My year as president of NEHA is coming to a close. I am very grateful to each of you for your support and encouragement during the past year. As we started on a new road of discovery in July 2014, the board of directors had a monumental task to replace a person who had led NEHA for over 31 years. We also had the enormous responsibility of maintaining NEHA operations and keeping the lights on. As I wrote in my first column, the most important item on the agenda during my presidency would be hiring a new executive director for NEHA. Many of you e-mailed or called me to express your support for NEHA and the board of directors as we began a search for a new executive director who could lead NEHA into the 21st century.

The executive search team was formed at the April 2014 board of directors meeting and immediately began work to identify a search firm to guide us through the process. In late September, the board of directors met to discuss the ongoing operations of NEHA. After review and discussions regarding current operations, the board of directors voted to hire an interim executive director. The board wisely chose a past president to lead NEHA until we found a permanent executive director. Brian Collins, 2012–2013 NEHA president, had recently retired after serving for over 25 years as an environmental health director. His familiarity with NEHA as a large and complex organization was very helpful in which he was able to draw upon his experiences as a board member and having gone through the leadership from second vice president to past president. His thorough knowledge of NEHA, management skills, and the profession gave him an insight into what was needed during this transition period. Brian was and continues to be the absolute best choice for leading NEHA in the interim while we worked to identify and bring on board our new executive director. My appreciation to Brian for stepping up to the plate and taking on this role for NEHA is boundless.

By late fall our search firm had received over 40 applications for the NEHA executive director position. The executive search team spent the next eight weeks working on reducing the number of applicants to a smaller group whom they interviewed via Skype. Four candidates were selected for in-person interviews with the board of directors and the executive search team. Our normal December board of directors’ meeting was moved to the second week of January. At this board meeting, the executive search team and the entire board of directors interviewed the four candidates whom we had brought to Denver. After much discussion, questions, and comments, the board of directors in conjunction with the executive search team voted on a new executive director. Our unanimous choice was Dr. David Dyjack. Dr. Dyjack, as you may have read in last month’s column, was the most qualified candidate and his expertise and knowledge about all of the boards’ areas of concern was admirable, and even more so was his vision for NEHA and our profession moving forward.

Our new executive director started officially on May 4. Brian Collins will continue to manage NEHA and work with Dr. Dyjack to ensure a seamless transition. This year has brought the board together in a new way including having our October board of directors meeting in person. The board of directors has excelled this year, enabling NEHA to continue to move forward and to adjust to the changes that are inherent in management and our dynamic profession.

As I look back on my year as president, I have found NEHA to be an organization of and for people who care greatly about environmental health and ordinary citizens. It has been a privilege to work with our wonderful board of directors as they worked tirelessly to sustain and improve our organization. As board members, we are volunteers, and most if not all of us have full-time jobs. This year has been a challenge for NEHA, its members, its staff, and its board. The staff, management, and board have given more of their time, thought, and energy than at any other period in NEHAs recent history. Our year has
been one most of us are looking forward to closing out and moving on with a new executive director and a future in which we can all be participating members of the new and improved NEHA.

I want to assure you we have chosen a new executive director who will lead NEHA to greater heights with your support and involvement. I believe you will find him to be an excellent choice to continue the current work and enhance the opportunities of NEHA for which many of you have contributed a good part of your working lives as active members.

As I close my last column, please know of my deep appreciation and affection for you as members, and for providing me with the opportunity you gave me to serve you and NEHA as your president. Your support and kind thoughts throughout the past year were greatly appreciated. I look forward to visiting with many of you in Orlando, Florida, at the 2015 Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition on July 13–15 to usher in a new era for NEHA.

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Did You Know?

NEHA’s new membership categories give every professional affordable options to belong and an opportunity to grow. You can choose the membership that is right for you, your career, and your commitment to the environmental health profession. From multiple-year memberships to the delivery of the Journal of Environmental Health, you decide what works best for you. Find more information about NEHA’s different membership categories at www.neha.org/member/join.html.

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