

NEHA's 2003 Annual Educational Conference and Exhibition—Reno, Nevada

Kristin Benn
Julia Miller



President Doug Ebelherr and Conference Coordinator Toni Roland in front of the ice sculpture at the President's Banquet.

Introduction

The 67th NEHA Annual Educational Conference (AEC) was held in Reno, Nevada, from June 8 through 11, 2003, and it was a tremendous success. Nearly 2,000 people attended, including approximately 1,500 attendees and over 100 exhibitors. Attendees came from as far away as Canada, Ghana, England, Jamaica, and New Zealand.

While many attendees commented on the wide variety of entertainment and tourist attractions in the vicinity of the conference, nothing has been the subject of more praise than the quality of the education sessions. Sessions on food safety, indoor air quality, onsite wastewater, and chemical and bioterrorism were well attended.

We note with appreciation that this year, the level of attendee feedback was the highest it has been for any AEC. The valuable comments we received challenge NEHA to raise the bar in advancing the educational needs of the environmental health and protection professional. One attendee stated,

“The information available at this conference would take you weeks of research on the Internet or through periodicals. It’s a must for any public health professional.”

NEHA strives to present a broad array of educational activities and learning tools to meet the needs of all conference attendees. Following are highlights of this year’s conference.

Opening Ceremony and Keynote Address

The opening ceremony and keynote address started with presentation of the colors by the Nevada Army National Guard. The soldiers wore their battle dress uniforms, instead of Class A Uniforms, to show support for soldiers participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom. NEHA President Jim Dingman welcomed everyone to the conference, and NEHA President-Elect Doug Ebelherr offered the invocation and asked for special prayers for our military. Recognition was given to conference attendees from around the world,

including attendees from Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand, and Ghana, as well as to new NEHA members and first-time AEC attendees. Sponsors were recognized for their generous support of both the keynote address and the conference as a whole.

The awards presentation preceded the keynote address this year. For a complete description of awards and winners, please see page 26.

President Dingman then introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. Patrick Meehan. Meehan represents the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at its highest levels, and NEHA was honored to have him speak in Julie Gerberding’s stead. He has been a longtime friend of public and environmental health. Within hours of the September 11 attacks he was on the ground in New York representing CDC and administering the National Pharmaceutical Stockpile program, for which he was responsible. More recently, he has played a prominent role in the development of CDC’s national strategy to revitalize environmental health in our country.

Meehan has been the director of the Division of Emergency and Environmental Health Services since October 2000. Before that, he was director of the East Metro Health District in Georgia, serving as county health officer and chief executive for three counties with a total population of nearly 700,000. Meehan had previously been director of the Georgia Division of Public Health, Department of Human Resources, for over three years and was director of the New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services from August of 1991 until May of 1994. He has completed a preventive medicine residency and the Epidemic Intelligence Service Program with CDC, and is a board-certified family practitioner. His publications address



Immediate Past President Jim Dingman at the opening ceremony and keynote address.

suicide epidemiology, violence epidemiology, foodborne illness, vectorborne illness, vectorborne viral diseases, and surveillance.

Meehan began his address by outlining the four areas he planned on discussing—traditional and emerging environmental public health problems facing the profession, special qualities that practitioners contribute to the solutions, why environmental public health is facing a crisis, and seven ideas for addressing the crisis.

He highlighted some of the great accomplishments of environmental public health services, including the reduction of diseases, the increase in life expectancy, and the capacity to “think outside the box” and confront new and emerging problems in public health. Without a return to basic sanitation and public health principles, the future of environmental health could include tasks such as disinfecting the streets to contain and interrupt outbreaks like the SARS epidemic. Meehan stressed that the root of the environmental public health mission needs to be re-emphasized and suggested that the time of environmental health professionals would be better spent educating the public than disinfecting streets.

A few examples of future issues facing environmental public health include emergency response, lead-based paint in housing, mold, and land use planning. Emergency response for environmental and public health professions will include worker protection, assessment of environmental exposure, and determining effects on groundwater and food supply. Lead-based paint in housing is already



Keynote speaker Dr. Patrick Meehan, director of CDC's Division of Emergency and Environmental Health Services.



Patrick Meehan.

being addressed by public health professionals; however, Meehan foresees that the emphasis in this area will in the future be on identifying and remediating lead exposure risks in existing housing, rather than on testing every child for exposure. Efforts to define the human health effects caused by mold exposure will continue, and health departments will be increasingly burdened by interpreting data on mold exposure and health effects. Finally, Dr. Meehan highlighted land use planning issues, including the increasing number of parking lots, strip malls, and concrete corridors; while their net effect on the environmental is ill defined, he suggested it is not insignificant.

Traditional environmental public health issues, including foodborne disease and rodent/vector control, will continue into the future and will grow more complex as they evolve. Meehan said that the vast majority of foodborne illnesses continue to be under-reported and that the West Nile Virus is an example of a complex vector control and habitation-related issue. The re-emerging rodent problem and the issues surrounding brownfields development will both serve as markers of larger urban environmental health problems.

After presenting the issues facing environmental public health, Meehan went on to explain the unique set of problem-solving skills that environmental health practitioners apply to these issues, including a systems approach to problem solving. The systems approach looks at the entire process involved in making it possible for someone to be exposed to a hazard. It also looks at all the factors in the process, including people, equipment, wages, and the process itself. The traditional environmental health philosophy is based on the agent-host relationship, but when the systems approach is applied, the real issue of why an exposure occurred in the first place can be illuminated and the exposure can be prevented in the future.

In addition to problem-solving skills, Meehan discussed the broad and flexible set of skills that environmental health professionals apply. The environmental health workforce, he said, is the flexible workforce of the public health system. The numerous activities that environmental health professionals were involved in following 9/11 serve as examples; they included incident command systems, syndromic surveillance, worker health and safety, decontamination, the National Pharmaceutical Stockpile Program, and environmental sampling.

“Environmental health touches everybody every day,” Meehan said. “Its professionals are the frontline in terrorism defense, working on the security of water and sewage utilities, monitoring the food supply, and detecting naturally occurring and deliberate outbreaks.”

Where do the problems lie? Meehan pointed out that the environmental health workforce is in a crisis, especially with respect to leadership. He feels that environmental health practitioners are not afforded, encouraged, or given the opportunity to get into leadership

positions. The public does not understand what they do, and the stakeholders need to be more involved in environmental public health services so that good working relationships can be established. The number of environmental health professionals has decreased; there has been a 42 percent decline in the number of students enrolled in environmental health programs. Also, there is a lack of scientific research to support the decisions that environmental health professionals must make. In general, environmental health is outmoded and needs to move into the 21st century in terms of science and leadership.

To address these problems, Meehan, his colleagues, and numerous stakeholders have developed a "Strategy to Revitalize Environmental Health Services." A work group developed the strategy after outlining six major goals over the course of a year:

- build capacity,
- support research,
- foster leadership,
- communicate and market,
- develop the workforce, and
- create strategic partnerships.

Meehan said that the strategy will improve environment public health services by preventing environmentally related disease, preparing environmental health staff for new and emerging threats, providing better access to training and information, providing effective analytical tools, creating a core of environmental health leaders, enabling better communication, and developing and expanding strategic partnerships.

Meehan discussed the initiatives that have or are currently taking place under the strategy guidance. Three states and two local health departments were funded by CDC to establish communities of excellence in environmental public health services. The communities of excellence are building capacity to address new and emerging issues, and to provide distance learning and up-to-date training opportunities. CDC funded eight states on the EHS-NET food safety initiative, and two cities (New York and Philadelphia) were funded for commensal rodent control programs. In addition, CDC has been working with the National Association of County and City Health Officials on the Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE-EH). PACE-EH is a collaborative, community-based project that allows communities to prioritize environmental health issues on the basis of public values. Finally, the Environmental Health Competency Project was funded to define non-

technical competencies for the environmental public health workforce.

Meehan concluded by thanking the audience and expressing his pleasure in speaking with the second biggest cadre of public health practitioners—environmental health professionals.

NEHA President Jim Dingman then thanked Dr. Meehan and introduced Jim Henderson from the Anchorage Convention Bureau, to talk about Anchorage, Alaska, the site of NEHA's 2004 AEC.

Mr. Henderson's enthusiasm excited the crowd; he told everyone that there are only two types of people—those who want to go to Alaska and those who want to go back. Henderson advised his listeners that when making plans to attend the NEHA AEC next May, they should plan ahead, plan extra time to see all the Alaska has to offer, and plan to bring the family!

Awards and Honors

The main awards ceremony was held during the opening session, just before the keynote address, to draw everyone's attention to and introduce the award winners. The two most prestigious awards were presented at the President's Banquet. NEHA is proud to introduce to you these deserving professionals and is happy to highlight their accomplishments in this issue of the *Journal*.

Walter S. Mangold Award

The Walter S. Mangold Award, NEHA's highest honor—for outstanding contributions to the advancement of the environmental health profession—this year was bestowed upon the very deserving Larry M. Eils. Please see the accompanying story on page 27, which details Eils's contributions to the profession.

Walter F. Snyder Award

The Snyder Award is a special joint recognition from NEHA and NSF International. This year, the award was not given because of a lack of applications. Both NEHA and NSF encourage individuals committed and dedicated to the environmental health profession to apply.

Certificates of Merit

Every year, each NEHA affiliate is asked to choose a member of its state organization to receive national recognition for exemplary contribution to the profession. Each Certificate of Merit recipient is recognized at the AEC awards ceremony and the award is

forwarded to the affiliate president to allow for further recognition at affiliate meetings. This year's winners are listed on page 28.

Davis Calvin Wagner Award

The Davis Calvin Wagner Award is presented by the American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS) and recognizes exemplary achievement in the environmental health field. This year the award was not presented.

A. Harry Bliss Editors' Award

The A. Harry Bliss Award is typically thought of as an award for writers and columnists of the *Journal*, but it is also designed to recognize individuals who, by way of the *Journal*, have advanced the cause of NEHA. Dr. A. Harry Bliss was *Journal* editor 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 production of the *Journal*.

This year the A. Harry Bliss Award was presented to NEHA President Jim Dingman. Mr. Dingman made courageous and honorable decisions with respect to *Journal* policies and showed his commitment to protecting the needs of the association's members and nonmembers. Throughout his term as NEHA president, Dingman submitted his President's Message columns long ahead of the deadline, contributing wonderful personal experiences and demonstrating his genuine affection for the environmental health profession. He also serves as a peer reviewer for the *Journal*.

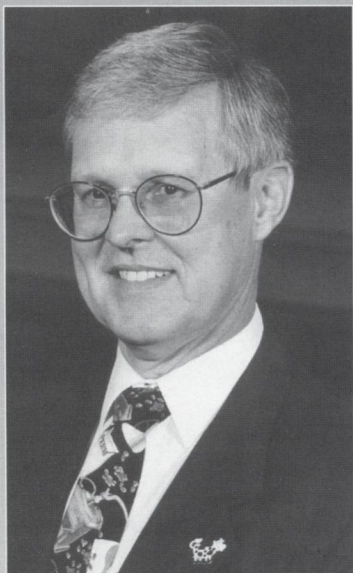
Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award

Every year, NEHA and 10 co-sponsors present the Crumbine Award in recognition of excellence and continual improvement in a local-level food protection program. The award is named in honor of Samuel J. Crumbine, a pioneer public health officer who helped invent the fly-swatter and pass laws in the state of Kansas banning public spitting and common drinking cups—steps that helped reduce and control the spread of communicable disease.

This year the award was presented to the Santa Clara Department of Environmental Health in San Jose, California. This local environmental health program was recognized for meeting the challenges of the diverse region it represents, showing remarkable leadership, and taking a proactive approach to food safety. Richard Fukes, director of the Consumer Protection Division in Santa Clara County,

2003 Mangold Award Recipient

Larry M. Eils, R.S., M.P.H.



The National Environmental Health Association is proud to present the 2003 Walter S. Mangold Award, its highest honor, to Larry M. Eils, R.S., M.P.H.

For more than 30 years, Larry has devoted his life to the advancement of the environmental and public health professions. As a widely recognized and respected leader in food safety issues and the vending machine industry, he has promoted the formation of partner-

ships among federal, state, and local regulatory agencies and the food vending industry. In the words of Trevor Hayes, executive secretary of the Conference for Food Protection, "Whether he is making presentations to the new member assembly or providing guidance and historical perspective for the board members or the industry caucus, he has the ability to command respect because, above all, he is an uncompromising advocate for food safety."

In his present position as senior director, health, safety and technical standards at the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA), Larry assists the vending industry in meeting its health and safety requirements, cooperates with regulatory agencies in developing minimum sanitation regulations, and promotes the industry's health, safety, and environmental programs to consumers and regulatory agencies. He also administers the NAMA Vending Machine Evaluation and Mechanics Training Programs, oversees the NAMA Safety-Loss Control and Vending Technology Standards Committees, and conducts training workshops for industry and regulatory agencies. Under his leadership, the Vending Technology Standards Committee developed two international standards now used in vending machines manufactured worldwide.

Larry currently serves as the secretary of NAMA's Automatic Merchandising Health-Industry Council. He has worked with the council to develop new food safety standards for the vending machine industry and was responsible for the production of three NAMA training videos on sanitation, lifting, and driving. According to Richard M. Geerdes, president and CEO of NAMA,

Larry has a well-earned reputation as being a man who contributes far more than his share to the resolution of

industry problems, customer service to NAMA's members, teamwork on the NAMA staff, and leadership in the public health field. Larry is well known for his ability to think ahead on problems, anticipate solutions, and follow through to ensure their success.

Larry's organizational leadership extends beyond his 18 years of service to NAMA to his involvement in both state and national associations; he has held all offices, worked on numerous committees, coordinated various events and receptions, and even edited newsletters. Larry has been an active member of NEHA since 1974, is currently a prominent member of the Industry Affiliate, and has actively participated in the Illinois Environmental Health Association (IEHA) for over thirty years. In addition, Larry is chair of UL's Environmental and Public Health Industry/User Advisory Group, and he is an active participant in both the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) and the Conference for Food Protection (CFP). According to Jorge A. Hernandez of the National Restaurant Association,

Larry has shown great skill in leading these organizations [IEHA, AFDO, CFP] where members often have competing interests and conflicting viewpoints. He is extremely knowledgeable, yet remains modest and willing to work with everyone at the table. Larry is the ultimate pragmatist, and uses his knowledge and skill to find cutting edge solutions that are in the best interest of all parties.

Throughout his career, Larry has published technical articles and publications on safety and health, written industry standards, revitalized a certification program for vending repair technicians, produced training videos, and conducted numerous seminars, presentations, and discussions. Yet, according to his environmental and public health peers, Larry still finds time to create new programs or volunteer for existing ones. He has performed—and continues to perform—above and beyond his usual professional requirements, contributing his time and expertise in many forums for the food service industry and the regulatory and regulated community. As expressed by John A. Marcello of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration,

The definition of an environmental health specialist is Larry Eils. If the Mangold Award is representative of the highest performance standards; if it is truly to be a reflection of an individual who approaches the profession with respect and dignity; if the recipient is to be a model for others to emulate, then I can think of no better individual to receive such a distinction than Larry Eils.

NEHA is very proud to present the 2003 Walter S. Mangold award to such a deserving candidate as Larry M. Eils.

accepted the award and thanked Jeff Ganse, Vicky Everly, and Ben Gail, for their support and outstanding contribution to the application for the award.

NEHA/AAS Scholarship Awards

The scholarship program is sponsored jointly by NEHA and the American Academy of Sanitarians. The program annually awards one graduate scholarship in the amount of \$2,000 and up to three undergraduate scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each. This year Brad J. Konwick from the University of Georgia was awarded the graduate scholarship. Jessica Goldberger from Colorado State University, Shannon L. McDiarmid from Colorado State University, and Saori Tanaka from East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma, each received an undergraduate scholarship.

Student Research Presentations

Thanks to a generous donation from the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH), nine students and their faculty mentors had the opportunity to present their research at the AEC. Each student participant received a plaque and up to a \$1,000 stipend to cover travel and related expenses. Dr. Carolyn Harvey of Eastern Kentucky University, Captain Mike Herring of the U.S. Public Health Service/CDC, and Dr. Patrick Meehan of NCEH/CDC all presented the student research and poster awards.

NEHA congratulates the following students for presenting their research: Christina Armatus, Stacey Catuara, Michelle Hines, Chris Maule, and Matt Sadler from Illinois State University; Amanda Brown from Eastern Kentucky University; Eli Hollen from Eastern Kentucky University; Amada Zych from the University of Washington; and Jean Edsall from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

A special award was also given to Lt. Commander Rhoda Sears for her outstanding work in judging the student research competition.

Past Presidents Award

Each year, the Past Presidents group, comprising former NEHA presidents, recognizes a NEHA member for outstanding achievement. This year the award went to Franklin Carver. Gary Coleman presented the award to Dr. Carver in recognition of his many meaningful years in environmental health and his dedication to mentoring future environmental health practitioners. Dr. Carver is

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>Alaska</i>	Mary O'Connor
<i>Colorado</i>	Thomas Dunlop
<i>Illinois</i>	Randy Markellie
<i>Louisiana</i>	John Dale Givens
<i>Massachusetts</i>	Fredric Cantor, D.V.M., M.P.H.
<i>Michigan</i>	Michael D. Ells, R.S., M.S., D.A.A.S.
<i>Minnesota</i>	Karen Casale
<i>National Capital Area</i>	Michael Treppel
<i>New Jersey</i>	Cynthia Weaver
<i>North Carolina</i>	Malcolm Blalock
<i>South Carolina</i>	Blaine Lyons
<i>Texas</i>	Dan T. Dennison, R.S.
<i>Uniformed Services</i>	Lieutenant Commander William R. Johnson III
<i>Virginia</i>	Charles E. Shepherd, R.E.H.S.
<i>Washington</i>	Phil Brinker

well recognized in the academic community for his publications and in the environmental health profession for being the former editor of the *Journal*.

Presidential Citations

These citations are special awards given to individuals who have made exemplary contributions to NEHA during the president's term of office. John Steward, David Delozier, Anil Parikh, Dick Pantages, John Barry, Kim Brandow, Nelson Fabian, Underwriters Laboratories (UL), and Cheryl Dingman all received citations and special thanks from Jim Dingman.

Educational Activities

What would an AEC be without education? Every year great effort is dedicated to providing attendees with the most current, relevant, and thought-provoking educational sessions. Speakers and topics are identified through hundreds of NEHA member interviews, where current issues being faced and areas of learning are brought to attention. Given the diversity of the educational sessions offered, attendees had a wide variety of environmental health topics to choose from and could

tailor the AEC to their educational needs. Subjects included ambient air quality, chemical and bioterrorism preparedness, drinking-water quality, emerging pathogens, environmental health consulting, environmental health justice, environmental health management, environmental health research, environmental health in schools, food safety and protection, general environmental health, geographic information systems (GIS), hazardous materials and toxic substances, indoor air quality, injury prevention/occupational health, institutional environmental health, onsite wastewater systems, solid waste management, swimming pools/recreational waters, vector control/zoonotic diseases, and water pollution.

New to this year's AEC was the CD-ROM of speaker presentations given to every attendee. This valuable reference tool included PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and handouts from over 90 speakers, resulting in over 2,300 pages of information. NEHA warmly thanks all speakers who participated in this endeavor. The CD-ROM also included information on NEHA's latest programs, along with general association information.



Jamie Stamey and Mary Anne Hogue of Steritech Group, Inc.

A new educational session was introduced this year: Environmental Health in Schools. This one-day session was made possible through the efforts of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), CDC, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Attendees acquired knowledge on “a topic that is gaining momentum.” The feedback was positive, with comments such as “This was the most informative one day of any conference I have attended” and “We need more [educational sessions] like this.” NEHA is looking to expand upon this topic in the future.

The Chemical and Bioterrorism Preparedness educational track continues to be in demand and well attended because of the ever-growing issues and responsibilities that environmental health professionals are encountering in this area and because of the need for education. Workshops such as the Public Health Agency Role in Incident Command Systems (ICS) and Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Terrorism Planning offered attendees a wealth of applicable information.

The educational sessions were not the only place where valuable information was offered. Several pre-conference workshops were given, along with review courses and exams for the Certified Food Safety Professional and the Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian credentials. Attendees were also able to get to a glimpse of future environmental health professionals through the undergraduate and graduate student research and poster presentations.

Educational sessions at the AEC are made possible through the hard work and dedica-

tion of the association's technical section chairs. These individuals are responsible for creating the sessions by assembling speakers to present on relevant topics—the topics you tell us you want to learn about—within their respective areas of expertise. Technical section chairs call upon their vast professional experience and knowledge to assist them in developing the highly educational sessions offered. NEHA extends a special thank-you to the technical section chairs listed below:

- Air and Land—Alicia Enriquez;
- Chemical and Bioterrorism Preparedness—Tom Butts, M.Sc., R.E.H.S., R.H.S.P., and Barry W. Moore, R.E.H.S.;
- Drinking Water Quality/Water Pollution—Robert Vincent;
- Emerging Pathogens/Vector Control/Zoonotic Diseases—Brenda Faw, R.E.H.S.;
- Environmental Health Management—Holly Coleman, R.S.;
- Environmental Health Research—Darryl B. Barnett, Dr.P.H., R.S., D.A.A.S.;
- Food Safety and Protection—Gary Coleman, R.S., D.A.A.S., and George Nakamura, R.E.H.S., M.P.A., D.A.A.S.;
- General Environmental Health—Owen Seiver, Ph.D.;
- Hazardous Materials and Toxic Substances—Welford C. Roberts, Ph.D., R.S., R.E.H.S., D.A.A.S., and John Steward, R.E.H.S.;
- Injury Prevention/Occupational Health—Daniel Holcomb;
- Institutional Environmental Health—Welford C. Roberts, Ph.D., R.S., R.E.H.S., D.A.A.S.; and
- Onsite Wastewater—Anthony Smithson, R.E.H.S.

Learning Through Exhibits

The exhibit hall at the Reno Hilton was full of excitement. With over 120 exhibit booths to visit, attendees had the opportunity to meet exhibitors from a wide variety of companies and organizations, experiencing firsthand a comprehensive and varied array of cutting-edge environmental health and protection products. This AEC was the biggest so far, and exhibitors were pleased with the high traffic and exposure to a knowledgeable group of attendees that included professionals from industry, academia, and the regulatory community.

An exciting addition this year was the Cyber Center, which quickly became a very popular area! Available for everyone's computer needs, it was great way to check e-mail and search the Web. Another special event was an exhibitors' seminar designed to give helpful tips to the novice as well as to the seasoned expert. D.J. Heckes from Exhib-it! presented effective ideas in an informative format.

The “Handwashing for Life” Olympics was once again a big AEC hit! Ninety contestants competed during the four-hour event. NEHA Training LLC was pleased to provide trainers to assist in raising awareness of the role that good handwashing plays in protecting the public's health. Champion handwashers were crowned and celebrated. A special award was presented to three-time winner Michele Samarya-Timm, a health educator for Franklin Township, New Jersey. Todd Frantz, resort safety director, brought home the gold for Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, California. First place in the Regulatory Class was shared by three winners: Vincent Radke, a CDC environmental health specialist; Brenda Faw, senior environmental health specialist, from El Dorado County, California; and Rose Silloway, senior environmental health specialist from Tacoma-Pierce County, Washington.

Back by popular demand were the infamous NEHA door prizes. Attendees visited exhibitors to become eligible for the drawing, which included a COMPAQ iPAQ personal computer, \$350 in gambling chips, and a \$150 Amazon.com gift certificate. Congratulations go to Mary Myszka, who won the personal computer. Ms. Myszka is a NEHA regional vice president and serves on the NEHA Board of Directors. (And no, it wasn't rigged!) Many thanks go to the following exhibitors for making this fun event possible: Aerobiology Laboratory Associates, Inc.; Bord Na Mona; Edlund Company; Glo-Germ Company; Kairak; and Lamotte Company.

2003 AEC exhibitors

A

Access Business Group
Advanced Drainage Systems
Aerobiology Laboratory Associates
Aerotech Laboratories, Inc.
Agency for Toxic Substances
and Disease Registry (ATSDR)
Airforce Institute for Operational Health
AK Coatings, Inc.
American Academy of Sanitarians
American Manufacturing Company
Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau
Association of Environmental Health
Academic Programs (AEHAP)
Association of Schools of Public Health
Auburn Environmental

B

BioLab, Inc.
Bio-Microbics, Inc.
Biotest Diagnostics
Bord Na Mona – Puraflor

C

California Onsite Wastewater Association
(COWA)
CDC, National Center for Environmental Health
CDC, Public Service Response
Cherry Creek Travel and Cruises, Inc.
and Holland America
Clearstream Wastewater Systems, Inc.
Concentric Enviro, Inc.
Conestoga-Rovers & Associates
Cooper Instrument/Atkins TempTec
Cromaglass Corporation

D

Daton Enterprises, Inc./Microbeguard
Decade Software Company, Inc.
Decagon Devices, Inc.
Delta Environmental Products, Inc.

E

Ecolab, Inc.
Edlund Company
Eljen Corporation
Environmental Microbiology Laboratory, Inc.
ESRI
Exhib-it!
EZ Flow

F

Federal Food Safety Coalition
FoodHandler
Forensic Analytical
Fralo PlasTech Manufacturing

G

Geoflow, Inc.
Glo Germ Company
GSC Mobile Solutions

H

Hancor, Inc.
Handwashing For Life (c/o Infocus Learning
Systems)
Hardy Diagnostics
Health Space Integrated Solutions
Hedgehog Environmental Systems
Hillyard, Inc.
Hoepfner Perfected Products
Hoot Aerobic Systems, Inc.

I

Infiltrator Systems
Input Systems, Inc.
Intertek Testing Services
IQ Scientific Instruments

K

Kairak, Inc.
K.D. Engineering
Kenkut Products
Kirkwood Community College

L

LaMotte Company

M

MicroSepTec
Mycometer – Indoor Air Solutions

N

National Association of County
and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
National Association of Local Boards of Health
(NALBOH)
National Drinking Water Clearinghouse
& National Small Flows Clearinghouse
National Environmental Training Association
(NETA)
National Library of Medicine
National Registry of Food Safety Professionals
National Restaurant Association,
Educational Foundation
National Safety Council
National Testing Laboratories, Ltd.
NEHA Information and Credentialing
NEHA Training, LLC
Netafim USA
Norweco, Inc.
Norwesco, Inc.
NSF International

O

Orengo Systems, Inc.
Orkin Commercial Services

P

PALINTEST
Portable Sanitation Association International
Proctor & Gamble
Professional Laboratories, Inc.
Public Health Foundation

R

Raytek
RMD Instruments, LLC

S

Same Day Distributing, Inc.
San Jamar
Shat-R-Shield, Inc.
SensIR Technologies
SneezeGuard Solutions
Steritech Group, Inc.
Steton Technology Group, Inc.
Stone Environmental, Inc.

T

TAP Series, LLC
TEC Technologies, Inc.
Tripod Data Systems
Tuf-Tite, Inc.

U

Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.
University of Findlay, School of Environmental
and Emergency Management
University of Michigan, Department of
Environmental Health Sciences
US Department of Labor, Energy Employees
Occupational Illness Compensation Program
US EPA, Environmental Response Team
US EPA, Indoor Environments Division
US EPA, Local Governments Reimbursement
Program
US EPA, Office of Ground Water and
Drinking Water
US EPA, Office of Wastewater Management
US Food and Drug Administration,
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
US Food and Drug Administration,
Office of Regulatory Affairs
US Navy Recruiting
US Public Health Service

W

Western Illinois University,
K-12 Food Safety Curriculum

Z

Zabel Environmental Technology
Zoeller Pump Company



Immediate Past President Jim Dingman and Technical Section Co-chair John Steward at the President's Reception.

Networking and Social Events

Events that encourage members to get together to exchange ideas and opportunities are a valuable aspect of the conference. Members can interact and create both professional and personal relationships in a casual setting. While the NEHA staff organizes a number of social events as function 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 is the traditional kick-off event of the conference. Dr. Carl Winter entertained the crowd with his rendition of popular tunes with a food safety twist. Attendees enjoyed food and music, as well as the opportunity to visit with old and new friends.

UL-Sponsored Lake Tahoe Cruise

Underwriters Laboratories sponsored a cruise on Lake Tahoe. This truly was the hot ticket of the conference. Those who were able to get the coveted tickets enjoyed a historical perspective on the lake, dinner, live music, and dancing.

Networking Luncheon

The networking luncheon allows participants to enjoy a meal and discuss environmental health issues. In the congenial setting of a buffet luncheon, where tables are set with placards indicating areas of environmental health expertise, attendees can easily

identify professionals of specific disciplines to mingle with while they enjoy good food and a bit of relaxation.

Silent Auction

In a busy, activity-filled exhibit hall, AEC attendees still found time to make their way to an item-filled silent auction booth. Here, they carefully evaluated the many gifts donated by others and determined which jewelry to purchase, how much a child (or adult) would appreciate a puppet of a timber wolf, what foods could serve as a special meal, and how badly they wanted to attend AEC 2004 in Alaska. In the past, a lot of bidding was done earlier in the auction, but this year the old-timers kept saying, "I'm just looking now. I'll bid just before the auction ends."

A few items always garner the most attention, and this year was no exception. Most popular in terms of number of bids was National Capital's U.S. flag, which was flown over the Capitol on June 2, just days before the auction. A very determined Vince Radke won the flag for \$150, paying more than twice its value. Last year, Vince also outbid all others for the top seller, a "Johnny" talking soap dispenser from the exhibitors at "Handwashing for Life." This year, two dispensers were again donated and were popular items.

In second place in the bidding wars were a Sony Digital Camera and Memory Stick from the industry affiliate. Close behind were a 40-year-old Navajo necklace from the collection of Nevada member Shannon Swann and a sapphire necklace handcrafted in Montana.

Other popular items at this year's auction were an Alaskan spirit mask, Omaha steaks



Clare Schmutz and Technical Section Co-chair George Nakamura enjoy George Kupfer's retirement reception.

from Nebraska, and duck decoys from Bundy in Indiana and from Paul Weber in North Carolina. Tim Hight of the Food and Drug Administration made some timely contributions: a poster and a deck of cards showing Iraq's most wanted. Valued at \$15, they brought in \$70. Lori Stoller of New Mexico paid \$750 for registration and four nights at the Anchorage, Alaska, AEC in 2004.

While proceeds from this year's auction did not equal totals from 2002, there was variety, fun, and an opportunity to bid on things that appealed. Moreover, the proceeds supported a very good cause: next year's AEC in Anchorage.

Golf Tournament

The 16th Annual NEHA Golf Tournament was held on June 6 at the D'Andrea Golf Club. This year's tournament will be remembered for being the most competitive ever. Only one stroke separated all of the teams that participated. The winners were declared through a tiebreaker: Elwin Coll, Tom Hatfield, Larry Yates, and Dale Nagata.

President's Banquet

At each AEC, the President's Banquet, a semi-formal occasion of dinner and celebration, is the final networking and social event. The official transfer of NEHA's presidency takes place, the Mangold Award is presented, and sabbatical-exchange participants are recognized. Events got under way with a video that paid tribute to the environmental health profession and highlighted some of NEHA's members.

President Dingman recognized Steve Konkel, who will be going to England, and Sara Forstring, who will be going to Canada, on exchange sabbaticals sponsored by NEHA, UL, and NSF.

David McSwane, a senior member of the Mangold Award Committee, presented Larry Eils from Illinois with the 2003 Walter S. Mangold award, NEHA's highest honor. Mr. Eils accepted the award and gave particular acknowledgement to Herb Ripley, his boss at

his first job in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Mr. Ripley encouraged Larry to pursue an advanced degree and taught him the importance of crafting a succinct business letter.

Eils encouraged environmental health professionals to get involved through NEHA and state affiliates and set an example by running for political office, joining a committee, or volunteering. By joining the political process, environmental health professionals can get to know the people who control the purse strings. Eils also suggested supporting the media, stating that the media can, in turn, support environmental health. He concluded his acceptance speech by recognizing his wife of 40 years, Marsha, and thanking her for her tireless support as proofreader and sounding board.

Jim Dingman gave a farewell speech and noted that it seemed like just yesterday when he accepted the position of president. He stated that he had three objectives when he took office: to expand educational opportunities, to increase visibility with federal agencies, and to strengthen the credentialing program. NEHA made substantive progress on educational programs in epidemiology, indoor air quality, radon, counterterrorism, and onsite wastewater, as well as on the Tools for School program. "We are now at the table with the feds in Washington and Atlanta," he said. Also, Dingman said, NEHA was in the final stages of negotiating a Washington presence through collaboration with former regional vice president Larry Yates. In addition, NEHA is working on a revision of the R.E.H.S. credential. Dingman declared that there had never been a dull moment in his presidency. He thanked his wife and stated that the opportunity to serve NEHA was priceless.

President-Elect Doug Ebelherr presented Jim Dingman with the presidential plaque and past president's pin. Mr. Ebelherr continued the presentation by announcing, "It's an Illinois night!" He recognized several people, as well as the Illinois Environmental Health Association. Then he told his audience that NEHA membership dues are a cover charge giving members basic services and "if you don't participate, that's all you get." He encouraged members to get involved and be mentors for someone in the environmental health profession. Ebelherr outlined several NEHA projects for the year, including increasing communication with the membership and promoting the environmental health profession by leveraging strengths through state affiliate partnerships.



NEHA's Board of Directors.



President Doug Ebelherr, Executive Director Nelson Fabian, President-Elect Jim Balsamo, First Vice President Ron Grimes, Second Vice President Richard Collins, and Immediate Past President Jim Dingman at the Council of Delegates Meeting.

Nelson Fabian, executive director of NEHA, concluded the evening by recognizing the NEHA staff and stating, "See you in Anchorage!"

Association Business

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors Meeting was held June 7 and was presided over by NEHA President Jim Dingman. Once again, the meeting had a full agenda and addressed many items of association business:

- The Environmental Health Accreditation Council (EHAC) reported that the enrollment of students in environmental health degree programs had increased 2 percent from last year to this year. The increase is a reversal of years of declining enrollment.
- It was reported that the Reno AEC was the largest in NEHA history, with the highest room pick-up, largest number of exhibitors, and highest levels of revenue ever seen at an AEC.
- Several NEHA staff changes were announced. Kim Brandow, Megan Thomsen, and Patricia Bolte have all moved from Denver to other states.
- A progress report was given on the examination of existing and potential credentialing-agency test partners for NEHA's R.E.H.S./R.S. and C.F.S.P. credentials.

- A lengthy discussion took place about what NEHA needed to do to make NEHA Training a success.
- A policy position paper detailing out the relationship between NEHA's R.E.H.S./R.S. and C.F.S.P. credentials was discussed and adopted.
- The board referred to its attorney the matter of how best to respond to a trademark challenge to NEHA's C.F.S.P. credential.
- The board approved for presentation to the Council of Delegates a change in the Articles of Incorporation that would enable the board to remove a director from office with cause.
- Because of a change in NEHA's fiscal year, the board approved a three-month transition budget for the period July 1 to September 30, 2003.
- The board approved two position statements, one supporting the consolidation of NCEH and ATSDR and the other supporting the maintenance of current levels of funding for environmental health programs throughout the federal government.
- The board adopted a resolution of appreciation for Jim Dingman.
- The board engaged in a lengthy discussion with Jim Kendzel, vice president of administration for NSF. The purpose of the discussion was to deepen both the understandings and the relationship between the two organizations.

- It was announced that for the first time NEHA would be providing a CD of much of the AEC education to each attendee.
- It was also announced that NEHA and its co-sponsors were awarding sabbatical scholarships to both England and Canada.

Council of Delegates Meeting

The Council of Delegates comprises the NEHA Board of Directors and all the presidents of the NEHA affiliates. Highlights of this year's meeting, held June 11 and presided over by the new NEHA president, Doug Ebelherr, are as follows:

- Mail ballot results were announced:
 - Rick Collins—second vice president,
 - Bob Custard—Region 8 vice president, and
 - Dick Pantages—Region 2 vice president.
- There is no elected vice president for Region 3, and the NEHA board will proceed with a process to fill the position.
- Candidate presentations for the office of second vice president were made by Rob Blake and Richard Gabriel.
- It was reported that over \$4,000 was earned at this year's silent auction.
- It was reported that NEHA was open to considering second- or third-tier cities for the AEC. This openness relates to opportunities to secure good prices on hotel rooms.
- It was reported that NEHA was participating in a significant way in the CDC environmental health capacity-building project.
- It was reported that a special report on lessons for environmental health from the 9/11 experience should be available to NEHA members by this fall.
- It was announced that President Jim Dingman will be running for the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) president-elect position.
- Affiliates were encouraged to work with the Denver office, in particular with Julie Muñoz, business development manager for NEHA Training (e-mail: jmunoz@neha-training.org) for the purpose of becoming involved in and earning income from Food Manager Food Safety education.
- As a way of heightening the visibility of the endowment fund, it was noted that the fund might authorize a small contribution to NEHA this year.
- It was explained that a select committee of the board would now be studying all of the input NEHA has thus far received on the issue of a name change for the R.E.H.S./R.S. credential. This committee will report

sponsors and partners of NEHA'S 2003 AEC and exhibition

The organizations listed below supported NEHA's 2003 AEC and Exhibition as sponsors and partners, making many valuable aspects of the conference possible. NEHA thanks its financial sponsors for their generous contributions and also thanks its partners for their support.

sponsors

Tier II (\$15,000-\$30,000)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health
U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Office of Regulatory Affairs

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Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
NSF International
Underwriters Laboratories

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Mars Air Doors
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United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9
United States Food and Drug Administration
University of Nevada at Las Vegas, Department of Environmental Studies
University of Nevada at Reno, College of Agriculture, Biotechnology,
and Natural Resources
Washoe County District Health Department, Environmental Health Services

back by the end of 2003 with a recommendation on what, if anything, NEHA might do regarding a name change for the credential.

- President Ebelherr presented and explained a new board policy concerning the relationship between NEHA's R.E.H.S./R.S. credential and the C.F.S.P. credential.
- The council took supportive positions regarding the consolidation of ATSDR and NCEH and the maintenance of current funding levels for environmental health programs throughout the federal government.
- Lacking information on how it would be implemented, the council tabled a proposal to establish within NEHA's Articles of Incorporation a provision that would enable the NEHA board to remove a director from office with cause.
- Several focus group presentations on the impact that the down economy is having on environmental health programs took place.

General Assembly

Outgoing NEHA President Jim Dingman called the General Assembly to order, welcoming the audience and introducing the members of the Executive Board. Jim stated that this was a time for members to ask questions of the board, hear firsthand what is occurring within the association, and learn the views of the board. He gave a brief report on the following accomplishments of the association:

- launching NEHA Training LLC, which is of strategic importance for NEHA, as it will provide a revenue stream to help support membership activities and services;
- receiving over \$1 million in grants and contracts in areas such as food safety, onsite wastewater, chemical and bioterrorism, epidemiology for food safety professionals, and indoor air quality;
- initiating a code of conduct for the board of directors, providing accountability to NEHA members;
- enhancing relationships with CDC, ATSDR, and NCEH, where environmental health policy is being developed;
- holding the largest AEC in NEHA history, with the largest gross revenues—a notable achievement considering the overall slowing economy;
- enhancing computer capabilities to improve financial services and accountability;
- developing a strategic direction of the association for the near-term future;
- enhancing the NEHA Web site;
- holding focus groups and workshops on many topics around the country; and



Region 4 Vice President Mary Myszka at the General Assembly.

- certifying more C.F.S.P.s and expanding the R.E.H.S./R.S. credentialing program to new states.

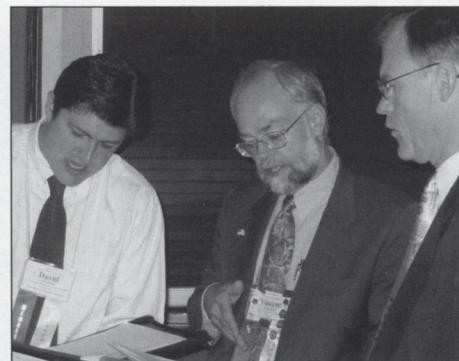
In addition, Dingman stated that NEHA has tripled its staff and budget, largely because of Nelson Fabian, the staff, and the activities of its members.

Dingman then announced that the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws allow for nominations from the floor in addition to the nomination process that had already been followed. Richard Gabriel is currently running for second vice president. The floor was opened to nominations for the seat of second vice president. Steve Tackitt, chairman of the National Conference of Local Environmental Health Administrators, nominated Robert Blake. Chuck Lichon seconded the nomination.

The two nominees for second vice president made brief statements outlining their platforms. Richard Gabriel proposed to market the environmental health profession, increase student involvement in NEHA, and increase funding and training for terrorism response activities. Robert Blake said that he would concentrate on improving the image of an "invisible profession," advancing future leadership, developing the workforce through recruitment and retention, increasing emergency response readiness, and enhancing the educational outreach of NEHA.

The floor was opened to comments from the audience:

- Bob Powitz informed the audience of his experience in obtaining professional liability insurance. He found that many insurance carriers did not have knowledge or awareness of the environmental health vocation. After some months he was able to secure professional liability insurance and is willing to share this information with the NEHA membership.



David DeLozier, Vince Radke, and Doug Park at the epidemiology advisory committee meeting.

- Michele Samrya-Timm proposed to set up efforts to bring environmental health educators to the AEC and to partner with the Society of Public Health Educators to bring environmental health educators to the forefront and enhance the environmental health profession as a whole.
- Two members from Iowa raised a question regarding the level of involvement NEHA has with the CDC Workforce Development group. Nelson Fabian, executive director of NEHA responded to this issue by providing an outline of NEHA's involvement and accomplishments in representing the profession, including holding meetings with several key personnel from NCEH, CDC, and U.S. EPA; lobbying for new initiatives; and negotiating with former regional vice president Larry Yates to arrange a part-time position in Washington, D.C., where he would represent the association at meetings. Several members expressed agreement and support for these activities.
- Dan Sproul, on behalf of Trenton Davis, thanked NEHA for supporting the successful turnaround of the East Carolina University environmental health academic program. The undergraduate enrollment doubled in the last year, and the teaching staff grew by two to a total of 35 positions. Laura Studevart recognized Tom Ward, who was instrumental in the efforts to save the ECU program.
- Mary Myszka announced plans for the Region 4 biannual education meeting to be held on September 30 and October 1, 2003. She encouraged the audience to send their employees to this conference.
- Susie Campbell, a new member from Oklahoma, asked if there was any financial support for local or state conferences. Jim Dingman responded that while there was

no support offered to attend local affiliate conferences, NEHA does provide opportunities for individuals to attend conferences in specialty areas.

- Before adjourning the meeting, outgoing President Dingman encouraged the audience to support the awards programs. Neither the AAS nor the Snyder award had a recipient this year. He emphasized that while the application process takes time and effort, awards are worthwhile for recipients and nominators.

Conclusion

This report has been designed both to recap highlights for those who were able to attend the AEC and to allow those who were unable to attend to enjoy some of the offerings. NEHA hopes that both attendees and non-attendees will benefit from the information we have presented here.

All educational offerings are one of NEHA's best tools for achieving its mission of advancing the environmental health and protection professional. As preparations for next year's conference in Anchorage, Alaska get under way, we are hopeful that even more of you will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities the AEC offers. In the words of one of this year's conference attendees, "I had a wonderful time, and my vocational pride has been reinforced through my participation at NEHA's AEC!"

Each year, the NEHA staff return from the AEC motivated to respond to your feedback and make the following year's conference even better. With 67 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. See you in Anchorage! 🐻



Sunset on Lake Tahoe.

NEHA recognizes its 2003 AEC Tier II sponsors

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health

NEHA would like to thank the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for crucial contributions to the field of environmental health. In its continuing efforts to provide national leadership through science and service, CDC is presenting the *Sixth National Environmental Public Health Conference: Preparing for the Environmental Public Health Challenges of the 21st Century* in Atlanta, Georgia, December 3–5, 2003. The conference goals are to

- prepare the public health workforce for the environmental public health challenges of the 21st century;
 - the need for an all-hazards approach to preparedness and response that encompasses terrorism, natural disasters, and other environmental challenges; and
 - promote the development of emerging environmental public health leaders.
- Additional information can be found at www.cdc.gov/nceh/Information/ncehconf03.htm.

NEHA also would like to highlight CDC's *National Strategy to Revitalize Environmental Public Health Services*. This critical strategy has been designed as a starting point for the rejuvenation of the country's environmental health system at the federal, state, tribal, territorial, and local levels. The overarching goal is to enhance and revitalize the system of environmental health services to address the broad range of issues facing states and communities. A cornerstone of the strategy will be development of the workforce through recruitment, training, and other educational activities. An increase in recruitment for and retention of the next generation of environmental public health professionals is vital given the challenges of the 21st century.

The Food and Drug Administration, Office of Regulatory Affairs

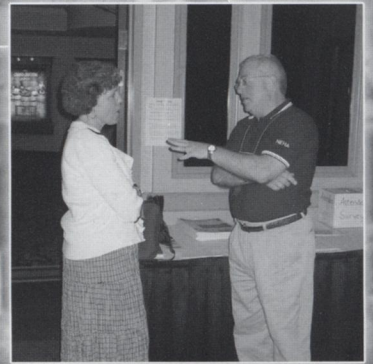
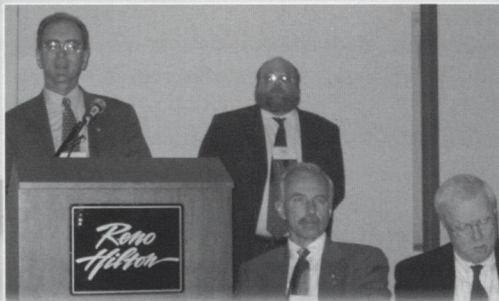
For the past three years, the support NEHA has received from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has covered conference registration costs for food safety professionals who otherwise would have been unable to attend NEHA's Annual Educational Conference (AEC). This year FDA's sponsorship made possible the attendance of over 50 recipients! This contribution was integral to the great success of the 2003 AEC and Exhibition.

NEHA is proud to be in partnership with an agency that protects the health of all Americans. FDA is in touch with consumers and firms across the country. Regulating more than 115,000 business establishments that annually produce, warehouse, import, and transport over one trillion dollars' worth of consumer goods is no small task. The FDA devotes about one-third of its personnel to this crucial task, which is directed by the Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA). Stationed in more than 150 offices, resident posts, and laboratories from coast to coast and in Puerto Rico, ORA's highly trained professionals are the eyes, the ears, and the long arm of the agency, ensuring the implementation of FDA's high public health standards. For more information, visit www.fda.gov/ora.

NEHA 2003

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Photos: Michele Samarya-Timm and Terri James.

