

NEHA's 2001 Annual Educational Conference and Exhibition Atlanta, Georgia

Toni Marinkovich
Tim Towey



NEHA's board of directors listen to comments from NEHA members during the general assembly.

Introduction

The 65th Annual Educational Conference and Exhibition (AEC) was held from June 28 to July 3, 2001, in Atlanta, Georgia. Over 1,500 people attended the educational sessions, exhibits, special tours, and networking events. While most of the attendees live and work in the United States, the AEC attracts international professionals as well. Of particular note this year were large contingents from Great Britain and Jamaica.

The conference received great reviews from attendees. The energy level was high at the 2001 AEC, with more activities and

educational opportunities to choose from than ever before. Attendees lauded Atlanta, the entertainment, and the networking opportunities. As is usually the case, however, the educational offerings were the subject of the most praise. One attendee said of the educational sessions, "No conference can offer a higher quality or wider range of education experience." Another called the AEC an, "opportunity to learn from the best people working on the cutting edge." NEHA would like to thank all of the speakers, sponsors, exhibitors, and attendees for making the 65th NEHA AEC one of its best.

Opening Ceremony and Keynote Address

At the opening ceremony, NEHA's outgoing president, Colonel (rtd.) Anthony C. Aiken, welcomed attendees to the conference. He expressed NEHA's interest in tapping into some of the Southern tradition and history that make Atlanta so unique and colorful. President-Elect Laura Studevart, R.S., offered an invocation and a call for environmental health professionals to serve as models for our children.

Several guests were introduced, including conference participants traveling from Canada, Mexico, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Jamaica (home of NEHA's newest affiliate). In addition, new NEHA members and first-time AEC attendees were acknowledged, as were participants from the American Association of Sanitarians. The generous contributions of our sponsors also were recognized.

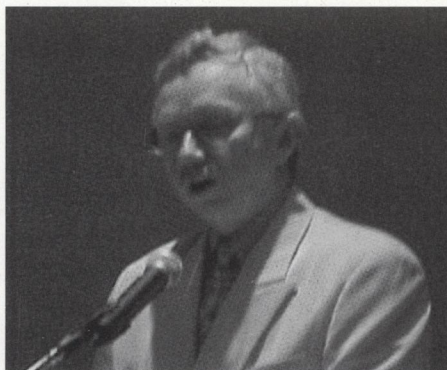
Richard J. Jackson, M.D., M.P.H., director of the National Center for Environmental Health of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), offered a Conference Welcome and introduced his vision for the future of environmental health. His presentation focused on the "Three Infs," the term he used to sum up the importance of infection, infrastructure, and in-filling. Dr. Jackson challenged the audience to bring environmental

health concerns into the future of urban design and development; he stressed the need for environmental health professionals to be involved in planning water and transportation systems as well as community recreational spaces. To stress this point, he referred to the Pew Commission's recommendation that community infrastructure be improved to address environmental health concerns. On the subject of infectious disease management, he stressed the need for real-time data and technological integration. Jackson also mentioned distance-based learning and online epidemiological surveillance as indicators of the future in the environmental health field.

A brief awards presentation followed Jackson's presentation, after which NEHA President Aiken introduced the NEHA Endowment Foundation and encouraged all who were present to look into their hearts and pocketbooks to guarantee a successful launch of this new program. In a playful reference to a \$3 million movie advance recently received by the upcoming keynote speaker, Richard Preston, Ph.D., Aiken suggested that Dr. Preston would surely like to be the first to make a donation to NEHA's Endowment Foundation. President Aiken then officially introduced Preston to the audience.

Preston is the author of two best-selling books that delve into the heart of environmental and public health. *The Hot Zone*, the book that introduced the world to the threat of the *Ebola* virus, was on the *New York Times* best-seller list for 42 weeks. His latest work, *The Cobra Event*, centers on the subject of biological terrorism, which has come to be recognized as the most significant security threat to our nation. The research process brought Preston into contact with the nation's foremost authorities on the subjects of emerging pathogens and bioterrorism. The insights he shared with NEHA conference attendees were both fascinating and frightening.

After graduating summa cum laude from Pomona College, Preston received a Ph.D. in English from Princeton University. As a result of his extensive knowledge on the subject of bioterrorism, he was asked to make a statement before the 1996 Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism & Government Information and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on Chemical and Biological Weapons Threats to America. Interestingly, an asteroid, the asteroid "Preston," has been named after him in recognition of his scientific contributions. He gave a stirring presentation to a packed hall of over 875 NEHA conference



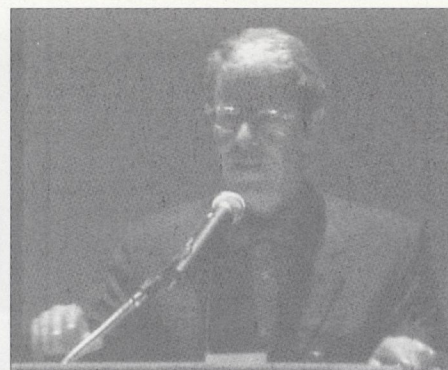
Richard Jackson, M.D., M.P.H., welcomes attendees at the opening ceremony.

attendees. The crowd was moved to honor him with a standing ovation at the conclusion of his chilling address.

Preston referred to himself as "a chronicler of the human spirit" and recognized that spirit as alive and well among the conference attendees and the environmental health field in general. He cited the opening prayer, given by NEHA President-Elect Studevant, as a testament to the great spirit and dedication our ranks bring to their profession. Preston suggested that the general public doesn't grasp the importance of public-health workers, a community he described as "at the epicenter of subtle events taking place in our species." Both of his books have represented public-health officials as heroes. As a result, many celebrities clamored for the opportunity to play public-health characters in the Hollywood renditions of the book.

The idea for his first book, *The Hot Zone*, came about in 1992 when AIDS began receiving a lot of publicity. Preston interviewed several doctors and virologists about various outbreaks that could occur. One doctor mentioned an *Ebola-Reston* virus outbreak that occurred in primate populations near Washington, D.C. The virus was spread monkey to monkey. The monkey handlers had been going about their daily lives and incurring their usual contacts with the general population, not recognizing that they had been exposed to a potentially lethal virus. Some of the monkey handlers became infected, although no humans became visibly ill from this strain of the virus. The doctor pointed out that since *Ebola* does not travel through the air, it is not a likely "doomsday" virus. A small change in the genomic sequence could, however, change that. Hence, the chain of events in this minor outbreak became the seed for what developed into Preston's first best-seller.

Viruses are very opportunistic and can adapt to hosts of different species. Humans make excellent hosts since they are plentiful and often



Keynote speaker Richard Preston, Ph.D., author of *The Hot Zone* and *The Cobra Event*.

live in densely populated areas. The worldwide population of humanity has undergone a dramatic shift to urban living that increases our vulnerability. Several tropical supercities could function as ideal breeding grounds for viruses, which is why Preston referred to them as "biological time bombs." Those supercities include Lagos, Calcutta, Sao Paulo, Mexico City, Jakarta, and Tokyo. In such locations, new infectious diseases could be disastrous.

Preston gave an enthralling real-life account of his experience with the *Ebola* virus. In the course of his studies, he had gained familiarity with the Khatoum/Kaitun Caves in Uganda/Zaire (now Congo). These caves are notorious in Africa for their association with the *Ebola* virus. They house a large salt deposit and, as a result, attract a great diversity of animal life. On one occasion, Preston was contacted by ABC anchorman Forrest Sawyer, who planned to produce an hour-long television program about the virus. He wanted to include footage on the caves and had called Preston to discuss safety issues. Preston recommended that Forrest and his photographer arm themselves with Level A protective suits and viral respirators to enter the caves. Unfortunately, the photographer's luggage was lost in flight, and he chose to film the caves without protection of any kind. Days later, the photographer awoke in his Manhattan apartment feeling feverish and noticed blood blisters all over his face and chest. He was stricken with fear that he had contracted the deadly *Ebola* virus while on location. A visit to his physician revealed that the blisters on his body were simply flea bites. The take-home lesson from this story is that a population of fleas was alive and well in the African caves, then was transplanted successfully to a midtown Manhattan apartment in less than one week's time. Fleas are a common vector for many bacterial and viral infections (including *Ebola*) and could take an outbreak to unmanageable levels.

Sponsors and Partners of NEHA's 2001 AEC and Exhibition

The organizations listed below supported NEHA's 2001 AEC as sponsors and partners, making many valuable aspects of the conference possible. NEHA wishes to thank its financial sponsors for their generous contributions and also thanks its partners for their effort and teamwork.

Sponsors

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NSF International

Tier IV (\$2,000- \$5,000)

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Columbus Bank and Trust
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Georgia Department of Human Resources—Division of Public Health
Georgia Environmental Health Association
National Center for Environmental Health
National Conference of Local Environmental Health Administrators
US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
US Food and Drug Administration, Southeast Regional Office

While researching his second book, *The Cobra Event*, Preston became familiar with the bioweapons industry and shared some of his insights with the NEHA audience. He mentioned a classified list of as many as 25 countries thought to be working on bioweaponry, with scientists developing the technical equivalent of the hydrogen bomb. Preston referred to this as "the dark side of the human spirit." Because of the classified nature of the subject, Preston was limited by security clearance requirements while researching for his book. He realized that, unlike *The Hot Zone*, *The Cobra Event* would have to be written as fiction.

He explained how a bioweapon might be deployed, using anthrax and smallpox as examples. Anthrax is easy to grow and easy to disperse as a powder. He performed a simple demonstration with baby powder to show the audience how a few grams of powdery substance gets distributed through large spaces with the aid of a common HVAC system. Smallpox would be more difficult to obtain, but its infectious nature makes it a very menacing threat. Humans have no immunity to smallpox. The U.S. government currently has about seven million doses of smallpox vaccine; Preston suggested that the minimum number of doses required to stop an outbreak would be roughly 40 million. At the height of the Cold War, the Soviet arms program included a bioweapons program that weaponized smallpox at Vector Lab in Siberia. Upon the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Soviet scientists defected all over the world, presumably taking seed amounts of smallpox virus with them to sell.

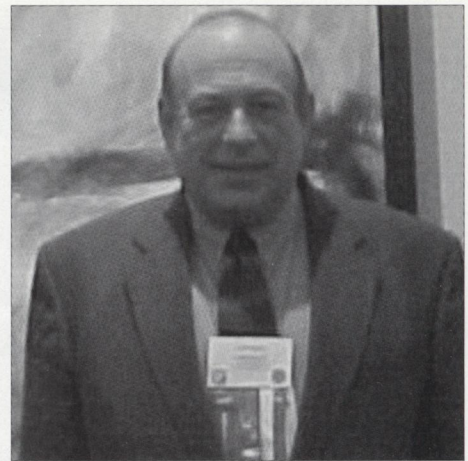
Preston told the audience he had been informed that President Clinton had read *The Cobra Event* from cover to cover in one sitting. The President was reportedly very frightened by the book, and it raised his awareness. He began recommending it to others. Raising awareness is exactly what Preston hopes to accomplish.

In his closing remarks, Preston expressed his desire to leave the audience with a sense of hope. He mentioned initiatives under way in the public-health community to increase surveillance measures, such as the RSVP Program in New Mexico, which is a touch-screen software program designed to expedite case reporting and generate instant epidemiological curves. Preston also referred to the National Pharmaceutical Stockpile, which is increasing the supply of vaccines and antibiotics to combat bioterrorism. His final remark was to stress his faith in human ingenuity and encourage the audience to do their best to ensure that preparedness efforts increase.

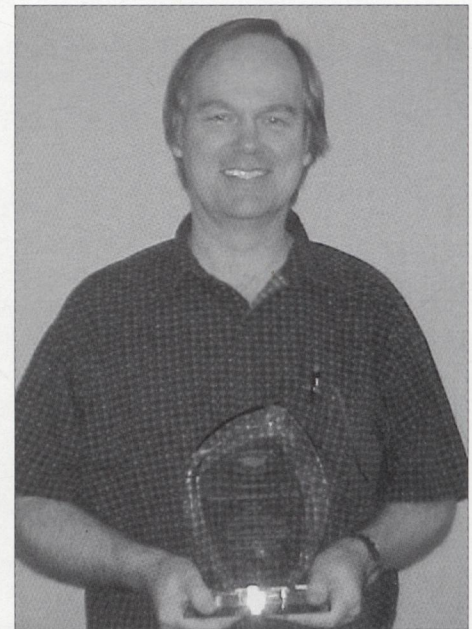
Certificates of Merit

Each affiliate may select one of its members for a national Certificate of Merit, which recognizes exemplary contributions to the profession of environmental health. Award recipients are announced at the awards program, and certificates signed by the NEHA president and executive director are forwarded to affiliate presidents so presentations can be made at affiliate meetings.

<i>Alabama</i>	Mitzi Chesser
<i>Illinois</i>	Paul Chase
<i>Massachusetts</i>	Priscilla L. Neves
<i>Michigan</i>	Richard Ive
<i>Minnesota</i>	Karen Swenson
<i>National Capital Area</i>	Mike Kasnia
<i>New Jersey</i>	Theresa Lombardi
<i>North Carolina</i>	Rachel Carpenter
<i>Ohio</i>	Deborah A. Leopold
<i>South Carolina</i>	H. Michael Longshore
<i>Texas</i>	Brian Collins
<i>Virginia</i>	Karl Rudolph
<i>Washington</i>	Linda L. Hofstad
<i>Wisconsin</i>	Mary Myszka
<i>Wyoming</i>	Linda Stratton and Wayne Cook



Mangold Award recipient George Kupfer, R.S.



Tom Hatfield, recipient of the A. Harry Bliss Editors' Award.

Awards and Honors

NEHA's AEC award ceremony was held immediately after the keynote presentation, so that the deserving individuals listed below could be recognized by their peers. Awards were presented for professionalism, various demonstrations of excellence, and contributions to environmental health. NEHA applauds these special people and is happy to recognize their accomplishments once again in this issue of the *Journal*.

Walter S. Mangold Award

NEHA's highest honor was bestowed this year on a very deserving George A. Kupfer, R.S., for his many years of service to environmental health. Please see the accompanying story on page 42, which details George's contributions.

Walter F. Snyder Award

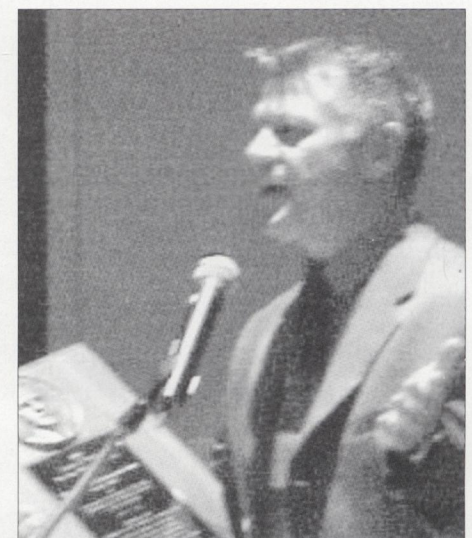
The Snyder Award was given this year to Dr. Robert W. Powitz. This award is a special joint act of recognition by NEHA and NSF International. Please see the accompanying story on page 43.

NEHA/CIEH Sabbatical Exchange Award

The sabbatical exchange program, financed by NSF International and managed by NEHA and its British counterpart, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), enables a deserving NEHA member to spend up to four weeks on sabbatical in the United Kingdom and a CIEH member to spend four weeks in the United States.

J. Shannon Swann, Ph.D., of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, National Park Service, was selected as this year's sabbatical ambassador to the United Kingdom. Applicants were screened on the basis of their portfolios and essays, and finalists were personally interviewed by the jury.

NEHA's plan to offer dual sabbatical opportunities next year—one to the United Kingdom in partnership with CIEH (as described above), and one to Canada in partnership with the Canadian Institute for Public Health Inspectors—is now official. Participants in the first annual sabbatical exchange between the United States and Canada will be announced at NEHA's 2002



David Ludwig, accepting the Crumbine Consumer Protection Award on behalf of the Maricopa County Health Department in Phoenix, Arizona.



Bob Powitz is congratulated by Tony Aiken, Dennis Mangino, and Nelson Fabian as he receives the Snyder Award.



Immediate Past President Tony Aiken passes the gavel to incoming President Laura Studevart.

AEC in Minneapolis. Details about both sab-
batical awards, including how and when to
apply for them, will be announced in future
issues of the *Journal*.

Certificates of Merit

Each NEHA affiliate is invited to choose one
of its members to be nationally recognized
for exemplary contributions to the profes-
sion. A Certificate of Merit is prepared for
and presented to each honoree. This year's
winners are listed in the sidebar on page 40.

Davis Calvin Wagner Award

This award, sponsored and presented by the
American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS), is
given for environmental health achievement so
distinguished that it merits the academy's
recognition. This year, Jim Balsamo received
the Wagner Award. AAS also elected the fol-
lowing new diplomates: Scott M. Butler,
Michael G. Halko, Joseph H. Hibberd,
Christine Moser-Fink, George M. Nakamura,
and Lawrence H. Pierce. Finally, AAS was
proud to name Eric W. Foskett, of the United
Kingdom, as the first-ever honorary diplomate.

A. Harry Bliss Editors' Award

Because the *Journal of Environmental Health* is
a product of contributors, the A. Harry Bliss
Editors' Award goes annually to a NEHA
member who has made an outstanding con-
tribution to editorial content. Dr. A. Harry
Bliss was editor of the *Journal* in 1969, the
year the award was first presented. When he
retired, the award was named after him to
honor his 40 years of involvement in the pro-
duction of the *Journal*.

This year, the A. Harry Bliss Editors' Award
went to Thomas H. Hatfield, R.E.H.S., Dr.P.H.
For more than a decade, Dr. Hatfield has con-
tributed feature articles, special reports, and

guest commentaries to the *Journal of
Environmental Health*. His article "Grading
Systems for Retail Food Facilities: A Risk-
Based Analysis" (which he co-authored with
Owen Seiver, R.E.H.S., Dr.P.A.), was fea-
tured on the outside front cover of the October
2000 issue of the *Journal*, and it generated
multiple requests for copies of that issue. Last
but not least, Tom has served NEHA for many
years as a *Journal* peer reviewer, and he has
consistently made himself available to help
the editorial staff.

Crumbine Consumer Protection Award

Each year, 10 cosponsors, including NEHA,
present a local government health unit with
the Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection
award for excellence in a food protection pro-
gram. Only local government health units in
the United States and Canada are eligible for
the Crumbine award. The award was present-
ed this year to the Maricopa County Health
Department (MCHD) in Phoenix, Arizona.
David Ludwig, MCHD's Environmental
Division Manager, accepted the award on
behalf of the department.

Past Presidents' Award

The Past Presidents group, comprising for-
mer NEHA presidents, annually recognizes a
NEHA member for outstanding achieve-
ment. This year the award went to Dick
Pantages, R.E.H.S., NEHA's Region 2 vice
president from California.

NEHA/AAS Scholarship Awards

The scholarship program, sponsored by NEHA
and the American Academy of Sanitarians,
awarded one \$2,000 graduate scholarship and
three \$1,000 undergraduate scholarships this
year. Nerissa Wu from the Boston University
School of Public Health received the graduate

scholarship. The undergraduate scholarships
were awarded to Scott Davison from Boise
State University in Idaho; Christina
Williamson from California State University,
Northridge; and Carla Buechler from Ferris
State University, Big Rapids, Michigan.

Student Research Presentations

NEHA congratulates the following students
for presenting their research at the AEC.
Thanks to a generous donation from CDC,
the students who participated in these events
each received a plaque and up to \$1,000 to
cover travel and related expenses. Presenting
research were Jason Childress from East
Central University, Ada, Oklahoma; Carolyn
Doyle from East Tennessee State University,
Johnson City; Jeffrey Gallagher from the
Institute for Environmental Quality, Dayton,
Ohio; Jon Neville from the DNA
Fingerprinting Laboratory, Salisbury,
Maryland; and Abigail Newton from East
Tennessee State University, Johnson City.

Past President's Pin

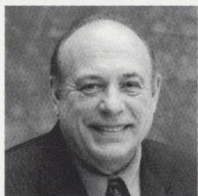
Outgoing NEHA President Tony Aiken was
recognized by the association for his excep-
tional year of service with both a past pre-
sident's pin and a past president's plaque.

Presidential Citations

These citations are very special to the NEHA
president, and therefore very few are award-
ed. They are given to individuals or organi-
zations that have made exemplary contribu-
tions to the association during the president's
term of office. Brenda Aiken, Dr. Welford
Roberts, NEHA staff, Harry Grenawitzke,
Tom Castino, Dennis Mangino, Dr. Henry
Falk, Dr. Richard Jackson, BG (rtd.) Walter
Johnson, and Norbert Campbell received
presidential citations this year.

2001 Mangold Award Recipient

George A. Kupfer, R.S.



The National Environmental Health Association is proud to present the 2001 Walter S. Mangold Award, its highest honor, to George A. Kupfer, R.S.

George has spent his lifetime in public service and has made a lasting contribution to the environmental health profession, both nationally and internationally. Starting as a staff sanitarian in the public sector, and then moving into the private sector as an industry executive, his responsibilities have included hands-on inspections, teaching, program and organizational administration, business development, and entrepreneurship. In the words of Peter J. Censky, executive director of the Water Quality Association, "George's role as ambassador, troubleshooter, guide and teacher has enriched the lives of consumers and helped municipalities find new and creative ways to serve their citizen's needs."

Continuing into his 46th year in the environmental health profession, George currently is the executive liaison for health and environment for Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL). He has been a major contributor at UL in the development of standards in related safety disciplines, as well as the establishment of criteria for accrediting laboratories that conduct sanitation safety certification. Tom Castino, president and CEO of UL, wrote "George is a leader in the safety certifications aspects of the sanitation of many products used on a daily basis by U.S. consumers. He has been tireless in setting the highest possible standards in the sanitation field, and has done so with extreme professionalism."

His six years with UL was preceded by six years as chief operating officer for NSF International (National Sanitation Foundation) and 34 years as environmental health director and specialist for the City of Milwaukee. At NSF International, George worked hard to improve the quality of life through consensus standards and accurate, cost effective conformity assessment of products and services focused on environmental and public health. Under his leadership in Milwaukee, the city developed a broad spectrum of new and innovative approaches to the prevention of environmental-related diseases.

Throughout his professional life, George has demonstrated the ability to work with and through the regulatory community and the regulated community. According to Chris Wiant, M.P.H., Ph.D., president and CEO of Caring for Colorado Foundation,

In leaving local health, George left his own comfort zone in order to advance a cause he believed in, that of consensus standards. . . . In his work with NSF International and UL, George took his technical expertise and public sector experience into the business world to facilitate finding common ground between regulatory agencies and the regulated community. The result is an improved dialogue between business and regulators and the growing strength of an effective voluntary standards effort that is now one part of the foundation of environmental protection.

George has contributed to environmental health initiatives at all levels—active participation in international, national and state environmental and public health organizations. During his time as president of the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) from 1990-1991, George was involved in several fundamental changes in the organization's structure. George's organizational leadership extends beyond NEHA to the American Public Health Association (APHA), the Conference of Local Environmental Health Administrators (CLEHA), and the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). Roger L. DeRoos, M.P.H., Ph.D., at the Department of Health and Human Services, wrote, "On numerous occasions, George was successful in promoting recognition of grassroots public health practitioners through his skillful participation in the State Affiliate Representatives group within APHA."

Another respected quality of George's is that he has truly understood the importance of a global perspective for environmental health professionals. According to V. Harry Adrounie, Ph.D., R.S., DAAS,

George has certainly surpassed the criteria of superior achievement and attainment of the highest moral and ethical standards of the profession and the Mangold criteria. In his present position at UL he has brought together most of the prominent sanitarians in the country as well as of NEHA into an Environmental and Public Health Council for the betterment of the profession, thus putting the 'sanitarian' into international prominence.

At NSF, he played a major role in founding and committing sponsorship of the NEHA/CIEH "traveling sanitarian" Sabbatical Award given annually to a sanitarian from the U.S. and a sanitarian from the UK to further their understanding and experience in the global aspects of environmental health. In addition, George has been active in the Canadian Institute of Environmental Health Inspectors. C. Dean Sargeant, past president of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI), wrote

George was the driving force behind the re-establishment of a strong relationship between NEHA and CIPHI. He was instrumental in the first joint NEHA/CIPHI Conference in Winnipeg in 1991. This event solidified the valuable relationship between environmental health professionals in the United States and Canada that continues to be unabated to this day.

George is an accomplished leader who has successfully developed numerous policies and programs that strive to protect the environment and public health. He is recognized and respected around the world, and he has demonstrated unwavering professionalism to all his partners in environmental health. As expressed by Patricia P. Evans, executive director of the Council on Education for Public Health, "George's distinguished career speaks volumes in support of his worthiness of this award, but it is in his personal attributes of commitment, sincerity and integrity that will do honor to the award's namesake." NEHA is very proud to present the 2001 Walter S. Mangold award to such a deserving candidate as George A. Kupfer.

2001 Walter F. Snyder Award Recipient

Dr. Robert W. Powitz



Thirty-four years ago, Dr. Robert W. Powitz began an adventure in environmental health that would take him from industrial hygienist in the State of New Jersey to the distinguished title of "one of the nation's most prominent environmental health professionals."

Advancing rapidly from hygienist to Senior Sanitarian, Powitz was given the task of forming a full-time health department for the Borough of Ringwood, New Jersey. This licensed health officer, the first in Ringwood Borough, took no time in implementing a health program that soon eradicated endemic Ascariasis among infants and children of the indigenous Ramapo Mountain People. Having established a full-service municipal health department in Ringwood, his advanced education became the next priority.

Dr. Powitz had earned his Bachelor of Science Agriculture degree from the University of Georgia in 1964. He was accepted at the University of Minnesota, School of Public Health as a graduate student. He completed his Masters of Public and Environmental Health in 1974 and his Ph.D. in Environmental Health in 1978 while supporting minors in epidemiology and microbiology.

As a post-doctoral research associate with the National Environmental Health Association, in 1978, Dr. Powitz was instrumental in redefining the Sanitarian profession, the first revision since its formal recognition in 1936. Multiple states reclassified the criteria for the Sanitarian profession; and, Powitz became an advocate in the growth and preservation of the Sanitarian profession.

In 1979, Dr. Powitz accepted an appointment as staff epidemiologist at Mercy Hospital in Detroit, Michigan. Once again, he excelled in his endeavor by identifying multiple causalities of post-Cesarean Section nosocomial infections. Implementing procedural changes in overall sanitation reduced the infection rate to less than three percent. Thus, the entire hospital chain adapted his modifications.

Dr. Powitz' tenure at Mercy Hospital was short lived as he was successfully recruited by Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan to establish an Environmental Health and Safety Office for the University. Not only did he establish this office, he served as its Director and biological safety officer for twelve years.

During his tenure, he orchestrated the implementation of a hazardous waste brokerage including a solvent recovery and reagent-recycling program. In a five-year span more than 54 tons of hazardous waste materials were processed leading to the establishment of hazardous waste collection sites throughout the State of Michigan.

As 'watchdog' for the profession of the Sanitarian, still at Wayne State, Dr. Powitz:

- co-founded and taught the Graduate Certificate and Masters degree programs in Hazardous Materials Management for eight years.
- served as a principal investigator for professional credentialing in environmental management.
- led by example in professional credentialing, he amassed 23 certifications and 6 licenses in 7 states and 13 national associations and/or boards.
- conducted tutorials, training sessions and conferences for the Michigan pest control industry.

In 1987, Dr. Powitz began a new career as a Forensic Sanitarian introducing the art of Forensic environmental health and safety to the sanitarian profession. These professionals now serve as expert

witnesses in public health litigation support activities. "In so doing, the State of Michigan Department of Commerce reluctantly, albeit formally recognized the Sanitarian as a professional entity," notes a fellow consultant. He adds, "Bob was the first to establish a Professional Corporation (P.C.) based on the Michigan Sanitarian Registration."

In 1992, the U.S. Department of Agriculture persuaded Dr. Powitz to join its Agriculture Research Service Plum Island Animal Disease Center in Greenport, New York. As Director, Biological Safety and Environment, he rewrote the USDA Biological Safety Manual using scientifically sound protocols and standards.

Powitz subsequently entered private practice as a consultant specializing in Institutional Environmental Health, particularly related to the often-neglected field of correctional facilities.

In addition to his private practice (R.W. Powitz & Associates, P.C.), Powitz currently serves as part-time health director for the Town of Westbrook, Connecticut.

Dr. Powitz has published numerous articles, papers and reports, and has made as many invited presentations and lectures. Three widely recognized publications in his dossier include:

- *Current Topics*, a quarterly magazine distributed throughout the United States and Canada on school safety and health issues.
- "Tools for Environmental Health," a regular column in the *Journal of Environmental Health* introducing new technologies and innovative methods for calibration and validation of field instrumentation.
- "The Corrections Advisor," a featured column in *Corrections Managers' Report*, devoted entirely to current issues in environmental health and safety of incarcerated persons.

"Technically, Bob is one of the finest environmental health professionals, advocates and communicators I have met in my 32-year academic, private and government career(s). His leadership qualities have been an asset to all who have needed his assistance ... [he is] a constant source of encouragement to his colleagues, students and 'clients,'" writes a fellow environmental health professional.

His dedication has brought him well-earned recognition for his work. His awards include: Laureate Diplomate #001 American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS); Davis Calvin Wagner Award, AAS; President's Award, Academy of Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (ACHMM) and President's Award CHMM-Michigan.

Dr. Powitz has an overwhelming desire to improve the practice of public health for his constituents and the public in general. Whether sharing institutional environmental health expertise, serving on the NSF Council of Public Health Consultants, participating in a NEHA workshop or doing volunteer work for a Federal agency, Powitz excels.

A fellow diplomat says it well, "Powitz is the quintessential sanitarian, combining extensive scientific background with his great enthusiasm and practical experience in the field. His no nonsense (tell it like it is) approach to problem solving combined with an ever present sense of humor has earned him a respected reputation as one of the nation's most prominent environmental health professionals."

He truly fulfills the qualifications of an individual committed to environmental health as subscribed by the award's namesake. NSF International and the National Environmental Health Association take great pleasure in awarding to Dr. Robert W. Powitz the 2001 Walter F. Snyder Award for Achievement in Attaining Environmental Quality.

2001 AEC Exhibitors

7th World Congress on Environmental Health

A Access Business Group

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Aerotech Laboratories, Inc.
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
Air Quality Sciences, Inc.
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American Manufacturing Company, Inc.
AMS, Inc.
Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs
Atkins Tempotec, Inc.

B BioLab, Inc.

Biolog, Inc.
Bio-Microbics, Inc.
Bord na Mona
Brass Smith, Inc.

C Carmody Data Systems

CDC—National Center for Environmental Health
Chemfree Corporation
Clearstream Wastewater Systems, Inc.
Comark Instruments, Inc.
Consolidated Treatment Systems, Inc.
Cooper Instrument Corporation

D Decade Software Company

Decagon Devices, Inc.
Delta Environmental Products, Inc.

E EMSL Analytical, Inc.

Environmental and Engineering Geophysical Society
Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee
Entech Instruments, Inc.
Experior Assessments
EZ Flow, L.P.

F FoodHandler

G GEOFLOW, Inc.

Georgia Environmental Health Association
Georgia Onsite Wastewater Association
Glo Germ Company

H HealthSpace Integrated Solutions, Ltd.

Highsmith Environmental Consultants, Inc.
Hoshizaki America, Inc.

I Infectious Awareables, Inc.

Infiltrator Systems, Inc.
Intertek Testing Services, Inc.

J J.T. Eaton & Company, Inc.

K K & M Environmental, Inc.

Kairak, Inc.
KatchAll—San Jamar
KatchAll Technology Group
KD Engineering

L Laarhoven Design, Inc.

M MesoSystems Technology, Inc.

Minnesota Environmental Health Association

N National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Association of Local Boards of Health
National Drinking Water Clearinghouse
National Environmental Training Association, Inc.

N National Indoor Environmental Professional Association

National Library of Medicine—Specialized Information Services

N National Registry of Food Safety Professionals

National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation

N National Sanitation Foundation International

National Swimming Pool Foundation
National Testing Laboratories, Ltd.

NoMound Onsite Systems

Norback, Ley & Associates, LLC

Norweco, Inc.

Norwesco, Inc.

NOWRA

O Orkin Pest Control

P Pollution Equipment News/Rimbach Publishing, Inc.

Polylok, Inc.
Premier Tech Environment

R Raytek Corporation

RMD Instruments, LLC

S Shat-R-Shield, Inc.

SneezeGuard Solutions, Inc.

T Tel-Tru Manufacturing Company

TeleDevices/QuadTech
TRAEX
TrainCaster (a division of NetCasters, Inc.)
Tuf-Tite, Inc.

U UltraClenz Corporation

Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.
The University of Findlay
USDA—Food Safety and Inspection Service
USEPA, c/o Eastern Research Group
USEPA—Indoor Environments Division
USEPA—Office of Solid Waste
USEPA—Office of Water
US Navy Recruiting
US Public Health Service
USA—CHPPM

W WebbStarr Technologies, Inc.

WERC
Worldstone, Inc.

Z Zabel Environmental Technology

Educational Activities

Every year, NEHA takes great pride in compiling an educational program of superior quality and professional diversity. Nowhere was that more apparent than in this year's Chemical and Bioterrorism Preparedness track. This portion of the AEC was very successful, with as many as 200 attendees for some presentations. Bioterrorism is a very complex threat; hence preparedness measures should involve cooperative efforts from multiple disciplines, including emergency management, public safety, emergency medicine, and public health. The environmental health profession is being recognized as a key partner in any comprehensive preparedness strategy, and the majority of this year's speakers communicated this message.

The field of environmental health incorporates a diversity of topics, and the educational offerings at the AEC are designed to reflect this. Subjects included ambient and indoor air quality, counter-biological and chemical terrorism, drinking-water safety, emerging pathogens, food protection, hazardous materials, injury prevention and occupational health, environmental health management, geographic information systems, solid waste management, swimming pools and spas, uniformed services, and vector control.

The Onsite Wastewater Systems sessions were structured around the draft management guidelines developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). Some of the biggest names in the field of onsite wastewater, including Jerry Tyler, Ph.D., Dick Otis, Ph.D., and Bob Rubin, Ph.D., were on hand to give presentations about the elements that form a management program.

Focus groups were conducted for various subspecialties of environmental health. Several of the attendees expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to participate in an open discussion about significant professional issues. A number of workshops also were offered in conjunction with the AEC, including the highly successful Food Safety Train-the-Trainer workshop, Presentation Skills for the EH Professional, and a Hands-On Instrumentation workshop. Finally, through research and poster presentations, NEHA provided a forum for students of environmental health.

NEHA would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to this year's Technical Section Chairs, whose dedication and professionalism have made the 2001 Annual Educational Conference the most successful learning experience to date:

- Air/Land—Timothy Varney, Ph.D., and Owen Seiver, Ph.D.;
- Counter-Bioterrorism—Barry Moore, R.E.H.S.;
- Drinking Water/Water Pollution—Sanjay Saxena;
- Emerging Pathogens/Vector Control/Zoonotic Diseases—Welford C. Roberts, Ph.D., R.E.H.S.;
- Environmental Health Management—Holly Coleman;
- Environmental Health Research—Darryl B. Barnett, Dr.P.H., R.S., D.A.A.S.;
- Food Protection—George Nakamura, R.E.H.S.;
- General Environmental Health—Beth Hailstock, R.S.;
- Hazardous and Toxic Substances—John Steward, R.E.H.S., and Alicia Enriquez;
- Injury Prevention/Occupational Health—Richard F. Collins, M.S.E., R.E.H.S.;
- Institutional Environmental Health—Merritt M. Lake;
- International Environmental Health—LTC Wendell A. Moore, R.E.H.S.; and
- Onsite Wastewater—Tony Smithson, R.E.H.S.

Learning Through Exhibits

The education continued in the exhibit hall, where attendees had the unique opportunity to meet with vendors and manufacturers one-on-one and learn about a variety of products and services in the environmental health and protection field. The NEHA Exhibition has gained a reputation over the years as the place for environmental health and protection professionals to receive hands-on experience with equipment that they have previously only heard or read about.

The excitement in the exhibit hall was reinforced this year with the addition of door prize drawings. After visiting a certain number of exhibitors, attendees could enter into a drawing for prizes that included a pocket PC, a \$300 travel voucher, and a digital camera. Congratulations go to the door prize winners: Anna Gavan from Norfolk, Virginia; Don Robasser from Princeton, New Jersey; and Patricia Hawkins from Arden, North Carolina. NEHA also would like to thank the exhibitors who helped contribute to this new event, including FoodHandler, Hoshizaki America, Infiltrator Systems, MesoSystems Technology, and Shat-R-Shield.

The success of this year's exhibit hall was also reflected in the record number of exhibitors that signed up on site for the 2002 conference in Minneapolis,



NEHA President Tony Aiken cuts the ribbon for the exhibition hall's grand opening.

Minnesota. Because attendees have told NEHA that the exhibition is a large part of the educational experience at the AEC, the association will continue to expand and improve this important component of the conference.

Networking and Social Events

Events that encourage members to get together to exchange stories and opportunities are a valuable aspect of the conference. These events make it easy for members to interact in a casual manner and create both professional and personal relationships—relationships that sometimes last a lifetime. While the NEHA staff organizes a number of social events as functions of the conference, informal and spontaneous networking opportunities abound throughout the proceedings. NEHA strongly encourages attendees to be alert and receptive to these opportunities as they arise—and to create opportunities for themselves. Who knows where an impromptu discussion with an experienced peer could lead!

Icebreaker Party

The icebreaker party traditionally serves as a good way for conference attendees to get to know one another, loosen up, and simply enjoy themselves. An Italian buffet dinner and cash bar were offered. This year's icebreaker was enhanced by the addition of Rupert's Orchestra. The talented 12-piece ensemble got partygoers on the dance floor in no time. Their eclectic mix of swing music, pop, and Motown hits provided something for every musical taste. Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to network, dine, and dance at this highly successful event.

UL Theme Party at Dave & Busters

Underwriters Laboratories (UL) sponsored a trip to the game-themed sports bar, Dave &

Buster's. All attendees received high-quality yellow golf shirts and free game tokens, courtesy of UL. This event gave participants the chance to network over dinner and drinks, then try their luck at the hundreds of games to be found in Dave & Buster's giant amusement room.

Networking Luncheon

This informal forum allowed participants to break bread together and discuss environmental health issues.

Silent Auction

The NEHA auction wore a slightly different face this year. It had more space and more items than usual. Two auction regulars, Vince Radke and Al Brunwasser, enjoyed spirited bidding for cans of macadamia nuts and packages of macadamia coffee donated by the new Hawaii affiliate, which was officially participating for the first time. Vince had the winning bid at \$32. Al still went home a winner, however, toting a certificate for Kansas City steaks donated by Bio-Microbics, an Amtrak T-shirt and party tray, a beaver puppet and an opossum puppet donated by North Carolina Public Health, and an Indiana gift box, as well as other items.

Old Glory, a perennial favorite, had been flown over the U.S. Capitol days before the conference and, thanks to the National Capital Area affiliate, earned \$80 from Zane Hall. New on the scene this year were *E. coli* neckties and dust mite boxer shorts from Infectious Awareables, a new participant at both the exhibits and the auction.

The highest price paid at the auction was \$480, which bought registration and four nights' stay at the Hilton Minneapolis for AEC 2002. The more than \$4,000 raised at the silent auction was deposited to a speakers' fund to help defray the cost of speakers at next year's AEC.

Other items generating spirited bidding were a Montana money clip; California's Inspector Goofy, all decked out in official paraphernalia and representing next spring's International Federation of Environmental Health congress in California; a Glo Germ test kit; a Raynger non-contact thermometer donated by the Industry Affiliate; and sports outfits ranging from Avalanche ice hockey shirts to college outfits. A book, the second edition of *Environmental Health*, donated by author Monroe Morgan, also drew considerable interest, as did a picnic set and cooler, a Virginia ham, and pins for the 2002 U.S. Olympics. There was considerable artwork available, as well, ranging from paintings to other collectibles.

All in all, NEHA's silent auction was truly a place to shop and shop and shop while enjoying the camaraderie of others and planning strategies for bidding at just the right time. The good news is... we're doing this next year! Start looking now for that special auction donation from you, your affiliate, or your company.

Golf Tournament

With help from Tom Bennett, president of the Georgia Environmental Health Association (GEHA), this year's AEC golf tournament was held in conjunction with GEHA's annual golf tournament. As a result of this coordinated effort, over 100 golfers turned out for the event. With score cards audited this year by an independent third party, it has been confirmed that Team America failed to win, place, show, or be recognized at all despite the team's tremendous effort on the green.

President's Banquet and Entertainment

The president's banquet, a semiformal occasion of dinner and celebration, is the final networking and social event at each AEC. At the banquet, the official transfer of NEHA's presidency takes place. President Tony Aiken made his farewell speech to a packed banquet hall. He spoke fondly of his year as president, awarded citations, and thanked many of the audience members. The audience was momentarily surprised because he reserved his biggest thanks for his "Hot Tub Buddy." He clarified that he was, in fact, referring to his wife, Brenda. President Aiken then graciously passed the gavel to Laura Studevant, NEHA's new president. Ms. Studevant expressed great optimism for the coming year. She also recognized many of the individuals in attendance, referring to them as her heroes.

The evening closed with a rousing performance by the Soweto Street Beat Dance Theater—the only professional South African dance troupe in the United States. The performance was an impressive display of athleticism. At one point, about 10 audience members were invited to join the dance troupe on stage. Several of them demonstrated surprising skill by keeping up with the entertainers. One attendee noted that they could most certainly pursue a career as professional dancers if they ever chose to leave the field of environmental health.

Association Business

Board of Directors Meeting

The meeting had a full agenda this year and addressed many items of business:

- The board agreed to pursue a joint venture with the Chadwick House Group Ltd. (a for-profit subsidiary of CIEH). The purpose will be to promote and deliver food safety education and training throughout the United States to help prepare people for food manager certification.
- The board approved taking the NEHA AEC to Providence, Rhode Island, for the year 2005.
- The board also agreed to explore a possible joint venture with NSF that would involve NEHA in the distribution of food safety education materials.
- A commitment was made to study the relationship between NEHA specialty credentials and the generalist R.E.H.S./R.S. credential. A more overarching policy that serves to better connect all of NEHA's credentials is anticipated from this undertaking.
- The individuals elected to various NEHA offices were reported as follows:
 - second vice president: Jim Balsamo;
 - Region 4 vice president: Mary Myszka;
 - Region 6 vice president: Mike Phillips; and
 - Region 9 vice president: Patrick Maloney.
- The executive director reported on the progress being made with the NEHA salary survey. He noted that over 2,100 responses had been received and that the study should be published by early fall.
- The details of a new NEHA Endowment Fund were reported. Decisions were also made about the makeup of a board of directors for the fund.
- The board decided that NEHA should remain a member of the International Federation of Environmental Health.
- A new method was approved for appointing a member of NEHA to represent the association on the Council of Linkages.
- A memo of understanding was approved that defines a relationship between NEHA and the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA).
- A code of ethics for NEHA members was adopted.
- The board advised that in light of a financially tight year, consideration was to be given to changing NEHA's fiscal year so that the association would not be so

dependent on the AEC to determine if a year was financially successful.

- The board approved a final policy on the nature of director and staff business relationships with institutional friends of the association.

Council of Delegates Meeting

The NEHA Council of Delegates comprises the NEHA board of directors and all of NEHA's affiliate presidents. New NEHA President Laura Studevart presided. Highlights of this meeting, which is held at each AEC, are summarized as follows:

- The council approved a NEHA budget for next year, of almost \$3 million dollars.
- A resolution of appreciation for the service of NEHA President Tony Aiken was approved.
- Silent Auction proceeds were reported to be over \$4,000.
- Focus groups comprising NEHA affiliate presidents reported on discussions of how NEHA's specialty credentials affect the R.E.H.S./R.S. credential.
- It was announced that, pending legal review, NEHA would soon be publishing a model pool code.
- Various concerns about the state of the profession were raised and discussed. The concerns ranged from how to attract younger people into environmental health to how to deal with new issues like genetics and bioterrorism to how to raise the respect extended to this profession.

General Assembly

NEHA President Col. Anthony Aiken called the NEHA General Assembly to order. President Aiken spoke of the association's accomplishments of the past year, noting that NEHA has been "taking it to the next level." He specifically remarked that

- NEHA's staff is now up to 26 people and includes an office in Colorado Springs.
- The newly formed Association Research Center has initiated a nationwide salary survey.
- NEHA continues to maintain strong partnerships with federal agencies.
- Over \$100,000 has been invested in the computing system at the association headquarters.
- A formal partnership has been developed with NEHA's counterpart in Great Britain.
- New affiliates have been formed in Hawaii and Jamaica.
- The sabbatical program has been expanded.
- Over 200 NEHA members now serve as volunteers for the association.



The general assembly provides all conference attendees with the opportunity to speak directly to the board of directors.

- A renowned radon expert, Doug Kladder, has joined the staff.
- President-Elect Studevart represents NEHA with the Red Cross.

President Aiken also announced that the board of directors had selected Providence, Rhode Island, as the site for the 2005 AEC. He then introduced Immediate Past President Gary Coleman, who opened the floor to nominations for the seat of second vice president; none were received. The official candidates for next year's election of second vice president were announced: Ron Grimes and Theo Terry. Ron Grimes was introduced and made brief remarks about his platform for the upcoming election. Detailed platforms from each of the candidates will be presented in the March 2002 issue of the *Journal*.

President Aiken then opened the floor for the audience to voice any opinions or concerns they had about NEHA or related issues.

- Vince Radtke recommended implementing a satellite downlink of the general assembly and keynote address for NEHA members who are unable to attend the AEC.
- Maureen O'Dea extended an invitation to candidates to speak at the Illinois caucus. She also noted that the Illinois Environmental Health Association Board believes that specialty credentials dilute the R.E.H.S./R.S.
- Sue Hibberd took the opportunity to thank the board for the time it took in hearing the Minnesota Environmental Health Association's resolution regarding the C.F.S.P. credential.
- Warren Abrahams welcomed attendees to

"Hotlanta" and informed the audience of the upcoming Braves home games.

- Petrona Lee expressed concern about recent political developments affecting the field of environmental health. She encouraged NEHA to become more active in assisting affiliates to influence legislation.
- Bob Powitz commended the board and the executive director on the economic revitalization of the organization. He noted, however, that he feels that NEHA is unconnected with the troops in the field. He suggested including the names and faces of NEHA staff in the *Journal* and naming NEHA funding sources. He also suggested including success and failure stories from the various affiliates in the *Journal* so that affiliates may better learn from each other's experiences.
- Michele Samarya-Timm encouraged raising awareness of environmental health at the university level.
- Mike Halko congratulated his colleague Jim Balsamo on his election to the position of second vice president. He also thanked NEHA for displaying the candidates' platforms on the Web and issued the challenge of developing a long-range plan for the association, which could be published in the *Journal*. He then presented President Aiken with a Braves tomahawk.
- Milton Pinnock, from the Jamaica affiliate, encouraged NEHA to list opportunities in environmental health.
- Region 4 Vice President Mary Myszka invited everyone to Minneapolis for the 2002 AEC. She noted that for the first time

in 30 years, the AEC will take place in Region 4.

- Gilda Robinson-Fisher offered her thanks to the Food and Drug Administration and to NEHA staff member Tim Towey for providing her with a registration scholarship and to NEHA for putting together a great AEC program.

President Aiken closed the General Assembly by introducing the NEHA Endowment Foundation. He recognized past presidents Pete Thornton and Harry Grenawitzke for initiating the foundation and encouraged members to contribute.

Conclusion

NEHA hopes the information presented in this special report is informative to attendees and nonattendees alike. The report is designed both to recap highlights for those who were able to attend and to allow those unable to attend to enjoy some of the AEC offerings nevertheless.

Providing education is one of NEHA's best tools for achieving its mission of advancing the environmental health and protection professional. As preparations get under way for next year's AEC in Minneapolis, Minnesota, we are excited and hopeful that even more of you will be able to take advantage of the educational opportunities it offers. Perhaps the best words of encouragement come from past attendee surveys: "[NEHA's AEC] is an excellent opportunity to gain professional education and to have the chance to network with environmental health professionals from all over the country." "Without reservation, [it is] the best conference that exists to gain a wide variety of updated, highly professional information." "The networking is invaluable." "Attend next year!"

Each year, NEHA staff return from the AEC motivated and challenged to respond to your feedback so that "next year's conference" will be even better. With 65 AECs now under our belt, we know that constant changes in the environmental health profession are a given, and that by conducting careful research into what those changes are, we can always find ways to improve the conference. Here's to seeing you in Minneapolis! 🐾

