines TAB's data requirements to verify and finalize the operator's 2003 audit. In the future, TAB Audit Notes will only be distributed to plant operators.

While there will be no physical inspection of the plants in 2003, physical audits will continue after 2003. However, with our new centralized database approach, you will see a dramatic reduction in the volume and nature of physical inspections as you have known them. These reductions will translate to significant audit expense savings and less time spent by plant operators.

I hope you now have a better understanding that not only will the new audit process bring more accurate and timely DEC's to the industry, but also a more efficient and less burdensome on-going audit process.

Larry Hennessy