The IEHA Annual Educational Conference

October 25 & 26, 2007
Hotel Père Marquette • Peoria Illinois
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• CDC: A Workforce “Crisis” in Environmental Health
• Nelson Fabian: Straight Talk about NEHA and Policy
• Mark Gross: Water Softener Discharges DO Harm Septic Systems

Plus

IEHA Board Election Candidate Profiles and Election Materials
The purposes of the Illinois Environmental Health Association are: To maintain and improve the environmental health protection of the public by fostering and encouraging research, education and the dissemination of information; To promote the highest degree of skill, efficiency and professional competence among sanitarians and others practicing in the various environmental health disciplines through the mutual exchange of knowledge and experience; To publish, or cause to be published, technical and other useful information relating to environmental health; In both the public and private sectors, to promote the administration of environmental health programs for the maximum public benefit; To foster cooperation of the various branches and departments of government at all levels in activities directed toward the improvement of health and comfort of the public; To engage in other lawful activities which are appropriate for a professional association; Provided, that the Association shall not function as a collective bargaining agent for the purpose of fixing the compensation or conditions of employment for any of its members; provided further, that the Association shall not endorse or sanction the endorsement by any of its members of products or services of a commercial nature.

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Mission Statement:

The Illinois Environmental Health Association will work to advance the Environmental Health Profession and promote sound environmental health practices throughout the State of Illinois.

Editorial Policy

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IEHA News

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Farewell from Your President

I was sitting in my office finishing up my cup of coffee, and I started to reflect over the past year in IEHA. There were some challenges that needed to be addressed, and the Board took on those challenges. Even though the outcome was not what we hoped it would be, the outcome still was beneficial to the membership and the Association.

The first challenge was the renewal of the LEHP Act. In this endeavor, it was our hope that the Act would be renewed for at least 10 years with the grandfather and RS/REHS recognition amendments added. Unfortunately with it being an election year and the legislature not having enough time to act, Speaker Madigan felt it best to extend the act for two years and then address the renewal.

The second challenge was the reciprocity of the LEHP and RS/REHS. This was a high priority item for the Strategic Planning Committee, and Chairman Mackey, along with his committee, has done an outstanding job. Talks are currently underway with IDFPR to at least create a rule change to officially recognize the RS/REHS from NEHA.

While at the NEHA Conference, Wil Hayes and I did speak with NEHA to open a dialogue for NEHA to recognize the LEHP so that if you have the LEH license, NEHA will grant you RS/REHS registration. Talks are still underway with NEHA.

The third challenge that the Board needed to address was the lack of recognition that IEHA had with the State Legislators. The Board decided to hire a lobbyist. Her job is to first and foremost promote the passage of the LEHP Act, but she also keeps the Association before the legislators. This past year, because of our lobbyist presence, IEHA has been asked to comment on different pieces of legislation ranging from the “Illinois Smoke Free Act” to the changes in the septic code.

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Newz Bitz * Sony Recycles

To encourage consumers to recycle and dispose of electronic devices in an environmentally sound manner, Sony has established a national recycling program for consumer electronics. The Sony Take Back Recycling Program allows consumers to recycle all Sony-branded products for no fee at 75 Waste Management (WM) Recycle America eCycling drop-off centers throughout the U.S.

The program, which begins on Sept. 15, was developed in collaboration with WM Recycle America, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Waste Management, Inc. The program also allows consumers to recycle other manufacturers' consumer electronics products at market prices, and may include a recycling fee for some types of materials. According to Sony, this is the first national recycling initiative in the U.S. to involve both a major electronics manufacturer and a national waste management company.

As the Sony Take Back Recycling program expands, the number of eCycling drop-off centers will increase to at least 150 sites within a year, with at least one location in every state through a combination of WM Recycle America locales and WM external service partners. Sony and WM Recycle America are also working towards the goal of having enough drop-off locations in all 50 states so there is a recycling center within 20 miles of 95 percent of the U.S. population. Consumers will also have the option of shipping their used Sony electronics products to select WM Recycle America locations.

The Sony Take Back Recycling Program is part of Sony's broader global commitment to environmental stewardship, which spans product design, recycling, facilities management, and energy conservation across all categories. As the technology industry sees continued growth, the amount of electronic waste is also increasing. A study by the EPA showed that in 2005 used or unwanted electronics amounted to about 1.9 to 2.2 million tons. Of that, some 1.5 to 1.9 million tons was primarily discarded in landfills, and only 345,000 to 379,000 tons were recycled.

By recycling old electronics products, useful materials - such as glass, plastic, and metals - can be collected and re-used in the manufacture of other products. Recycling not only minimizes the amount of waste disposed, it also minimizes the extraction of new raw materials from the earth and resources required for processing, saving energy and reducing greenhouse gases in the process.


Newz Bitz * Tired of Tires

According to a press release from IEPA, Agency Director Doug Scott has asked the Illinois Attorney General to take the necessary legal actions to prevent Lonnie Wayne Sinclair, doing business as Lon's Tire Recyclers, from illegally accumulating, storing or disposing used and waste tires, and to properly remove and dispose of all used and waste tires currently stored at his illegal tire storage site just off of East Clary Street in northeast Petersburg.

A recent inspection by the Illinois EPA, with assistance from the Illinois Department of Public Health, revealed thousands of used and waste tires at the site, with hundreds of them located outside. Many of the tires contained water and mosquito larvae, of the type that is the primary carrier of the West Nile Virus, as well as other mosquito-related diseases. Additionally, Lon's Tire Recyclers is not currently registered with the Illinois EPA to store or dispose used or waste tires at the East Clary Street site.

The location of the used and waste tires is within a few blocks of a nursing home, a Head Start school and playground, and residences, significantly adds to the public health threat posed by the site conditions.

In an effort to prevent the mosquito larvae from emerging from the tires as adult mosquitoes, the Illinois EPA treated the used and waste tires located outside with a larvicide designed specifically for use in tires. This treatment will ensure that adult mosquitoes that are capable of carrying the West Nile Virus will not emerge from the used and waste tires at this site until such time that the tires are removed and properly disposed.

In March 2005, Lon's Tire Recyclers was referred to the Attorney General for numerous violations at a former used tire storage site, located just off of Route 97 in southeast Petersburg. That case is still pending. Used and waste tires remain at that site, which is not registered with the Illinois EPA as a used tire storage site.

If the responsible party does not take the appropriate preventive or corrective actions, the Illinois EPA will conduct an immediate used and waste tire removal action and seek to recover costs up to three times the cost of the cleanup from the responsible party.

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President-Elect Perspective

By Wil Hayes

This year as President-elect of the Illinois Environmental Health Association (IEHA), I had the privilege of attending the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) educational conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey as one of the two representatives for IEHA. This was not my first trip to the NEHA Conference, but it was my first time as a delegate for IEHA.

I must admit that I was not looking forward to all the special meetings and missing a majority of the educational sessions. However, my attitude changed as I sat through the first meeting (The Affiliate Presidents Meeting). As I sat there listening to all of the other affiliates talk, I realized three things:

1. Other states have the same problems as Illinois.
2. IEHA is at the forefront of addressing many of these issues.
3. Being in IEHA provides its members with a lot of benefits compared to many of our peers.

Within just a few minutes of the start of the meeting and hearing all of the complaints and very few answers, any hesitation or intimidation that I had about speaking to these individuals who I didn't know was gone. Todd Campbell (the other IEHA delegate) and I found ourselves at the center of many of the discussions at all of the meetings we attended. We were also stopped by many of the delegates after the meeting to continue the discussions. I am not saying that IEHA does everything perfect and the organization can't improve. I will even admit that I picked up some ideas for IEHA and our Annual Educational Conference (AEC). However, IEHA is definitely ahead of the curve and one of the leading environmental health organizations.

As I sat on my flight to Atlanta (which was already running a little over an hour late), I thought it would only be appropriate for me to say thanks to the membership for allowing me to represent IEHA at the NEHA conference. I also decided that this would be a chance for me to outline some of the membership benefits that places IEHA at the head of the class as a NEHA affiliate and a leading environmental health organization.

1. Multiple educational conferences and workshops held throughout the state. Many other affiliates hold only one educational workshop a year. IEHA hosts three Chapter Conferences, an Onsite Wastewater Conference, a Food Safety Conference, and the Annual Educational Conference (AEC). With all this, IEHA members have multiple opportunities to obtain CEUs with minimal travel requirements.
2. The Licensed Environmental Health Practitioner (LEHP) review course. IEHA is one of only a handful of affiliate organizations that provide educational training to its members who will be taking the licensure exam.
3. An excellent website and members-only forum. Not only is IEHA one of the affiliates with a website, but it is updated regularly. The website is professionally managed that not only looks good, but is functional for its membership. With the addition of the members-only forum, IEHA members can post questions and give feedback on issues important to the membership. The website is constantly being updated and will continue to grow as needed. I would tell any member to take some time to look at the website and join the forum: http://ieha.us.
4. The IEHA has a contract with a lobbyist. The lobbyist is contracted on a part-time basis to help ensure the renewal of the LEHP act, keep the organization up-to-date on proposed legislation, and makes sure that IEHA is represented in Springfield. I am aware of only one other state affiliate that has a lobbyist.
5. The IEHA newsletter is published four times a year and seeks to provide the membership with current, up-to-date, and interesting environmental health information. Some affiliates don't even publish a newsletter. The awards and stipends IEHA gives to the membership. Annually, chapter Member of the Year awards are presented to an individual in each chapter that has achieved excellence in the profession. IEHA awards a member stipend to one applicant annually to attend the NEHA Conference. There is also the Graduate and Undergraduate scholarship awards given to applicants studying in the environmental health field. The Newcomer of the Year award is given annually to one up-and-coming environmental health professional. And last but not least, there is the Sanitarian of the Year award. This award is the highest honor that IEHA can bestow on a member. This award is issued to an individual who exemplifies what it means to be an environmental health professional.
6. IEHA has a contract for a professional office management service. The office provides clerical support, manages the website, provides phone coverage, and tracks CEUs, and provides overall support for the membership.

These are just a few of the benefits that IEHA members have the privilege of accessing to enhance and advance their careers. They are also the items that have made IEHA one of the strongest NEHA affiliates. As an IEHA member, hopefully you will utilize at least a few of these benefits. Attend a conference, go to the website, join the members forum, apply for one of the stipends or scholarships, or even better yet get active join a committee, become a board member.
2007 IEHA Board of Directors Election
Candidate Profiles

Editor’s Note: What follows are profiles for the candidates running for positions on the IEHA Board of Directors for 2007 - 2008 (unless otherwise stated). Please review these profiles before you mark your ballot for the election. Ballots, instructions and election envelopes were mailed with this issue of the IEHA News.

President-Elect
Kerry Abdullah
No profile submitted

Secretary
Amy Serby
Current Position, Employer: Sanitarian, Food Plan Specialist. Kendall County Health Department, Yorkville.
Education, Credentials: B.S., Northern Illinois University, LEHP, FSSMC Instructor
Number of years IEHA Member: 11
IEHA Activities and Committees: Director at Large 2003 - 2005, Secretary 2006 & 2007
Candidates Views: “IEHA has much to offer its membership, enhancing our knowledge and skills as public health professionals. I would like to see IEHA continue to expand and diversify its membership and educational opportunities statewide. We must work together and encourage volunteerism within the association in order to strengthen the organization itself for the betterment of our profession.”

North Chapter Vice-President
Jeff Bohner
Education, Credentials: LEHP; B.S. Environmental Health, Illinois State University.
Number of years IEHA member: 17
Candidates Views: “IEHA must remain visible and viable to avoid further erosion of the environmental health role in public health.”

North Chapter Director (2007-2010)
Stan Czieczak
Current Position, Employer: Area Manager Food Safety & Sanitation, Jewel-Osco Foods, Melrose Park, IL.
Education, Credentials: B.S. in Community Health; NIU, LEHP, IDPH Food Service Sanitation Manager & Instructor, City of Chicago, Certified Foodservice Manager & Instructor, Certified Professional Food Manager, IDPH Certified Technician for Structural Pest Control.
Number of years IEHA member: 9
IEHA Activities and Committees: Currently North Chapter V.P., Served on North Chapter AEC Planning, Public Relations, and Strategic Planning Committees.
Other Environmental Health Activities: I became first involved in the field of environmental health when I was a swimming pool inspector employed by a county health department during summer break. During my undergraduate studies, I worked part-time at the university’s recycling center and for a mosquito abatement company until graduation. I was also elected President of the student chapter of the Illinois Department of Public Health. Prior to my current position, I worked on the regulatory side of environmental health for 4.5 years as a sanitarian employed by a county and municipal health department.
Candidate’s Views: “My vision for IEHA is to be the premier organization for environmental health professionals in Illinois to gain continuing education in this dynamic field. When I attended my first IEHA conference I was impressed with the quality of topics and speakers at the meeting. Most importantly, I was impressed with the knowledge and skills of the members I met in the organization. If elected, I would like to continue enhancing IEHA as an organization for quality education and networking for environmental health professionals.”

Kathi (Worden) Landow
Current Position, Employer: Sanitarian, DuPage County Health Department.
Candidate Profiles continued on next page
Education, Credentials: Sanitarian Trainee Certificate, State of Oregon; Portland State University (Environmental Health; Western Illinois University (B.S. Agricultural Science)

Number of Years IEHA Member: 16+

IEHA Activities and Committees: Food Technical Chair 2004 to present, Associate Editor IEHA News

Other Environmental Health Activities: Taught Food Service Sanitation at Waubonsee Community College 1990 - 2000.

Candidates Views: “Those in our field must be open to emerging hazards and find new ways to protect the public. We must provide support and mentoring to new sanitarians as well as encouragement to those considering environmental health as a career.”

Central Chapter Vice-President

Jessica Thoron

Current Position, Employer: Food Program Supervisor, Sangamon County Health Department.


Number of years IEHA member: 10

IEHA Activities and Committees: IEHA 2006 Central Chapter Education Conference Planning Committee member.

Candidate Views: “After many years and many drafts, I would like to see the Amendments to the IL Food Service Sanitarian Code pass. After much debate, I would like to see a draft of Amendments to the IL Private Sewage Code that protects groundwater, yet is practical.”

South Chapter Vice-President

Andrea Kohring

Current Position, Employer: Environmental Health Inspector, Monroe - Randolph Bi-County Health Department.

Education, Credentials: A.S., Biological Science, Currently pursuing B.S. in Ecology from SIUE. Licensed Private Sewage Disposal System Installation Contractor.

Number of years IEHA member: 2

Candidate’s Views: “I look forward to playing a vital role in bringing an informative and useful conference to southern Illinois in 2008. With our need to streamline information and current advances, I feel that bringing in a GIS specialist or technician would provide environmental health professionals with some great ideas on improving their operations and procedures.”

Director-at-Large (2007-2010)

Sharron LaFollette

Current Position, Employer: Chair and Associate Professor Department of Public Health, University of Illinois at Springfield.


Other Environmental Health Activities:
• National Environmental Health Association (NEHA): Faculty Forum 1996-1998, Research Technical Section 1997-2004,
• American Public Health Association, Environmental Section Educational Program Committee 1999-2001.
• Research: Risk Assessment, Risk Communication, Workforce Development, and Indoor Air Quality.

Candidate’s Views: “As health departments face the challenges of workforce turnover and budgetary constraints, IEHA must continue to advocate for the profession, provide cost-effective services, and provide quality educational conferences necessary for the EH professional to meet the challenges of protecting public health with the latest information and strategies for innovative problem solving.”

See Candidate Profiles on Page 11
Groundwater Protection Still Has Value

By Jerry Dalsin

Recent notices from IDPH to homeowners with private wells in certain municipalities illustrate that groundwater protection efforts are always beneficial. Not sure about staffing that abandoned well program? Don't want to take the time to check demolished/abandoned sites as you are driving to the next inspection? Still unsure about working with a village to alert the health department about city water connections to housing that used to use a well? Groundwater protection efforts are worthwhile, and they will help avoid notices such as those posted below.

In the following cases, the IEPA detected contamination in the city's municipal water wells as part of routine testing. Although the water supply treatment plant removed the contaminants to meet US EPA standards, private wells in the area could be affected. Residents in these areas are encouraged to have their water tested by a private laboratory.

June 26, 2007 - Fairmount area (Will County). Persons with private wells located within a ¼ mile radius of the intersection of Main Street and the Norfolk Southern Railroad, are encouraged to have their water tested by a private laboratory. Contaminates detected include methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) and dichloroethane (1,2-DCA), but at levels less than groundwater quality standards. A list of private laboratories approved for testing can be obtained by calling IDPH's Champaign office at 217-693-5360. Once samples have been analyzed, residents can call the health department for an explanation of the test results. The risk of adverse health effects depends on the level of contaminants in the water and the duration of exposure. Exposure to elevated levels of vinyl chloride, cis 1-2-DCE, and 1,1-DCE can cause nausea, dizziness and headaches. Long-term exposure to these chemicals may affect the liver and kidney. Long-term vinyl chloride exposure may increase the risk of liver, brain, and blood cancers.

August 9, 2007 - Hinckley area (DeKalb County). Persons with private wells located within the city limits South of Miller Avenue/Clark Avenue, are encouraged to have their water tested by a private laboratory. Contaminates detected include trichloroethylene (TCE), exceeding the groundwater quality standard, and cis-1,2-dichloroethylene (cis-1,2-DCE) and toluene below the groundwater quality standard. A list of private laboratories approved for testing can be obtained by calling IDPH's Rockford office at 815-987-7511. Once samples have been analyzed, residents can call the health department for an explanation of the test results. The risk of adverse health effects depends on the level of contaminants in the water and the duration of exposure. Long-term exposure to these chemicals may increase the risk of liver and kidney damage.

August 9, 2007 - Grafton area (Jersey County). Persons with private wells located between Dagget Hollow Road and ¼ mile east of Brown Street and from the Mississippi River extending 1/3 of a mile north, are encouraged to have their water tested by a private laboratory. Contaminates detected in Grafton's Source water include tetrachloroethylene (PCE), exceeding the groundwater quality standard and methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE), trichloroethylene (TCE), cis-1,2-dichloroethylene (cis-1,2-DCE), and xylenes below the groundwater quality standards. A list of private laboratories approved for testing can be obtained by calling IDPH's Edwardsville office at 618-656-6680. Once samples have been analyzed, residents can call the health department for an explanation of the test results. The risk of adverse health effects depends on the level of contaminants in the water and the duration of exposure. Long-term exposure to these chemicals may increase the risk of liver and kidney damage.

August 24, 2007 - Sheffield area (Jersey County). Persons with private wells located within the area north of South Street, west of East Street, east of Reed Street, and south of North Railroad Street are encouraged to have their water tested by a private laboratory. Contaminates detected include carbon tetrachloride, ethylbenzene, p-dichlorobenzene, and xylenes, but at levels less than groundwater quality standards. A list of private laboratories approved for testing can be obtained by calling the IDPH's Peoria office at 309-693-5360. Once samples have been analyzed, residents can call the health department for an explanation of the test results. The risk of adverse health effects depends on the level of contaminants in the water and the duration of exposure. Long-term exposure to these chemicals may increase the risk of liver and kidney damage.
Four Communities to Pilot New Federal Environmental Health Partnership

(Washington, D.C. - July 18, 2007) EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson and CDC/ATSDR Director Dr. Julie Gerberding signed a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) today, signaling their intentions to develop collaborative strategies that assist communities coping with health problems that may be related to environmental hazards.

Under the agreement signed Wednesday, four communities will partner with experts from EPA, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and CDC’s sister agency, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registrries (ATSDR) to pilot a new initiative aimed at strengthening the capacity of communities to identify and effectively address environmental protection and public health services. The four communities are Cerro Gordo, Iowa; the Cherokee Nation, Okla.; Savannah, Ga; and Boston, Mass. The communities, which range from urban centers to rural areas, were selected for the project because they had strong local leadership in addressing community issues, experience in working with a wide range of private and public sector partners, and a track record of successfully addressing local health or environmental issues.

CDC, ATSDR and EPA independently have long supported local organizations and governments dealing with complex, localized environmental health issues, such as lead in homes, pollution-induced asthma, and drinking water contamination. Both agencies also have grant and other programs focused on community assistance.

In 2005, for example, EPA developed the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program, a $4 million competitive grant and technical assistance program for community-based organizations across the country.

In 2000, CDC and the National Association of City and County Health Organizations developed a community environmental health assessment tool for local health departments. This tool has since been distributed to more than 1,000 agencies. The 13-step Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE EH) guides communities through the process of identifying local environmental health problems, developing action plans, and evaluating outcomes.

More information on the collaboration and to read the MOU: http://www.epa.gov/care/collaboration.htm or http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/CEHA/collaboration.htm

Candidate Profiles
continued from Page 9

Evelyn Neavear

Current Position, Employer: Tazewell County Health Department, Director of Environmental Health

Education, Credentials: B.S. in Environmental Health, LEHP.

Number of years IEHA member: Off and on for 30 years.

IEHA Activities and Committees: Central Chapter Vice President, Environmental Health Technical Chair, Previous IEHA Secretary.

Other Environmental Health Activities: Chairman - Central Regional Groundwater Protection Committee, IEHA Annual Education Conference Planning Committee, Member of East Central Regional Water Supply planning committee, Clean Water Celebration planning committee.

Candidate’s Views: “Environmental programs at local health departments are expanding beyond food, water, and sewage. IEHA can provide direction to its membership on the issues of radon, class V injection wells, water demand issues, geothermal heating systems, etc. I believe with my experience I can help IEHA with this task.”

Pest / Vector Seminar Announced

By Randy Markillie

The IEHA Pest/Vector Technical Section has been notified that Anderson Pest Solutions in cooperation with the Madison County Health Department will be conducting their 2nd Annual Pest Solutions Seminar on Tuesday, October 9, 2007, at the Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive, Collinsville, IL 62234. Featured speakers include: Dr. Austin Frishman; Dr. Robert Corrigan; and Dr. Michael Potter. For further information, contact Anderson Pest Solutions at (630) 834-3300 and ask for Program Coordinator Tom Dobrinska or at their website: www.AndersonPestSolutions.com. Please remember that an updated list of structural pest control seminars can be found at: www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/pdf/Bulletin.pdf.
NEHA Update:

The NEHA Board of Directors met for their spring meeting in Colorado Springs, CO. This two day meeting was jammed packed with lengthy discussions on: NEHA Training, Journal of Environmental Health, Research and Development programs, 2006 audit, sustainability, NEHA credential for healthy homes, proposed legislation for a new national food safety agency, 2007 and 2010 AEC, and several position papers.

There were several items on the agenda that I want to provide you with more details.

Membership: NEHA membership routinely holds at around 5,000. This has been the case for many years. Several factors influence whether or not someone joins an association like NEHA. One of the most interesting is that people now days are simply, not joiners. They are still interested in what NEHA has to offer, but they would rather pay higher fees to obtain services, than become a member to obtain the benefits of membership.

Certified Installer of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (CIOWTS): NEHA has completed the contract with EPA for the Onsite Wastewater Credential for installers. Currently NEHA is the promotion phase. For more information please visit: http://www.neha.org/onsite/index.htm

U.S. Conference of Mayors position on Sustainability: The Board unanimously voted to support the billion dollar Energy and Environmental Block Grant program to help cities fight global warm-}

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Location of the 2010 AEC: After consideration of several cities and the pros and cons of each city, the Board developed a list of its top three sites for the NEHA staff to investigate. The top three cities are Albuquerque, Honolulu and Salt Lake City. I am interested in your preference. Please let me know which of these cities would you be most willing to visit for an AEC?
Healthy Homes Credential Now Available

The Healthy Homes Specialist (HHS) Credential is the newest addition to the National Environmental Health Association’s (NEHA) eight other credential offerings. It was developed in partnership with the National Center for Healthy Housing (NCHH) and the National Healthy Homes Training Center & Network (Training Center).

Sustainability: A New Road for NEHA

Last year, the NEHA Board of Directors established a new committee to facilitate the development of NEHA’s activities in the sustainability arena. The committee has two main goals. One is providing education and resources in the four areas: renewable energy, energy conservation, pollution prevention and green building. The other is the development of an award — “NEHA Excellence in Sustainability Award.” This award is to recognize NEHA members who are solving environmental challenges by using new and innovative sustainability/index.html

A Note from your RVP

I was pleased to see so many members of Region 6 at the NEHA AEC in June. Those who were able to attend not only enjoyed the social events and networking, but also an excellent smorgasbord of educational opportunities. I hope to see many of you next year in Tucson.

As part of my activities as your RVP, I try to attend as many of your affiliate AECs as possible.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to attend all of them in the past due to work-related travel. I will soon be in the process of planning my 2008 travel, and would appreciate receiving the dates of your AEC as soon as they are known.

As always, your comments and suggestions are important and welcome. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

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Straight Talk About NEHA and Policy

By Nelson Fabian, Executive Director, National Environmental Health Association

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Ninety-five percent (if not more) of my work life is an absolute pleasure. I work for, and have the honor of representing, some of the greatest people and one of the noblest professions that one could ever hope to find … anywhere. How could someone in my position not be extremely happy?!

On the other hand, life is real, not a fantasy. And within even my happy life, there is that 5 percent (or less) that is very real and that can sometimes be very frustrating. Topping my frustration list is the challenge of dealing with particularly difficult people.

In general, I find dealing with difficult people to be fun for the challenge it presents. There is no fun involved, however, in dealing with that one type of difficult person who has no use for facts, truth, new information, and the like. That rigid adherence to positions that can't be supported by the available facts robs discussions of intellectual honesty and gives rise to doubts about what the real intention of the difficult person is. After all, if that person's position is at variance with what is known about something, than we must wonder if the ongoing argument might have a more nefarious goal, one that is very different from the presumed goal of exploring an issue for the purpose of finding a constructive resolution to it.

It's tempting to delve into the psychology of all this. It's even tempting to share some personal stories about how I've changed my points of view as life has found ways to teach me to see things in different ways. But that's not the direction in which I want to take this column. Rather, I want to share with the NEHA membership some facts on how active NEHA has become in the policy-making arena. I do this with both pride and frustration. Pride, because the list belies our size and resources—we have devoted far more time, energy, and attention to this side of environmental health than might reasonably be expected of an organization of our size and resource base. Frustrated, because this information has been shared many times before and in many different ways. Despite these presentations, we continue to hear, from a few of the difficult people whom I referred to earlier, the stinging criticism that our association is mute when it comes to "policy involvement." That just isn't true. If anything, the NEHA Board of Directors has been devoting increasing amounts of its agenda to concerns in the policy arena. That's a fact!

Before I get to my presentation of exactly what NEHA has done, it is first important to clarify what "policy involvement" entails.

Having been involved in policy making long before I came to NEHA, I can attest to how policy involvement has changed over time. I used to work for the trade association that represented the interests of all makers of motor vehicles on the North American continent. Policy involvement was a daily staple of our work, and our attention was focused on legislative and regulatory bodies, not only in Washington but in Europe as well. In those days, policy involvement basically meant writing up critiques of proposed laws and regulations. We spent untold hours pouring over proposed rulemakings in the Federal Register to ensure that we didn't miss any opportunity to comment (and exert influence) on any governmental policy that might have an impact on the domestic automobile and trucking industry.

In today's world, this kind of activity remains important. Policy involvement has, however, also come to mean everything from participating in alliances, to collaborating with others (and especially other nongovernmental organizations [NGOs]), to developing meaningful relationships with colleagues in regulatory agencies, to keeping one's constituency informed and mobilizing them when necessary, and even to mounting to some degree a public relations effort to promote a particular position on an issue. As with everything else in the modern world, things just aren't what they used to be. If anything, they have become more complicated.

NEHA's policy work has involved purposeful activity in almost all of these areas. In the past year alone, NEHA has worked hard to develop and articulate positions on a wide variety of public policy issues that affect the profession we represent. We've also considered how measured we need to be in expressing our opinion. For example, in the case of the proposed National Food Safety Uniformity Act, we determined that we needed to be particularly loud—and we were. In other cases, we've spoken with less stridency. My point is simply that our positions are not only carefully thought out, but also calibrated and attenuated as appropriate to enhance their effectiveness. It goes without saying that it requires a lot of thought and time to accomplish this balance.

In addition to the specific positions that we have recently taken, we have also invested an enormous amount of time in building relationships and participating in scores of meetings that all in some way lead to policy outcomes—be they legislative, regulatory, cultural, or voluntary. In the process of sending staff or volunteers or even our president or members of our board to these many and varied events, we build, cultivate, sustain, and enhance a broad array of key relationships. It is through these relationships that we are often able to advance specific interests of the environmental health profession. Sometimes much more can be accomplished by whispering a great idea into someone's ear than by pounding a hammer on that same someone's head—and we understand that, even though the quiet whisper is less likely to be noticed by others than the hammering!

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Finally, it is also important to keep in mind that our very nature limits the amount of policy influence that we can wield. NEHA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, not-for-profit professional society. That classification puts us in the same part of the federal tax code as a college or university. Our purpose is tied to the advancement of scientific knowledge. Yet despite the restrictions that statute places on us, we have found ways to support a robust program of policy involvement on behalf both of the cause of environmental health and of every person who practices in it. The NEHA Board of Directors is very committed to this hugely important activity, and as best I can tell, this work will only grow further in our future.

It is a pleasure to share the following list that begins to describe the volume of work the NEHA government affairs program does in the policy-making arena:

- endorsed the Healthy Places Act of 2006;
- mobilized the NEHA membership to communicate to Congress in support of restoring funding to the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) in the federal fiscal-year ‘07 budget;
- submitted written support for NCEH’s fiscal-year ’07 budget request to the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations;
- obtained membership in the Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR);
- endorsed the All-Hazards Public Health Emergency and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act;
- presented a public-health-workforce-development needs assessment to staff of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Bioterrorism and Public Health Preparedness;
- is developing, in cooperation with the National Center for Healthy Housing, a certification program for healthy homes;
- collaborated with CDC on developing national performance standards for the environmental health workforce;
- endorsed public health workforce development legislation;
- developed and submitted a position paper on including environmental health in public health education;
- developed a position of support for recommendations made by the Trust for America’s Health and the Infectious Disease Society of America concerning pandemic flu preparedness;
- endorsed environmental public health tracking legislation;
- developed a position paper that detailed the relationship between generalist and specialist credentialing in environmental health as it relates to the R.E.H.S./R.S. and C.F.S.P. credentials;
- endorsed CDC’s National Strategy to Revitalize Environmental Public Health Services;
- opposed legislation pre-empting local control over food safety programs (H.R. 4167);
- participated in developing the NCEH/ATSDR research agenda;
- developed a formal position on the relationship between environmental health and public health nursing for CDC;
- facilitated work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP) workgroup reviewing HACCP standards for school food operations;
- participated in the USDA/HACCP workgroup reviewing inspection standards for school food operations;
- participated in the development and promotion of an operational definition for environmental health;
- participates in the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice (workforce recruitment, retention, and certification issues);
- participates in CDC’s Emerging Leaders Program;
- participated in CDC’s Futures Initiative;
- participates in CDC’s Epi-X Forum;
- participates in the Public Health Systems Research Interest Group;
- participates in meetings of the Conference for Food Protection;
- serves as lead organization in a workgroup developing a military career guide for public/private-sector placement in environmental health;
- collaborates with CDC in defining the environmental health role in emergency planning/terrorism response;
- held a seat on the search committee for the new director of NCEH/ATSDR;
- initiated formal discussions with CDC/NCEH-ATSDR on future projects and collaboration with NEHA, and developed a blueprint document outlining long-term cooperative ventures of the two organizations;
- is one of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (U.S. EPA’s) National Cooperative Partners for Indoor Air Quality;
- participates in U.S. EPA’s national symposium on indoor air quality (IAQ) in schools;
- has signed U.S. EPA’s memorandum of understanding (MOU) establishing a cooperative-partner network for onsite wastewater management systems;
- is a member of CDC’s national partner group for environmental public health tracking;
- participates in CDC’s Environmental Public Health Workforce Development Consortium;
- participated in CDC’s Tier II workforce development committee;
- participates in CDC’s national partner group for land use/community design;
- participates in the National Coalition for Food Safe Schools;
- is a member of the Clean Hands Coalition;
- is a member of the School Network for Absenteeism Prevention;
- participated in the development and distribution of the Food-Safe Schools Action Guide;
- served as lead, in cooperation with the CDC Food Safety Office, in developing, promoting, and conducting training for Epi-Ready foodborne-outbreak investigation strategies;
- developed the Epi-Ready Train-the-Trainer Program in cooperation with the CDC Food Safety Office and the FDA Office of Regulatory Affairs;
- served as lead in developing, administering, and promoting a certification credential for onsite wastewater professionals;
- is a member of the National Mosquito Control Cooperative;
- set up strategic board committees to develop and advocate for positions on sustainability, workforce development, international environmental health, and the marketing of our profession;
- developed, in cooperation with NCEH, the U.S. Army, and private industry, a vector control program for presentation at NEHA conferences;
- represented NEHA at the National Press Club news conference launching the MOU agreement among national partners for onsite wastewater management;
- represented NEHA at the President’s National Infrastructure Advisory Council Meeting;
- represented NEHA at the Surgeon General’s Conference on Indoor Air Quality;
- represented NEHA at national public health preparedness meetings;

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Governor signs executive order to develop water supply strategy

Editor’s Note: Excerpted from the East central Rule Water Supply Web Site.

While Illinois has significant sources of both groundwater and surface water, the growing state population and increasing demand for water is expected to strain current resources.

In January 2006, Governor Rod Blagojevich signed Executive Order 2006-001 to develop a comprehensive, statewide water supply planning and management strategy. The Executive Order assigns the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Office of Water Resources (IDNR-OWR) to oversee the process in coordination with the State Water Survey. To begin the effort, the State selected two areas most at risk for water shortages and conflicts: the Northeastern Illinois Deep Aquifer and the Mahomet aquifer, spanning central and east-central counties of Vermilion, Iroquois, Ford, Champaign, McLean, Macon DeWitt, Piatt, Woodford, Tazewell, Mason, Logan, Menard, Cass and Sangamon.

To implement the requirements of Executive Order 2006-001, the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium (MAC) started a three-year regional water supply planning process with a funding grant from IDNR-OWR. The first task was to convene the East Central Illinois Regional Water Supply Planning Committee (RWSPC). This local planning committee will help collect the data needed to draft the regional water supply plan, and also outline and approve their regional plans. This data will include figures such as total usable amount of groundwater and surface water in the planning area and projected water supply and demand.

The East Central Illinois RWSPC includes twelve members, one each from the following interest areas: Agriculture, Small Business, Public, water Authorities, Water Utilities, Municipal Environmental, County, Rural Water Districts, Industry, Electric Generating Utilities, and Solid and Water Conservation Districts. The members are also geographically balanced by region as follows: West region (Cass, Logan Mason, Menard, Sangamon and Tazewell counties); Central region (Dewitt, Macon, McLean, Piatt and Woodford counties); and East region (Champaign, Ford, Iroquois, and Vermilion counties).

The primary objectives and activities of the RWSPC are to:
• Utilize water-resource research findings by the state agencies (i.e., Illinois State Water Survey, Illinois State Geological Survey)
• Develop water demand scenarios to year 2050
• Evaluate water supply and demand management options as potential implementation of such options might benefit the citizens of east central Illinois
• Create a regional water-supply plan that reflects a newly developed understanding of water availability given research findings on supplies and demand scenarios and plans for growth, development and land-use change
• Propose and support outreach and public education activities.

IDPH developing water well inspector’s manual

By Jerry Dalsin

The new Water Well Inspector's Manual, in second draft stage, was developed by IDPH to serve as a guide for the Department's and local health departments water program staff for conducting inspections in the private water program. The basis for this guide is the Illinois Water Well Construction Code (415 ILCS and 77 Illinois Administrative Code 920) and the Illinois Water Well Pump Installation Code (415 ILCS 35 and 77 Illinois Administrative Code 925).

The topics covered in the manual are comprehensive - the more significant ones include well drilling methods, the inspection of the construction of the different types of water wells, grouting, monitoring wells, closed-loop wells, installation of water well pumps, the sealing of abandoned wells, and helpful internet links. It is for the most part a stand-alone manual, containing references to the codes and tables that clarify and streamline the inspection process, including the minimal lateral distances in feet between water wells, closed-loop heat pump wells, and sources of contamination, separate charts for grouting and sealing abandoned wells, listing of approved pitless well adapters and units, listing of approved backflow preventers for irrigation wells having chemical injection systems, and volume and hydraulic conversion equivalents.

The manual incorporates numerous check lists to facilitate the inspection of different types of wells, the installation of water well pumps, and the sealing of abandoned wells. Since the checklists are on separate pages, all the well inspector has to do is copy the check list and use it for the type of inspection desired.

IDPH gave a presentation on the manual on August 29 as part of the IEHA South Chapter Conference, held at the Rend Lake Conference Center. It the past, there was confusion among local health departments as to the differences between well casing and liner pipe. The presentation explained these differences and outlined the conditions under which liner pipe is installed and grouted in place. A similar presentation on it will be given at the Peoria region annual local health department water program training session on November 1.

The second draft was mailed to the local health departments during August for their review and input and to return any comments they may have within 90 days. As it is tested and applied under field conditions, it is anticipated that changes will be made to the manual over time. Any recommendations to improve it will be most appreciated.
The IEHA Annual Educational Conference
October 25 & 26, 2007
Hotel Père Marquette • Peoria Illinois

Registration materials and conference flyer are included with this newsletter mailing!

This year’s AEC will feature speakers from: CDC, IEMA, Amtrak, IEPA, Niton and much more.

Topics for this year include: Taste of Chicago Foodborne Illness, Rabies and Bats, Class V Injection Wells, Trouble Shooting Problem Wells, Noro-like Viruses, Plumbing Cross Connections, Unusual Sources of Lead, Radon, and much more.

Earn up to 10 LEHP CEU hours
Five (5) IDPH food hours
Three (3) IDPH water hours
Three (3) IDPH sewage hours

This year the exhibit hall has more than doubled in size and will have many new companies.

Other activities:
• CDP Sponsored Presidential Reception/Social on October 25th
• Awards Luncheon on October 25

Wanted: Items To Analyze For Lead
During the October 2007 AEC, you will have the opportunity to bring such household items as: toys, dishes, pottery, etc. to a presentation titled, "It Ain't Paint- Identifying Other Sources of Lead In A Child's Environment." Thermo Fisher Scientific Representative Bill Radosevich will demonstrate the latest in NITON Lead Analyzers including a model that can determine if that treasured toy, heirloom or "Made Overseas" item contains lead.

Goose/Pigeon Control Innovations
Innolytics, LLC CEO Erick Wolf will give a presentation on innovative new products for Canadian geese and pigeon control at the Annual Educational Conference in October. OvoControl G Ready-To-Use-Bait for Canadian geese was developed in collaboration with scientists at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Wildlife Research Center in Fort Collins, CO to help reduce bird populations by decreasing the number of hatched eggs during the breeding season. OvoControl P Ready-To Use Bait for pigeons effectively controls egg hatchability in pigeons. OvoControl P interferes with the formation of the vitelline membrane that separates the yolk and white in the egg, so no embryo is ever formed.

IEPA Coordinator Will Speak On Class V Injection Wells
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Underground Injection Control (UIC) Coordinator Bur Filson will give a presentation on Class V Injection Wells at the Annual Educational Conference in October. As the UIC Coordinator for the Permit Section, Bureau of Land, Mr. Filson serves as the point of contact for UIC issues from within the Section, Bureau, and Agency wide. Class V injection wells are the shallow injection wells such as dry wells, septic systems, and injection wells used for rededication of soil and groundwater contamination.
How do I know if my private sewage disposal system is working???

By Chad Moorman

What is "working"? In my discussion with numerous individuals within the industry over the past few years I have received interesting answers to this question. Such as, "it's not discharging to the ground surface", "it has worked fine for 15+ years without maintenance", "it's not backing up into the house" and "it's only slow draining a few months/weeks throughout the year." These responses along with other indicators lead me to believe there needs to be more education within the industry to help develop a better understanding of how private sewage disposal systems are to operate and treat domestic waste. Understanding how a system should operate and what are the conditions needed to achieve proper treatment is a never ending learning process because of the continuing advancements within the industry, along with concerns of the impact on public health and the environment. This is not going to be an easy task, but it is a worthy goal. As regulators, contractors and property owners become more educated and better understand the principles and reasons why specific conditions are needed to achieve appropriate treatment, the productivity and longevity of private sewage disposal systems will be increased.

In addition to pointing out this concern in the State, I would also like to take time to point out there are many knowledgeable and educated individuals within the Illinois private sewage disposal industry. You see many of them year after year at the conferences, trade shows and industry related meetings. The industry is constantly making advancements and they would like to be a part of this process in addition to increasing their knowledge and understanding. A challenge I have for myself, and I recommend to others is to tap into the knowledge and experiences of these individuals. I have found these individuals are willing to take time to share their experiences and lessons learned.

An issue that has recently been receiving a lot of attention and discussion is vertical separation. There are some that believe changing one word in a code will have a detrimental impact and be too difficult and costly to enforce. The issue is not which word is used in the code, but what is the reason or intent for achieving the vertical separation. Having an unsaturated layer of soil beneath the trench allows the naturally occurring organisms within the soil to provide final treatment and reduction and/or elimination of harmful pathogens and viruses commonly found within septic tank effluent before they reach a limiting layer and/or ground water. If there is not a sufficient amount of unsaturated soil, proper treatment or elimination of pathogens and viruses may not occur. Many studies have illustrated the need for a two to four feet zone. In addition to treatment, having the separation will eliminate those times of the year when the system is slow draining or backing up into the building because of seasonal high water tables. While discussing this issue, I have heard this comment several times, "no one is dying or getting sick from this". This is a difficult view or justification for me to agree with or even understand. As individuals charged with advancing the industry and protecting public health and the environment, we should be practicing good governance by utilizing practices and policies best suited for each site and the individuals and environment surrounding the property. Sometimes it may require more then just slapping in the same system that has been used for twenty years. It may require the need for more thorough site or soil evaluation and the use of an advanced treatment system to achieve proper treatment of the effluent before it is discharged to a subsurface seepage trench. This leads us to evaluate the private sewage disposal system and determine if we are installing a system that distributes effluent or one designed to achieve proper treatment. Voluntarily addressing the issue of ground water protection and achieving proper treatment now is better then having the issue forced upon the industry, which may require drastic changes to correct numerous years of passiveness or disregard for proper separation. This type of repercussion has already been seen as it relates to surface discharging private sewage disposal systems.

The need for more advanced and more frequent training is another issue that has been expressed by many in the industry. Several avenues are being explored that would help to provide the needed education and training, but many limitations are being encountered such as shrinking budgets and shrinking or limited staff at all levels within the industry. The Illinois Department of Public Health has been and will continue to address this issue by developing and promoting training for regulators and contractors as well as property owners. Upon approval of the proposed amendments to the Private Sewage Disposal Code continuing education will be required for contractors. This training is already required for local health department staff under the Local Health Protection Grant. Research and development of education and training programs/modules on which the Department is working or partnering with industry professionals has focused on understanding soils and soil analysis reports, proper private sewage disposal system design and configuration, the unsaturated zone, proper maintenance, evaluation of a system and site, identifying and treating high strength waste and understanding and determining system abuse (loading/waste strength and hydraulics).

I hope an understanding or recognition for more training and education is relevant from my findings and concerns expressed. Developing and presenting all of the training and education material can not effectively be done by just one person. It will need the participation and support from all within the industry to be successful. If you encounter a topic or concept that would be beneficial to provide education and training for, please contact me at chad.moorman@illinois.gov. By partnering and working together we can help advance the onsite wastewater industry in Illinois.
Water Softener Discharges DO Harm Septic Systems — And The Problem is Easy to Solve
Mark Gross

Contrary to what some people say, water softener backwash poses a problem, not only to septic tanks and drainfields, but also to advanced treatment systems. When the water softener resin is backwashed two or three times a week, concentrated brine enters the wastewater stream as a slug of 38 to 112 gallons each backwash cycle. This causes two problems. One problem is that the septic tank discharges solids into the drainfield, which can cause the soil to plug and the drainfield to fail. Also, if there is a secondary treatment component, such as a media filter or ATU, it will perform abnormally. The simple solution to these problems is to route backwash brine directly into the drainfield.

Although research on the effects of softener brine was performed at NSF and the University of Wisconsin, this research did not include septic tanks and did not reflect real-world conditions. The NSF study used complete-mix activated-sludge ATUs, not septic tanks. In studies with septic tanks, which are quiescent (not mixed), the high concentration of salt introduced by backwash brine causes stratification in the tank. The salt water dives to the bottom of the tank, and the fresh water rides across the surface of the brine layer. The heavy salt water can actually lift the sludge from the bottom of the tank, washing it into the downstream components. Septic tanks that receive water softener brine have been observed to have no distinct layers of sludge, scum, and clear zone, as they should have in order to perform primary treatment.

The 1978 University of Wisconsin study, which dealt only with the soil dispersal component, not septic tanks, did not conclude whether or not water softener backwash brine is harmful to septic systems, and the study suggests — at least five times — that additional research is needed. Since that study, researchers have found evidence of both good and bad effects of water softener backwash brine upon soil dispersal systems. However, field observations of side-by-side dispersal systems in a shared mound showed that the trenches receiving the effluent with water softener brine formed a thick, gelatinous slime layer that clogged the infiltrative surface, while the trenches receiving no salt water discharge remained open with a normal microbial clogging layer.

Until conclusive research is performed, the evidence of observation and common sense must be trusted. Sodium concentrations over 3500 mg/L inhibit anaerobic digestion. Chloride concentrations over 180 mg/L also inhibit microbial growth. Over the course of history, all cultures have used salt as a preservative and disinfectant. It simply makes common sense that high concentrations of salt will inhibit the growth of microorganisms used for wastewater treatment. Observation supports this assumption: a field study of 18 wastewater treatment systems in Virginia clearly showed that nitrogen removal was inhibited in systems receiving water softener backwash brine.

For these reasons, just as managers of municipal systems prohibit the discharge of salty wastes into their systems, most of the manufacturers of advanced wastewater treatment systems have clauses in their warranties voiding the warranty if water softener backwash brine is discharged to the treatment system. Homeowners who want to avoid this by rerouting the backwash brine away from the septic tank are often told that it would require cutting of concrete footings and floors at a cost of “thousands of dollars.” Yet, in the Virginia field study, five water softener backwash discharges were routed out of the wastewater system for less than $100 per home using simple plumbing components. A pipe from the softener can lead directly to the distribution box or discharge basin. This simple, inexpensive measure prevents septic tank and treatment system failure and keeps the system warranty in effect.

Given the abundant evidence for the harmful effects of brine, and given how easy it is to keep these discharges out of septic systems, it makes sense for regulators to require water softeners to be installed in such a way that they pose no problems for wastewater treatment systems.
A Workforce "Crisis" in Environmental Health
7/19/2007

Public health professionals know that improvements in environmental health have been even more important in increasing Americans' lifespan over the past century than improvements in medicine or hospital care. But while the exploits of heroic doctors and nurses are featured in TV shows like "Gray's Anatomy," there's no such show about the men and women who strive to keep our air, food and water clean.

So perhaps it's no surprise that while the nationwide shortage in nurses received extensive media coverage and attention from politicians, a "similar, if not equally sizeable shortage" of environmental health professionals has gone largely ignored, notes Michael Herring, REHS, MPH (Capt, USPHS), Senior Environmental Health Scientist, Environmental Health Services Branch (EHSB), NCEH.

The workforce crisis plaguing environmental health goes beyond a shortage of personnel, Herring says. It's also a dearth of leadership, training and education—factors that are becoming even more important as demands on environmental health practitioners grow.

To change this trend, Herring and his colleagues are at work on programs and publications designed to improve both the number and the quality of environmental health practitioners at the tribal, state and local level. Their ambitious agenda extends to improving the way environmental health is practiced on the front line.

A Starved Workforce
Herring estimates that between 40 percent and 50 percent of the environmental health workforce will be eligible to retire within the next five years. As these employees near retirement, a gap has formed, Herring says, as new employees are not adequately prepared to step in.

A major reason for this is that not enough young professional are making a career in local environmental health. "They work hard for a few years; their workload is fairly intense, and the pay is abysmal," Herring says. "They get burned out, but they have good solid training, and they're hired away by private industry."
The workforce is also inadequately trained. Herring estimates that more than 90 percent of the current workforce has no formal degree in public health or environmental health. The result is a workforce that is poorly prepared for some of its emerging responsibilities, such as disaster and terrorism response. "We're asking a lot of our environmental health practitioners, and requiring more technical expertise," Hugh Mainzer, MS, DVM, (Capt., USPHS) acting chief of the EHSP. "But there aren't a lot of people to do the work."

Increasingly, today's new environmental health practice professionals lack a range of skills, instead specializing in a single area such as food safety. But "in a disaster environment, broadly trained and experienced generalists are critical during public health response and recovery activities when impacted populations need safe water, food, sanitation, and shelter," says Herring, who was an environmental health team lead during the response to Hurricane Katrina.

Revitalizing Environmental Health Services

The low pay and inadequate training of environmental health practitioners grow in part out of the limited view of environmental health held by some policymakers. "Environmental health has taken a major shift in the last couple of decades to a fee-for-service structure," says Herring. Cash-strapped local and state governments are hungry for the revenues that come from restaurants permits, septic tanks permits, well permits and the like. As a result, many agencies pour their attention into inspections. They adopt what Herring calls a "checkbox mentality."

"When policymakers think of environmental health specialists, they think those people are just checking boxes on a sheet," Herring says. "Environmental health specialists are problem solvers, yet they're paid based on that checkbox mentality." Enforcing laws and regulations, notes Herring, fulfills only one of the Ten Essential Public Health Services. Instead, practitioners must take a more systematic approach to prevention—monitoring environmental health, diagnosing and solving problems, educating and empowering communities.

One local environmental health manager, Dwayne Roadcap, recently found that his agency was in danger of succumbing to that checkbox mentality. Roadcap is program manager of the Virginia Department of Health's Division of Onsite Sewage and Water Services. His agency was understaffed and inundated with septic tank permit requests. The result was a backlog that affected staff morale and drew criticism from applicants.

Roadcap discovered the solution to his problem when he became a fellow at the Environmental Public Health Leadership Institute, which is sponsored by CDC.

Training the Next Wave of Leaders

Now in its third year, EPHLI is a year-long fellowship for environmental health
practitioners at the state and local level, says program coordinator John Sarisky, RS, MPH (Capt, USPHS), also a Senior Environmental Health scientist in the EHSB. With a current cohort of 40, the program also takes fellows from academia and non-profits.

The program includes three weeklong educational sessions and a final project designed to apply systems thinking to a real-world problem at home, all under the supervision of a CDC mentor. It was at EPHLI that Roadcap found a way forward for his organization, says Roadcap's mentor, Brian Hubbard, MPH, Environmental Health Scientist at EHSB.

"Using systems thinking, Dwayne eloquently defined the problem," Hubbard says. "He said we're becoming a permitting organization, not even doing public health. He said we should change our paradigm, get out of the permitting business and develop a public health program." Roadcap developed a plan to outsource inspections to private firms, freeing up staff to focus on minimizing risk and achieving public health goals.

CDC is involved in several other initiatives to build the capacity of the environmental health workforce. Here are just a few:

- **Establishing new academic programs.** In the mid-1990s, the number of graduates of undergraduate environmental health programs began to decline, plummeting by nearly half to about 300 a year by 2003, Herring says. A new program had not been accredited in more than 20 years. But thanks to an agreement between CDC and the Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs (www.aehap.org), eight new undergraduate programs and four new graduate programs have been accredited in the last four years. Student enrollment and graduation in environmental health programs have also started climbing. AEHAP provides funding for schools to enhance their student recruitment programs, especially among minorities. "They do a magnificent job with a small amount of money," says Herring.

- **Attracting former military.** The uniformed services of the United States employ about 7,000 active duty environmental health practitioners. Their experience, training and leadership skills are sorely needed by local environmental health departments. But many who leave the uniformed services are not even aware that job opportunities exist in local or state agencies, Herring says. To raise awareness, CDC produced the Career Resource Guide for Uniformed Services Environmental Health Practitioners, with support from CDC's Uniformed Services Environmental Public Health Careers Work Group. The document gives details on career paths, salaries, and education. It also highlights several success stories of veterans now working in environmental health.

- **Promoting standards.** A major push to improve standards for the practice of environmental health was launched with the publication of "A National Strategy to Revitalize Environmental Public Health Services" in 2003. Produced by CDC with broad stakeholder input, the report laid the foundation for other efforts such as the development of the Ten Essential Environmental Health Services (an outgrowth of the Ten Essential Public..."
The fourth challenge was to strengthen the protocols for co-sponsorship of educational events. Once again, the Strategic Planning Committee was given the task of developing the protocols. The Board approved the new protocols at the March Board meeting.

During the March Board meeting, we discussed how the web site could be used to better communicate with membership. A few months later, Paul Chase and his staff revamped the web site and created a members forum section so that the membership could discuss different topics and communicate better. I think I can say for the entire membership...OUT STANDING JOB CES!!!!!!

An ongoing project that Glenn Filip, Publications Chair, has been working on is the development of the on-line Sanitarian Hand Book. The basic format has been approved and now Glenn is in need of all Technical Chairs and membership to assist him in writing the different sections and topics. Please contact Glenn today and volunteer to help write those sections that are within your area of expertise.

Recently, at the NEHA Conference in Atlantic City, Wil Hayes and I attended an information forum for affiliate presidents. During the meeting Heidi Shaw, NEHA Crediting Coordinator, was curious about IEHA’s LEHP review course that is conducted by Walter Saraniecki. Apparently IEHA is the only Affiliate that provides a review course to its membership. Therefore, NEHA has asked and the Board has agreed to explore creating a partnership between IEHA and NEHA to offer the LEHP/RS/REHS review course on line.

Finally, I have to express my appreciation to the membership for permitting me to be your President of this great Association for the past year. I look forward to fulfilling my duties as the immediate Past-President in the up coming year. This means that I will be approaching you to serve as a regional Vice-President or a Board Member. So be prepared to say, “YES, I will serve.” Remember that this Association needs everyone to volunteer.

Thanks again for letting me serve as President, and I hope to see you at the AEC in October.

Respectfully,

R. Todd Campbell, LEHP
President

President
Continued from Page 4

By focusing on the links between factors in the environment and adverse health outcomes, systems-based environmental health assessments and interventions also help to highlight prevention strategies designed to ensure the proper functioning of critical community infrastructure (such as food or water safety programs) that prevent human disease.

The objective of NCEH’s Environmental Health Services activity is to strengthen the role of state, local, and national environmental health programs and professionals to better anticipate, identify, and respond to adverse environmental exposures and the consequences of these exposures to human health.

The EHSS provides access to topical, relevant, scientific information, consultation, and field assistance to environmental health specialists, sanitarians, environmental health professionals and practitioners.

The EHSS is committed to developing and reinforcing an awareness of the important role environmental health and its workforce plays within the public health practice community.

This Inside Story by Richard Sine
IEHA ❱ Who’s Who
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Continued on next page
IEHA NEWS

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Management- VACANT
NEHA and Policy

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• established cooperative work projects with NSF International, Underwriters Laboratories (UL), and the National Swimming Pool Foundation;
• has formal working relationships with and represents NEHA on working committees of other national organizations, including the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), the National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH), the American Public Health Association (APHA), the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), the Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs (AEHAP), the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the American Lung Association (ALA), the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the Consumer Federation of America (CFA), the Environmental Law Institute (ELI), the National Association of Counties (NaCO), the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA), the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH), the American Water Works Association (AWWA), the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), the National Association of Waste Transporters (NAWT), the American Planning Association (APA), the National Conference of Local Environmental Health Administrators (NCLEHA), the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI), Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), and the School Nutrition Association (SNA).

I don’t have much faith that this listing is going to make any difference to that small handful of difficult people who enjoy telling others that NEHA is hopeless when it comes to policy involvement. But that hunch doesn’t excuse those of us who work on behalf of NEHA and who know how committed our board is to policy involvement from setting the record straight. Our membership deserves no less than an accurate portrayal of all that we do, especially in this realm of our work.

Now please excuse me while I get back to that 95+ percent of my pleasurable work life with NEHA!

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Employer: _______________________________________________________________________

Address: ________________________________________________________________________

City/State/Zip: __________________________________________________________________

☐ This is my home address  ☐ This is my work address

Phone Number: ___________________________  Fax Number: ____________________________

Email: ___________________________________________________________________________

License Type:  ☐ No License  ☐ LEHP  ☐ LEHP-In-Training  ☐ PE

License Number: __________________________________________________________________

Please mark your membership class:

☐ Active - $40.00  ☐ Industry - $40.00  ☐ *Student - $5.00  ☐ Retired - $10.00  ☐ Honorary - Free

Please mark your Chapter Affiliation:

☐ North  ☐ South  ☐ Central  ☐ Out of State

Please mark your employment category:

☐ Local Health Department  ☐ Illinois Department of Public Health  ☐ Other Government Agency  ☐ Private Industry  ☐ Academia  ☐ Faculty ☐ Student  ☐ Other: Please Specify Below:

* Students: Please submit a letter from your faculty advisor verifying that you are a student.

All applicants: Please return your completed application and check, payable to IEHA to:

Illinois Environmental Health Association
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 609
Rochelle, Illinois 61068-0609

Questions? Contact the IEHA Office at (815) 562-1040

Amount Enclosed: $___________________