

NEHA's

2006

Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition A Special Report



San Antonio, Texas

What do you call a four-day experience of back-to-back educational sessions, armadillo racing, Tex-Mex food, networking, and line dancing? To over 1,400 environmental and public health professionals, this experience was a typical—but far from ordinary—NEHA Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition.

NEHA's 70th AEC & Exhibition was held June 25–28, 2006, in San Antonio, Texas, and featured 177 educational sessions and seven pre-conference workshops, on topics ranging from terrorism and all-hazards preparedness to onsite wastewater to food safety and protection. Other highlights of the conference included a panel discussion on pandemic and avian flu, an impressive poster session, and numerous networking and social events.

For many of our attendees, expectations for the conference were not only met but also exceeded. Stefanie Woods of the Combined Health District of Montgomery County reported: "The conference exceeded

my expectations by bringing in and inviting spectacular people who are experts in their field." Ann Mayo of the Lyon County Health Department added: "I expected excellence and that is what I got."

Opening Ceremony, Conference Panel, and Special Presentation

At the opening ceremony, President Ron Grimes welcomed everyone to the conference, recognizing NEHA's international guests, new NEHA members, first-time AEC attendees, and the AEC's generous sponsors. President-Elect Rick Collins offered the invocation.

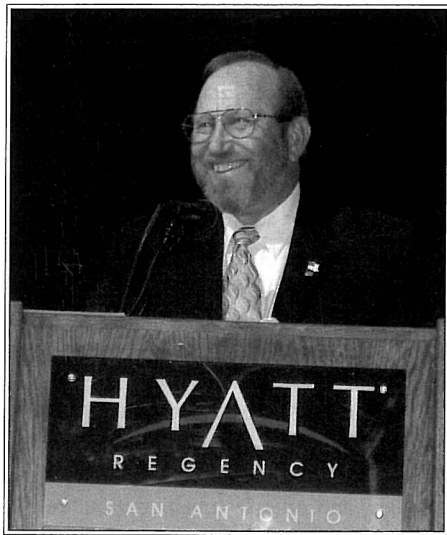
Conference Panel—Pandemic Flu and the Environmental Health Profession

Few issues on the horizon of public health concern public health professionals as much as pandemic flu does. Worst-case but entirely plausible scenarios suggest millions of deaths throughout the world, communities coming to a standstill, and community infrastructures

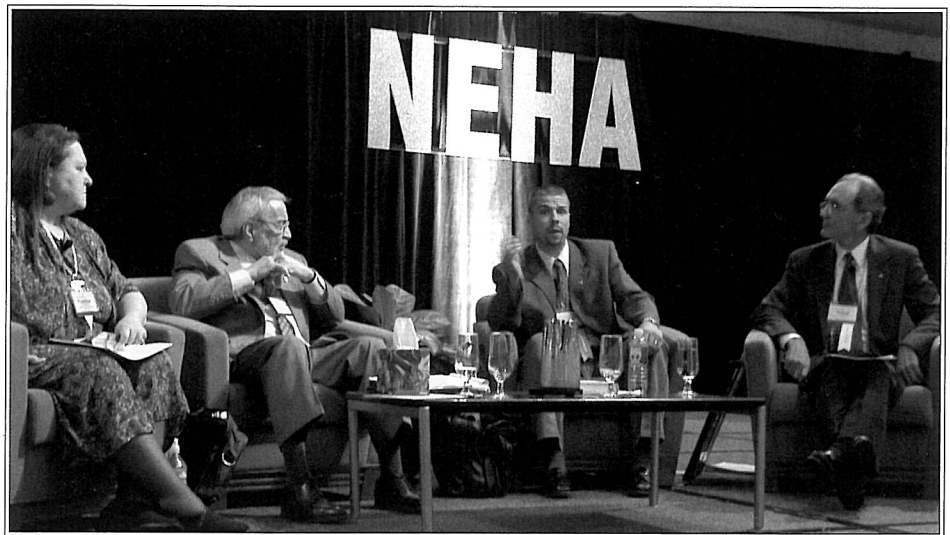
barely able to function. Throughout it all, countless public health professionals—including thousands of environmental health professionals—will be working on the front lines in all-out efforts to maintain the integrity and functioning of our communities.

NEHA is aware that in our lifetime, this issue may never materialize. On the other hand, ... it might. And if it does, environmental health professionals are going to be playing key roles in keeping our communities going and in minimizing the pandemic impact.

To help the cause of preparedness in our profession, NEHA changed its keynote event this year so that we could offer a probing look at the pandemic-flu issue. A series of presentations was followed by a panel discussion moderated by NEHA Executive Director Nelson Fabian. The purpose of this unique keynote event was to stimulate in conference attendees a realization of what might be lying ahead and what we can do now to prepare.



Immediate Past President Ron Grimes at the Opening Ceremony.



Keynote panelists: Dr. Cynthia Morgan, Dr. Fernando Guerra, Jason Bashura, and Nelson Fabian (moderator).

Conference Panelist—Dr. Cynthia Morgan

As the pandemic-influenza program coordinator for the Texas Department of State Health Services, Dr. Cynthia Morgan has much knowledge to share on pandemic-flu planning. She led the development of operational guidelines for the Texas Pandemic Flu Plan, and she is working to prepare the Texas community for a possible pandemic.

Morgan discussed the progress and challenges in pandemic-influenza planning. She began by focusing on three challenges in planning: containment, prevention, and treatment.

The challenge of containment measures, according to Morgan, comprises the challenges of population-focused interventions—the second line of defense offered by the environmental and public health profession. These challenges include determining what population-focused interventions should begin when; being sure people in charge understand how interventions are done and what their roles are; communicating with the public early so that they understand why, who, what, and when; being sure support systems are in place; and controlling communicable disease.

Also fully under the challenge of containment are the issues surrounding antivirals, including who receives them. Morgan emphasized that antivirals are not magic pills. She explained that people who are young through middle-aged (15–55 years of age) are most likely to become infected and that three of the previous pandemics showed a high fatality rate in this age bracket. In addition, people in this age bracket have the healthiest immune systems, which, in the case of a pan-

demic flu, would work against them. The immune system would overreact to the highly virulent virus, resulting in a cytokine storm, and they would die of adult respiratory-distress syndrome.

Last spring, an expert panel comprised of three groups of scientists, pandemic-flu experts, ethicists, lawyers, faith community representatives, and consumer advocates was formed in Texas to discuss the highest priorities with respect to antivirals. They all reached similar conclusions: The highest priorities should be outbreak control for early containment, and reaching critical-service providers and sick patients.

The second challenge in pandemic-flu planning, Morgan said, is prevention. Prevention in part deals with the production and distribution of influenza vaccine. Morgan asked several critical questions: When will it be available? How much will there be? How effective will it be? Who will own it? How should it be delivered? Who should get it? Who will pay for it?

To determine the availability of the vaccine, she joked, would require a medium. Her other questions have yet to be answered.

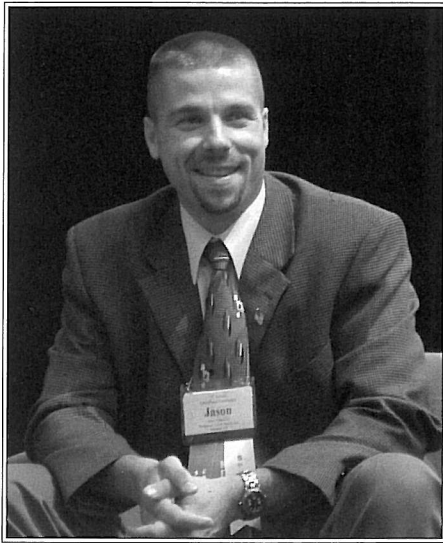
On a positive note, however, she pointed to several new vaccine developments. First, the administration is aiming to have 600 million flu vaccine doses available within six months of a pandemic, two for every American. To meet this target, the U.S. Health and Human Services Department (HHS) is looking to diversify the production of influenza vaccines by using cell-based vaccine manufacturing and to have more of such manufacturing take

place in the United States. Second, a vaccine that uses a DNA technique and allows scientists to choose components to be used as antigens could someday translate to a super-vaccine—in other words, a universal vaccine that could provide long-acting immunity to all current human flu strains. Third, vaccine production using bacterial fermentation shows promise and may produce large quantities quickly. For this type of production to occur, DNA is inserted into *E.coli* bacteria, and the bacteria are allowed to replicate in a fermentation vat. As the bacteria replicate, the DNA is copied, and the genes of interest are removed and combined with an agent that increases the ability of the vaccine to elicit an immune response.

Morgan also noted that the United States and Canada are the largest consumers of vaccines and that while 70 percent of global vaccine production is located in Europe, 50 percent of that production is exported out of Europe. Furthermore, there are no vaccine-manufacturing sites in the United States (although some plants in the United States do conduct post-manufacturing activities).

In response to the need for vaccines, the U.S. government is focusing on building infrastructure in the states for vaccine manufacturing. According to HHS, five manufacturers received more than \$1 billion in contracts to develop new and improved influenza vaccines and to make them in the United States.

The third challenge to planning, said Morgan, is treatment. Under this challenge, considerations need to be given to current hospital capacity, triage clinics, alternate care



Jason Bashura, keynote panelist and public health preparedness coordinator at the Naugatuck Valley Health District.

sites, the number of ventilators, coordination and legal status of volunteers, and treatments for cytokine storms. According to Morgan, hospitals should be the intensive-care units for the most ill, those needing limited care should stay at home, and those needing symptomatic care such as IVs should be at an alternate care center.

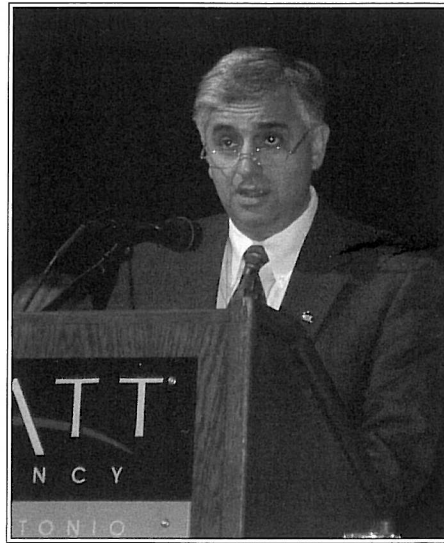
Morgan also highlighted other general challenges to pandemic-flu planning. Staffing for public health infrastructure, noted Morgan, is a huge challenge. "We keep getting money labeled as 'one time' and are encouraged not to hire staff," said Morgan. "Current staff can't do more, and more is expected." In addition to staffing challenges, there are tracking systems and border issues to consider.

As she concluded, Morgan encouraged the professionals in the audience to know their business continuity plan, identify critical functions, cross-train staff, and—of course—be informed.

Conference Panelist—Dr. Fernando Guerra

Dr. Fernando Guerra is the director of the San Antonio Metropolitan District Health Department. With a department of over 740 employees and a budget of \$46 million, he has the significant responsibility of protecting the health of this large metropolitan area. In his presentation, he discussed issues surrounding pandemic flu from his perspective as a local public health director.

While we are called to disaster response, said Guerra, we must remember to maintain our daily duties as environmental and public health professionals. At times, he noted, all



Stan Hazan, senior director of NSF's Regulatory Affairs and Association Programs, at the Opening Ceremony.

of the media attention on pandemic flu seems to leave the impression that this issue takes precedence over other efforts that are taking place in public health. We cannot, however, allow ourselves to get so categorical that we forget all of our responsibilities and the importance of cross-training.

Guerra also focused on maintaining relationships—as they relate not only to pandemic-flu planning but also to the wide scope of the environmental and public health profession. He emphasized the importance of relationships within departments as well as with entire communities. In the event of a catastrophic event such as Hurricane Katrina, his department relied on their relationships with public and private sector groups, including the hospital community and volunteer groups.

Within the context of building relationships, Guerra remarked that it is critical to identify who the key stakeholders are. In its community-planning efforts, this department has on many occasions had special briefings with legislative delegations, county and city officials, and stakeholders outside of the public sector, including the business sector, chambers of commerce, and the transportation sector.

The big concern, said Guerra, is how pandemic flu will affect the workforce (for that reason, he noted, the profession needs to build this concern into its contingency plans). Fortunately, there are systems in place to help us identify viral strains of H5N1 early. Texas, according to Guerra, has fairly good surveillance systems in place that receive in-

put from school and medical communities, as well as from pharmacists, and that provide a level of reassurance. Pharmacists, for example, can note an important early indicator: an increase in the number of prescription medications being dispensed.

Finally, Guerra addressed what he feels is a truly important area that the environmental and public health profession needs to think about—the many vulnerable communities around the United States. As we prepare for another disaster, manmade or natural, he stressed, it is important to remember the large number of people who barely get by every day and who are without basic housing, supplies, and reliable transportation. In addition, we must also acknowledge individuals with physical disabilities, as formidable challenges are involved in displacing them, bringing them into shelters, and isolating them from their current living situations.

Conference Panelist—Jason Bashura

With the enthusiasm and passion of a Yankees fan, Jason Bashura, public health emergency response coordinator for the Naugatuck Valley Health District in Connecticut and NEHA terrorism and all-hazards preparedness technical section co-chair, brought to the panel his local perspective on pandemic-influenza planning. He also addressed communications, workforce capacity to respond to a pandemic flu or other event, family preparedness, and education and training.

Bashura began by asking the audience: How does pandemic-flu planning differ from the all-hazards planning we've been doing for some time now? We all know that any event is going to start and end locally. "We can't wait for the big trucks and the airplanes to get here—if something happens, we simply can't wait," Bashura pointed out. He argued that we must prepare risk communications materials, provide just-in-time training to our staff on personal protective equipment, identify and review the roles they'll be filling within a clinic or at a dispensing point, coordinate and train volunteers, and send notifications to CEOs—and be flexible and adaptable.

Locally, said Bashura, departments should be completing (or have just completed) the CDC pandemic-flu assessments. He advised: "If you are from a local public health agency and don't know what I am talking about, maybe you should ask your supervisor, because odds are if something happens, your name [will] appear somewhere on a grid or two assigned to a responsibility like 'nutrition

area unit leader' or 'logistics section chief.'" Bashura also suggested that when planning regionally, departments recognize that an event of this magnitude is going to require assistance beyond the people who attend monthly staff meetings. "By working within our regions," he said, "We have the ability to learn from each other and share with each other."

Another facet of communications is the *ability* to communicate. Bashura questioned the audience: "When was the last time you actually talked to some of the members of your community without telling them not to store the stainless-steel polish next to the spray pan release? Have you spoken with a member of the local senior center to get their feelings on 'preparedness?'" He described his experience in a senior center several months ago, where an elderly woman told him that she had sworn off chicken because she didn't want to get the bird flu. "What does that say about us, if we don't know the fears, thoughts, and concerns of our residents?" asked Bashura. In addition to senior centers, Bashura pointed out that schoolteachers are a great link to the community—after all, they care for and educate our children. He added: "Seniors and teachers are the pulse of the very populations that we serve every day."

What about communicating with businesses? Bashura asked. He highlighted a call that he had recently received from a local bank CEO who informed him that her bank was going to instill confidence in its customers and staff in the case of a pandemic by having hand sanitizer in place. She then asked him if there was a way to figure out how many gallons of hand sanitizer she should have on hand for her 35 employees and the roughly 200 customers she sees every day. Bashura thought: How can you be so sure *any* of your staff are going to come to work? Hello? Pandemic flu! People are going to do online banking!

Research suggests that from 40 to 60 percent of the health care workforce—including members of the environmental and public health profession—will not go to work for fear of becoming ill and because of responsibilities at home. Bashura urged the audience to think: "If our communities look to us for answers during floods, fires, blizzards, temporary events with vendors, and so forth, how are they going to get answers if we are not at work?"

As for family and personal preparedness, Bashura issued another challenge: "How many of us here today have family members at home who are missing us? What if

the power goes out.... Do our families have enough food and water (five gallons per person) to last three days if the power were out that long? If this is a message that we want our residents to hear and heed the advice and *prepare*, we've got to start practicing what we are preaching."

Bashura also acknowledged the importance of education and training. He called upon the audience: "Don't wait for the answers to questions that are bothering you. If you want info from your boss, a nurse, an epidemiologist, *ask!*" He advised everyone to visit Pandemic-flu.gov, Redcross.org, and Ready.gov for preparedness-related information, and to attend municipal emergency management meetings.

"To be honest," Bashura said, "We don't even know what we do not know. But we do know that we can't simply ignore the reports and say it'll never happen. The time to prepare isn't just today, it's yesterday as well as tomorrow."

Panel Discussion

Nelson Fabian—I have theory on this issue:

The more prepared we are as a society, the more time the system has to respond and adapt to the significant assault that a pandemic would represent. The longer we can delay the tipping point of the system, the more time we have to be able to get the system back into equilibrium so that it continues to function and operate. By system, I mean the entire community infrastructure, not just public health. Therefore, if the system collapses, the dimensions of the problem that we would likely face would far exceed the boundaries of anything that would be caused by a pandemic flu. So it is vital to keep the system operating, and the system will operate longer if more and more people are prepared.

I've read most of the states' pandemic-flu plans, and most of the plans feature as their centerpiece the idea of mass vaccinations. That sounds good, except for the fact that we don't have a vaccine, and even with the wonderful developments taking place, we don't anticipate having vaccines for quite some time. I read editorial pages across the country, often written by people who represent state public health, and I read a lot of reassurances from state officials telling us that we've got a plan, we've got everything under control.

My question to the panel is: If we continue to represent that we've got a plan, that we've got things under control, that we

know what we're doing, aren't we undermining people's preparedness and sending a counter-message to our public that in the end disarms and discourages people from preparing, such that the tipping point time gets reduced because we aren't as prepared as we thought we were?

Dr. Fernando Guerra—We need to put this into a context that clearly establishes our responsibilities not only for preparing for pandemic flu or annual flu but also for whatever circumstance. We could have power outages, for example. People need to be prepared, and we have an obligation to convey the message to our communities that on any given day it is still our responsibility to ourselves and to our families to be sure that, whatever the next situation might be that puts us in some semblance of risk and displacement, we are prepared. We need to have something in place that helps us get by for a period of time. In addition, we need to identify vulnerable groups.

Jason Bashura—The reassurances that we're ready and that we have a plan—I'm not telling everyone this. If that's the message that you're saying, then, yes, you are undermining people's preparedness. First, we will not have enough vaccines for all residents, and we will not have enough vaccines for the people who need them. We will have to prioritize. Second, preparedness is not just about pandemic flu, so if we are telling people that we have a plan and we're not also encouraging preparedness, we're not doing our jobs.

Dr. Cynthia Morgan—There isn't enough public education. In my experience, people aren't even at the point where they're getting ready to think about getting ready for anything. We need to make sure the public understands that what will work best during a pandemic flu is their preparations and their following of basic public health methods.

Nelson Fabian—In Colorado, we have something like 22 executive orders now drawn up and ready to go should a pandemic situation develop and the governor finds its necessary to implement various public health emergency measures. It is interesting that these measures have been subject to no public review or comment—and that was by intention. The state has said that the reason for this is that gaps and vulnerabilities would be revealed that we don't want revealed.

continued on page 58

Awards and Honors

The main awards ceremony was held during the opening session, just before the panel discussion, to draw everyone's attention to the award winners. NEHA is proud to introduce these deserving professionals and is happy to highlight their accomplishments.

Walter S. Mangold Award

NEHA's highest honor, the Walter S. Mangold Award—for outstanding contributions to the advancement of the environmental health profession—was not given this year. For more information on this award, please visit www.neha.org.

Certificates of Merit

Certificates of Merit are awarded to affiliate members who make exemplary contributions to the profession of environmental health. Each affiliate sets its own criteria for recognition, so recipients do not need to be NEHA members. For 2006, the following winners were announced:

- Alabama—*Theodore (Teddy) King*,
- Florida—*Greg Kearney*,
- Idaho—*Robert Hays*,
- Indiana—*Patty Nocek*,
- Massachusetts—*Gerald F. Cody*,
- Minnesota—*Colleen Paulus*,
- Missouri—*Marsha Perkins*,
- NCLEHA—*Mel Knight*,
- National Capital Area—*Christopher Gordon*,
- Nebraska—*George Hansen*,
- New Jersey—*Dalynn Knigge*,
- Ohio—*OEHA Sewage Technical Committee (Rick Novickis and Laura Kramer Kuns)*,
- Oklahoma—*Alisa Mankins*,
- Texas—*Richard Briley*,
- Utah—*Joseph Decaria*,
- Wisconsin—*Thomas E. Wittkopf*, and
- Wyoming—*Jon Cecil*.

Affiliates may submit their nominations at any time for Certificate of Merit awards to be announced next June in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

A. Harry Bliss Editor's Award

Tommye Schneider

Dr. A. Harry Bliss was the *Journal* editor in 1969, the year this award was first presented. When he retired, the award was named after him to honor his 40

years of involvement in *Journal* production. NEHA often gives the annual Harry Bliss Editor's Award to outstanding writers and columnists, but the award may also go to individuals who, through the *Journal of Environmental Health*, advance the cause and interests of the association.

This year, we are proud to announce that the 2006 recipient of the Harry Bliss Award is Ms. Tommye Schneider, director of Environmental Health and Laboratories at the Madison Department of Public Health.

As a peer reviewer for the *Journal*, Schneider has exemplified the dedication and professionalism we need from our peer reviewers to uphold the *Journal's* standard of excellence and its mission of providing useful, in-depth, and cutting-edge information to environmental health professionals. Year after year, she provides reviews that are prompt, thorough, and insightful, often adding comments beyond the review form. For the past five years, including for the 2005–2006 publication year, Schneider has earned the distinction of *JEH* Distinguished Peer Reviewer, a designation awarded to those peer reviewers who perform timely and above-average reviews.

NEHA/AAS Scholarship Awards

The NEHA/AAS Scholarship Award program is sponsored jointly by NEHA and the American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS). This year, the program awarded one graduate scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 and one undergraduate scholarship in the amount of \$1,500. NEHA Past President and Scholarship Committee Chair James Balsamo presented the scholarship awards on behalf of the scholarship committee:

- graduate scholarship—*Tom Gonzales*, University of Northern Colorado, and
- undergraduate scholarship—*Sarah Elizabeth Keyes*, Eastern Kentucky University.

Walter F. Snyder Award

Arthur L. Banks

NSF International and NEHA honored Arthur Banks with the 2006 Walter F. Snyder Award. Kevan Lawlor, president and CEO of NSF, and Steve Tackitt, director of environmental health in Charlotte, Michigan, presented the award. The award is given in honor of NSF's cofounder and first executive director, and it

recognizes outstanding contributions to public health and the environment. Please see the accompanying story on page 56, which details Mr. Banks's contributions to the profession.

Sabbatical Exchange Award

NEHA offers a wide-ranging opportunity for professional growth and the exchange of valuable information on the international level through its longtime Sabbatical Exchange Program. The recipient of this award may go either to England, in cooperation with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, or to Canada, in cooperation with the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors. Underwriters Laboratories (UL) currently sponsors the sabbatical.

The award jury this year decided that the sabbatical award would not be given.

Anyone interested in applying for the award should contact Kim Clapper at (303) 756-9090, extension 302, or kclapper@neha.org.

Innovative Environmental Public Health Practices Awards

NEHA acknowledged and congratulated several programs selected by the Environmental Public Health Workforce Development Consortium for offering exemplary case study examples of innovative environmental public health practices. The consortium is a voluntary group of association representatives dedicated to the enhancement of the environmental public health workforce. The goal of the project is to recognize, collect, and widely disseminate innovative practices in order to build the nation's capacity to recruit, train, and strengthen the environmental public health workforce. Outstanding program submissions came from the following organizations:

- *Iowa Department of Public Health*—No or Low-Cost Continuing Education;
- *Multnomah County (Oregon) Environmental Health Services*—Multnomah County Environmental Health Internship Program: Replenishing the Environmental Workforce of Tomorrow;
- *National Council for Diversity in Environmental Health (NCODE Health)*—Diversity in Environmental Health; and
- *County of Riverside (California) Department of Environmental Health*—Recruitment Efforts at Colleges and Universities, Career Awareness,



Environmental Health Specialist Trainee Program, Tangible Assets.

Members who wish to learn more about these outstanding programs are invited to visit www.neha.org for a detailed explanation.

Student Research Presentations

Every year, the Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs (AEHAP) and CDC's National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) sponsor and financially support undergraduate and graduate student research presentations. Thanks to a generous donation from NCEH, six students and their faculty mentors had the opportunity to present their research at the AEC & Exhibition. Each student participant received a plaque and a stipend of up to \$1,000 to cover travel and research expenses. Presenting the student research awards were Dr. Dale Stephenson of Boise State University and Captain Michael Herring of the U.S. Public Health Service/CDC/NCEH.

The following undergraduates were honored for their research presentations: *Olivia Cunningham and Crystal Woolf* from Boise State University, *Leslie Toni* from Colorado State University, and *Jared Balkman* from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. The following graduate students were honored for their research presentations: *Elisabeth Maxwell* from Oregon State University and *Laura McLaughlin* from the University of Washington.

Plaques were also awarded to the students who were selected to present their research at the student poster session: *Sarah Elizabeth Keyes* from Eastern Kentucky University, *John Rodgers* from the University of Illinois at Springfield, and *Amanda Glisson* from East Carolina University.

Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award

Multnomah County Environmental Health Services

The Samuel J. Crumbine Award is a prestigious national award given annually to a local food protection agency that demonstrates excellence and continual improvement in a food protection program. The award is named in honor of Dr. Samuel J. Crumbine, a sanitarian-physician and public health pioneer who

was renowned for his innovative methods of improving public health protection, and it is supported by the Conference for Food Protection in cooperation with AAS; the American Public Health Association; the Association of Food & Drug Officials; the Foodservice & Packaging Institute, Inc.; the International Association for Food Protection; the International Food Safety Council; the National Association of County and City Health Officials; NEHA; NSF; and UL.

This year, Multnomah County Environmental Health Services in Portland, Oregon, received the Crumbine Award for its well-defined strategy and outcomes, innovative use of grants to supplement funding, foodborne-illness database, community outreach, and education and training efforts. For more information on Multnomah's award-winning application, please visit www.fpi.org.

Past Presidents Award

*Holly Coleman
Art Banks*

Each year, the Past Presidents group, comprising former NEHA presidents, recognizes a NEHA member for outstanding achievement. Past President Doug Ebelherr presented this year's award to Holly Coleman, environmental health director of the Chatham County Public Health Department and co-chair of the NEHA technical section on environmental health leadership development, and Art Banks, senior advisor for FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition.

Presidential Citations

A Presidential Citation is a special award given to individuals who have made exemplary contributions to NEHA during the president's term of office. President Ron Grimes presented presidential citations to *Jackson County and the Jackson County Health Department, the NEHA Denver staff, Jason Bashura, George Nakamura, Joe Beck, Larry Gordon, Elwin Coll, and Rick Collins.*

NSF International Scholar Award

Thomas Bixler

NSF President and CEO Kevan Lawlor presented Thomas Bixler, a student at Missouri Southern State University, with the second-ever NSF International Scholar Award. NSF is providing the financial support, and AEHAP and NSF are working together to create a scholar

program that offers an undergraduate student the opportunity to gain valuable experience in the environmental health field by interning at a local environmental health department and conducting research.

During the internship, Bixler will be working with the Joplin City Health Department, and he will be completing research on food inspection practices, particularly hot- and cold-holding units and NSF certifications. He will also be completing pool inspections and researching the use of NSF standards in pool equipment. His advisor, Mr. Michael Fletcher, will be overseeing his research.

Davis Calvin Wagner Award

Dr. Joe Beck



Davis Calvin Wagner Award recipient Dr. Joe Beck with his wife, Sue Beck.

AAS presented its highest award, the 2006 Davis Calvin Wagner Award, to Dr. Joe Beck, professor of environmental health sciences at Eastern Kentucky University. The Wagner Award and honorarium are given each year in recognition of outstanding professional work, accomplishments, and contributions to environmental and public health. Professor Beck was recognized for elevating the status of credentialing and the visibility of the profession, as well as for recruitment and diversity efforts. The award is particularly meaningful since recipients are nominated and selected on the basis of recommendations from their peers in the profession.

Educational Activities



One hundred and seventy-seven sessions in 20 environmental health technical sections; expert speakers from local, state, and federal agencies, from academia, and from private industry; seven pre-conference workshops; credential review courses and exams; a poster session; student research presentations; and an onsite wastewater systems tour—all this makes up the educational content of the AEC & Exhibition. "There is a great variety of topics and something for just about everyone," commented Laura Rabb, environmental health officer for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

A tremendous amount of effort goes into ensuring that educational sessions are current, relevant, and

thought provoking. Before the conference, countless hours are spent talking to numerous NEHA members about their careers and educational needs. The educational sessions are then designed to meet the needs and address the issues that have been identified through this process.

Hot topics such as ethnic-food safety, hurricane response and recovery, avian and pandemic flu, meth lab cleanup guidance, workforce development strategies, and many others were covered at the conference. These sessions captured the interest of numerous attendees, and many session rooms were packed to capacity. "NEHA continues to attract the speakers that have their finger on the pulse of today's environmental health profession-

al. Their presentations are both timely and informative," observed Tom Ward, public health preparedness coordinator for the Union County Health Department in Monroe, North Carolina. Victor Zare, director of public health standards for Amtrak in Washington, D.C., added: "The sessions were 'in tune' with today's subject matter."

Several other organizations provided further educational sessions at the conference—the National Environmental, Safety & Health Training Association (NESHTA), the International Aquatic Foundation (IAF), NEHA's Uniformed Services Environmental Health Affiliate (USEHA), and the American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS). NEHA thanks these organizations for their contributions.



A vast array of pre-conference workshops and courses also were held. These workshops provided attendees with in-depth and focused education in areas such as foodborne-illness epidemiology, healthy homes, plan review, and school food safety. In addition, two workshops, Environmental Health Training in Disaster Response and Biology and Control of Insects and Rodents, made their debut at the conference, providing new training opportunities for attendees.

As always, review courses and exams were held for the Certified Food Safety Professional (C.F.S.P.) and the Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (R.E.H.S./R.S.) credentials. This year, NEHA was pleased to offer exams for its newest credential, the Certified Installer of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (C.I.O.W.T.S.). These exams are the culmination of several years of work by many professionals associated with the onsite wastewater systems industry, and they constitute one piece of a strategy whose aim is to provide national onsite standards and improve system installations, thus protecting the health and environment of the nation.

A special thank-you goes to the over 300 speakers, trainers, and instructors who inspired, shared, taught, and motivated. The combined effort of all these individuals makes the AEC & Exhibition—to quote Barry Moore, manager of the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department Office of Emergency Preparedness in Memphis, Tennessee—“still the largest, most comprehensive and focused educational conference for any environmental health professional.”

Educational Topics

AEC sessions covered a wide range of topics:

- ambient air quality,
- children’s environmental health,
- drinking-water quality,
- emerging pathogens,
- environmental health leadership development,
- environmental health research,
- food safety and protection,
- general environmental health,
- geographic information systems (GIS),
- hazardous materials and toxic substances,
- indoor air quality,
- injury prevention/occupational health,
- institutions and schools environmental health,
- onsite wastewater systems,
- solid waste,
- swimming pools/recreational waters,
- terrorism and all-hazards preparedness,
- vector control and zoonotic diseases, and
- water pollution.

NEHA’s Technical Section Chairs

NEHA extends a special thank-you to the 2005–2006 technical section chairs, who were instrumental in the development of the educational sessions at the AEC & Exhibition:

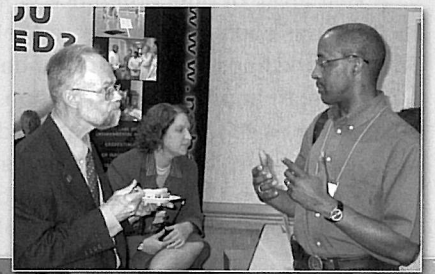
- Air/Land—**Terry Beebe, E.H.S.;**
- Children’s Environmental Health—**Don Herrington, R.S.;**
- Drinking Water Quality/Water Pollution—**Robert Vincent, R.S., M.P.A.;**
- Emerging Pathogens/Vector Control and Zoonotic Diseases—**Robert Galvan, Dr.P.H., M.P.H., M.S., D.A.A.S.;**
- Environmental Health Leadership Development—**Holly Coleman, R.S., and Mel Knight, R.E.H.S.;**
- Environmental Health Research—**R. Steven Konkol, Ph.D., A.I.C.P., F.R.I.P.H.;**

- Food Safety and Protection—**George Nakamura, R.E.H.S., M.P.A., D.A.A.S., and Michèle Samarya-Timm, M.A., R.E.H.S., C.H.E.S., D.A.A.S.;**
- General Environmental Health—**Karen Hoffman Bender, R.E.H.S., R.D.;**
- Hazardous Materials and Toxic Substances—**Priscilla Oliver, Ph.D., and Welford C. Roberts, M.S., Ph.D., R.S./R.E.H.S., D.A.A.S.;**
- Injury Prevention/Occupational Health—**Daniel L. Holcomb;**
- Institutions and Schools Environmental Health—**Terrance B. Gratton, Dr.P.H., D.A.A.S., R.S., and Welford C. Roberts, M.S., Ph.D., R.S./R.E.H.S., D.A.A.S.;**
- Onsite Wastewater Systems—**Craig Gilbertson, R.S.;** and
- Terrorism and All-Hazards Preparedness—**Mike Allred, Ph.D., and Jason P. Bashura, M.P.H., R.S.**

Weren’t Able to Attend the 2006 AEC & Exhibition?

You have several options if you could not attend the conference and need continuing education. The conference CD is available for purchase online at www.neha.org. The CD contains almost 5,000 pages of information from 113 presentations, plus session abstracts and attendee, speaker, and exhibitor lists. Also, over 50 sessions presented at the conference were taped, and the tapes are now on sale at www.nehacert.org. This educational offering puts you right in the presentation room—you can watch the speaker and the Power-Point slides as you listen to the presentation. Continuing-education credit can be earned for viewing either product.





Attendees followed a string of exhibit booths from one ballroom to the other as the NEHA exhibition took over the second floor of the Hyatt Regency Sunday night and all day Monday. The diversity of environments in which the booths were set up made walking through the exhibition a unique experience this year; the open atrium could be enjoyed in some areas, and the buzz of a full exhibit hall could be enjoyed in others.

Also contributing to the unique experience were new activities for those in attendance. Shoulder and feet massages were available at Decade Software's booth, while a rousing competition, with multiple-choice questions testing professionals' knowledge of their field and awards of free drink tickets for Sunday night, drew crowds to the Digital Health Department booth.

Extensive, gourmet desserts at Monday afternoon's NSF Dessert in the Exhibition were a special treat. The whole thing was kicked off Sunday night with the Exhibition Grand Opening and Party, which had carving stations, nachos, crudités, and additional gourmet desserts.

Handwashing for Life again held its popular Team Rally competition. Linda Jones was the overall winner. Ms. Jones is the standardization/evaluation officer for the Oklahoma State Department of Health Protective Health Services. Her score of 96 (according to the ProGrade

scoring system) documented her effectiveness and efficiency; she scored high in all three categories measured: soil removal, knowledge, and time.

Those attending the conference were each given three entry tickets for the Exhibition Door Prize Drawing. Teresa Long of Washoe County District Health Department won the Sharp 20" Flat Panel LCD television first prize valued at \$1,000. Second prize went to Patrick Jones of the City of Alexandria, who won a Garmin GPS Forerunner 305 valued at \$350. A \$150 Neiman Marcus Gift Card went to Dr. Manuel Martinez of Val Verde County, who won third prize. Kent Oostenstad from the University of Alabama won fourth prize and received a \$50 Texas Roadhouse gift card. The prizes were provided through the generosity of several exhibitors.

Colorful backdrops in the nearly 100 booths set off the abundance of displays of safe-food-handling products and information, onsite wastewater treatment systems with various features addressing the diverse landscapes in which they are installed, software solutions to tracking health inspections and possible epidemics, and five booths from various U.S. EPA divisions, among many others. Whether an environmental health professional was seeking information on training options or ways of addressing vector control, answers were available in the exhibition.

Silent Auction

This popular event did not disappoint attendees. Affiliate states, exhibitors, board members, sustaining members, and even NEHA staff donated items to raise funds for NEHA AEC speakers. Items were also put up for bid to support NESHTA scholarships. Vince Radke again drove up bidding on gold and silver coins from Alaska. This year, however, he lost to Jerry Pierce and Bob Vincent. Spirited bidding was also witnessed for the hotel and registration at the 2007 AEC in Atlantic City. Jackie Rayburn and Linda Jones came in to secure them just as the auction closed.

By far the most popular item—it required two bid sheets—was a "You know you're a health inspector when...." T-shirt from the Wyoming Environmental Health Association. Gerri Silua boosted the auction bottom line with the winning bid.

The most unique donation was probably Candywipes (www.candywipes.com). These attractively packaged items look like candy lozenges. Add a bit of water and they expand into a hand towel. Running a close second in uniqueness were a motion picture with soothing sounds and a Wisconsin cheese head. Gift baskets featuring products from various states were snapped up, as well as vacation vouchers. It was a successful event that brought in more than \$3,000.

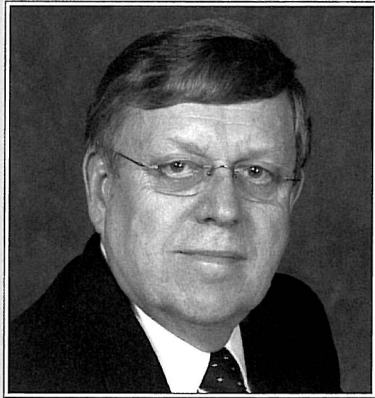


- 360 Training**
www.360training.com
- Advanced Drainage Systems**
www.ads-pipe.com
- AEHAP (Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs)**
www.aehap.org
- Algaewheel, Inc.**
www.algaewheel.com
- American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS)**
www.sanitarians.org
- American Food Safety Institute**
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- American Manufacturing Company Inc**
www.americanonsite.com
- ARAMSCO**
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www.ashtead-technology.com
- Atlantic City Convention & Visitors Authority**
www.atlanticcitynj.com
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- Bio-Microbics Inc**
www.biomicrobics.com
- Bord Na Mona**
www.bnm-us.com
- Chicopee Inc**
www.chicopeeproducts.com
- Clearstream Wastewater Systems**
www.clearstreamsystems.com
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- Cromaglass Corp**
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- CSA International**
www.csa-international.org
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- Dandux Outdoors (C.R. Daniels, Inc.)**
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www.decagon.com
- Delta Environmental Products Inc**
www.deltaenvironmental.com
- Digital Health Department**
www.garrisonenterprises.com
- Edlund Company**
www.edlundco.com
- Eljen Corporation**
www.eljen.com
- Environmental Health Testing/NRFSP**
www.nrfsp.com
- EPA Indoor Environments**
www.epa.gov/iaq
- EPA Memorandum of Understanding Coalition**
www.neha.org/onsite
- EPA National Homeland Security Research Center (NHSRC)**
www.epa.gov/nhsrc
- EPA Office of Children's Health Protection/ Aging Initiative**
www.epa.gov/children
- EPA Office of Water**
www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish
- EPA Onsite Wastewater**
www.epa.gov/owm/onsite
- FDA**
www.fda.gov/ora/training
- FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN)**
www.cfsan.fda.gov
- Five Peaks Technology (Ameriform)**
www.fivepeaks.net
- Food Talk/Food Protection Report**
www.setantapublishing.com
- FoodHandler Inc**
www.foodhandler.com
- FoodSafety.Com**
www.foodsafety.com
- Geoflow Inc**
www.geoflow.com
- GLO GERM Company**
www.glogerm.com
- Handwashing for Life**
www.handwashingforlife.com
- Hardy Diagnostics**
www.hardydiagnostics.com
- HealthSpace Integrated Solutions Ltd**
www.healthspace.ca
- Hoot Aerobic Systems Inc**
www.hootsystems.com
- Intertek Testing Services-ETL SEMKO**
www.intertek-etlsemko.com
- Jet Inc.**
www.jetincorp.com
- JohnsonDiversey**
www.johnsondiverseym.com
- Kairak Inc**
www.kairak.com
- Medical Reserve Corps**
www.medicalreservecorps.gov
- MSDSpro LLC**
www.mspspro.com
- National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)**
www.naccho.org
- National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH)**
www.nalboh.org
- National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH)/ ATSDR**
www.cdc.gov/nceh
- National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)**
www.neha.org
- National Environmental, Safety & Health Training Association (NESHTA)**
www.neshta.org
- National Environmental Services Center (NESC)**
www.nesc.wvu.edu
- National Library of Medicine**
sis.nlm.nih.gov
- National Restaurant Association (NRA)**
www.nraef.org
- National Swimming Pool Foundation (NSPF)**
www.nspf.org
- Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC)**
www.nehc.med.navy.mil
- NBBTP**
www.nbbtp.org
- NEHA Training LLC**
www.nehatraining.com
- North Carolina Institute for Public Health**
www.sph.unc.edu/nciph
- NORWECO Inc**
www.norweco.com
- NSF International**
www.nsf.org
- Onsite Water Treatment**
www.forester.net
- Orenco Systems Inc**
www.orenco.com
- Orkin Commercial Services**
www.orkin.com
- Polylok Inc**
www.polylok.com
- Reeves EMS LLC**
www.reevesdecon.com
- Salcor, Inc.**
jscraver@aol.com
- San Jamar**
www.sanjamar.com
- Scientific Technologies Corporation**
www.stchome.com
- SneezeGuard Solutions Inc**
www.sneeze-guard-solutions.com
- Steton**
www.steton.com
- TAP Series**
www.tapseries.com
- Texas Environmental Health Association (TEHA)**
www.myteha.org
- The Steritech Group Inc**
www.steritech.com
- The University of Findlay**
www.seem.findlay.edu
- Underwriters Laboratories Inc (UL)**
www.ul.com
- University of WI-Eau Claire, Program in ENPH**
www.uwec.edu/ph/enph/index.htm
- US NAVY Recruiting**
www.navy.com
- US Public Health Service (USPHS)**
www.usphs.gov
- Zoeller Pump Company**
www.zoeller.com

To exhibit at the
2007
Atlantic City AEC & Exhibition
June 18-19
(conference will be held June 18-21),
please contact Peggy Whitt at
(303) 756-9090, ext 306,
or at pwhitt@neha.org.



Arthur L. Banks



Arthur (Art) Banks is being honored for his 40 years of attention to detail as an advocate, educator, and mentor of public health in food safety.

A registered sanitarian, Banks first entered the environmental profession as an intern with the Franklin-Williamson Bi-County Health Department in Johnston City, Illinois, while attending Southern Illinois University.

Upon receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and sociology in 1965, he accepted a position with the Monroe County Health Department in Bloomington, Indiana. In 1966, he assumed a half-time position as sole "County Sanitarian" with the Brown County Health Department in Nashville, Indiana, while working half-time for Monroe County. He carried on these crossover duties for the next five years. In 1970, he resumed full-time duties with Monroe County, advancing to the position of administrator. During his time in Bloomington, Banks expanded his education through graduate courses in public health at Indiana University.

In 1972, he began a long, exemplary career with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the New York Field Office, Region II, in Brooklyn, New York. As senior food specialist and milk specialist, Banks was responsible for New Jersey, New York, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the (then) Panama Canal Zone. Following five years of field service, he accepted a position with the Retail Food Protection Branch in Washington, D.C., and was appointed its director in 1980.

The daily challenges of striving to meet the mission of FDA—"protecting the public health by assuring the safety, efficacy, and security of human and veterinary drugs, biological products, medical devices, our nation's food supply"—became part of Banks's identity. A few examples of significant FDA initiatives he was involved in include

- developing procedures, at the request of the Secret Service, to be used by FDA investigators in conducting inspections for "protectees" and dignitaries;
- conceiving the plan for jointly updating model ordinances covering food service, food stores, and food vending and combining them into the new *Food Code*; and
- designing the retail food protection electronic bulletin board that became the *FDA Prime Connection*.

Recognized as an expert in the development of food programs and food establishment standards, Banks was recruited by the United Nations to provide technical assistance and consultation to multiple U.N. organizations. Among his many contributions were authoring "Food Service Establishments—Formal Sector," for the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation of Food Protection for Urban Consumers in Rome, Italy (1980) and serving as vice chair of the WHO Consultation on Health

Surveillance and Management Procedures for Food-Handling Personnel in Geneva, Switzerland (1989).

As he completes his 40th year in public health service, Banks is recognized by his colleagues as someone who can discuss and render opinions on food safety and its impact on public health.

He has established an extensive network of individuals at all levels of industry and government and brings them together to seek solutions to ever-changing problems as food-processing technology progresses and new dangers arise (e.g., emergence of adaptive organisms or virulent pathogens that survive changing conditions).

While maintaining a rigorous schedule at FDA, Banks has found time to be actively involved with the prison ministry. He was appointed chair of the Staten Island Chapter of HOPE (Help Offenders Pursue Education) and for the past 30 years has continued to be active in prison ministry. Today, Banks represents the state of Virginia on the board of directors of the Kairos Prison Ministry International and serves as international board secretary and member of its Executive Committee.

Banks is a strong believer in science as the basis for regulation and has worked diligently to promote those beliefs through his leadership in the development of NSF International consensus standards. He has advanced public health through his service on NSF International technical committees and joint committee task groups, and as a member of the NSF Council of Public Health Consultants since 1981. He currently serves as chair, elected by his peers, of the council.

During his tenure on the NSF Council, he has reviewed more than 400 proposed, new, or revised standards. Banks continues to promote the use of standards to supplement regulations and laws where standards establish the criteria for performance.

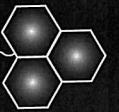
Always willing to share his talents and knowledge with colleagues, Banks has served as a member, officer, or advisor to numerous professional organizations. The extensive list includes the Indiana Association of Sanitarians; the Comprehensive Health Planning Council of Indiana; and the International Association of Milk, Food, and Environmental Sanitarians. He was appointed by the Assistant Secretary for Health to a three-year term on the Sanitarians' Professional Advisory Committee (SPAC) to the Surgeon General. Currently, he is active in NEHA, the Conference for Food Protection, and the Underwriters Laboratories Environmental and Public Health Council.

Notes a colleague: "He is most humble." This trait is reflected in Banks's own words: "My vocational and avocational activities have been diverse, challenging, and personally rewarding. But I've always preferred to be a minimalist in documenting or posting my achievements. I always enjoy serving behind the scenes as a 'worker bee.'"

The Walter F. Snyder Award is conferred each year upon a professional who upholds the strong ideals and commitment of environmental health subscribed to by Walter Snyder. Banks truly meets those criteria.

NSF International and the National Environmental Health Association take great pleasure in awarding to Mr. Arthur L. Banks the 2006 Walter F. Snyder Award for Achievement in Attaining Environmental Quality.

Networking and Social Events



Second Vice President Dr. Welford Roberts and Immediate Past President Ron Grimes at the Networking Luncheon.



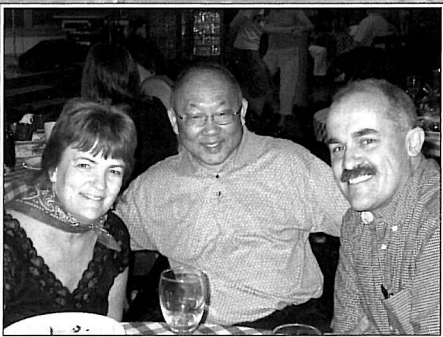
Executive Director Nelson Fabian and President Rick Collins at the President's Banquet.



Andy Timm and Michèle Samarya-Timm enjoy the museum artifacts.



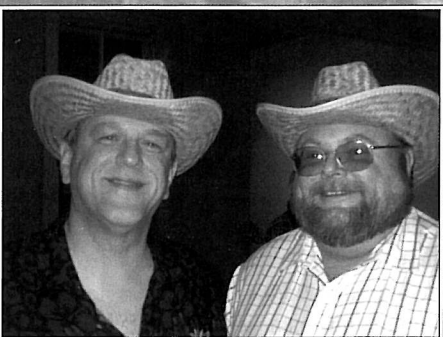
The AEC Networking Luncheon: Friends and colleagues gathered for a delicious feast and deep discussions.



Lila Wickham, Carl Osaki, and Rob Blake took the opportunity to meet during the barbeque.



NEHA staff welcomed attendees to the Texas-style barbeque.



Keith Krinn and Jim Dingman at the barbeque.



Attendees were treated to a UL-sponsored barbeque at the famous Buckhorn Saloon and Museum.

On a parallel track, if a severe pandemic were to develop anytime soon, virtually every pan-flu expert agrees that demand will greatly exceed the resources that are available and that some system of rationing will need to be implemented. It also appears to be the case that most of those rationing decisions will be made at the local or regional level. In Colorado, regional advisory boards are picking up that responsibility.

What this means is that depending on which community you happen to live in, you, your child, your spouse, etc., may or may not be able to obtain Tamiflu, a vaccine, a hospital bed, a ventilator, etc. These circumstances could easily develop into life or death situations, and your life or your loved one's life could end up being nothing more than a function of which town you happen to live in.

Without even getting into the ethics of fairness and all those concerns, what is striking is that there is virtually no public discussion taking place as to how these priorities should be set. What do you think about this?

Jason Bashura—There are confidential documents, by design, because there are things that the community doesn't need to know. There are things that they do need to know—what they can do, what they can plan for. If the executive orders are such that it's going to instill fear or alarm—that's the last thing that I would think we would want to put out to worry about. So local plans are not subject to public query. It is our responsibility to protect them and to inform the public to the extent that they need to be informed.

Dr. Fernando Guerra—This question also has ethical elements to it, and I think that in public health we're not always so willing to engage in ethical discussions and the decision making that accompanies that. We need to build the ethical considerations into our preparedness discussions and work.

Dr. Cynthia Morgan—Unless we throw a little anxiety at people, they're not going to begin to make any changes or take any responsibility for themselves. If something happens, it would be bad if the public wasn't given the opportunity to get some control over the situation and analyze the situation and come to terms with it. So, I think we do need to share some of this. The public may be more willing to believe you

if you're more transparent and talk about the things that are working and the things that aren't working. From the perspective of motivating the public and getting them to do something, we need to be sharing some of this information.

Nelson Fabian—I was recently talking to the executive director of the Colorado Civil Liberties Union. With respect to this very issue, she cautioned that the more you scare people, the more they are willing to give up their civil liberties.

On the other hand, noted risk analyst Peter Sandman admonishes that unless you scare people enough, you won't get them to take the actions that we want or need them to take.

Given the importance of communication and the consequences of scaring people too much or too little, where do you come out in this?

Jason Bashura—As for preparedness, if you don't have any activities planned locally, get the ball rolling. Think about doing some outreach with your Red Cross. The Red Cross has greater recognition among the public than does the local health department. One of the basic tenets of Red Cross is preparedness and disaster response. We need to provide the public with opportunities to prepare themselves.

Dr. Cynthia Morgan—We're trying to develop some communications and test them through focus groups. It's hard to say what's going to set them off and what isn't, but I know that the feeling of knowing something and having some control is really important.

Nelson Fabian—Very simply, what are your greatest fears with all of this?

Dr. Fernando Guerra—For me, one of the greatest fears is the latency factor in receiving the early reports of viral flu strains that are moving into our population and putting the community at risk.

Jason Bashura—I fear for my kids, because I know they're not on that list, and I'm sure there are other parents that think the same thing.

Dr. Cynthia Morgan—My fear is for those rural areas of Texas, because we have several counties that are high on the poverty list and have a lack of resources.

Special Presentation—Jane Moore

On Monday, June 24th, NEHA was excited to have Jane Moore, deputy director of U.S. EPA's Office of Water/Wastewater Manage-

ment (U.S. EPA/OWM), address the NEHA conference attendees in a special session. Moore was on hand to celebrate the unveiling of NEHA's latest credential, Certified Installer of Onsite Wastewater Systems (C.I.O.W.T.S.), which was developed through a cooperative agreement between NEHA and U.S. EPA. Her presentation also focused on the future challenges of water quality and protection and what is being done to meet them. These challenges include aging infrastructure, emerging contaminants, availability of water, and watershed protection. Moore provided an overview of what U.S. EPA/OWM has done over the last eight years, including launching a campaign to integrate decentralized wastewater treatment into public perception as a safe, viable, and cost-effective means of treating wastewater.

Moore addressed the performance of septic, or decentralized, systems—a national issue because of the existing and potential impacts on public health and water quality. She noted that, historically, onsite systems were looked upon as interim measures until a big-pipe system could be constructed, and that now they are considered a cost-effective and long-term option for meeting public health and water quality goals. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that decentralized wastewater treatment systems currently serve about 25 percent of U.S. households and almost 33 percent of new development.

Moore continued her presentation, noting that, as part of a strategy to better manage onsite and decentralized systems, U.S. EPA has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with a number of its partners in the onsite wastewater management industry. NEHA was an early and enthusiastic signer of the MOU, which focuses on collaborating with our partners to improve the management of decentralized systems. Credentialing and licensing is one of the tenets of U.S. EPA's Voluntary Management Guidelines for decentralized systems. The new C.I.O.W.T.S. credential will help elevate the industry by raising the competency and professionalism of installers—and result in better system performance.

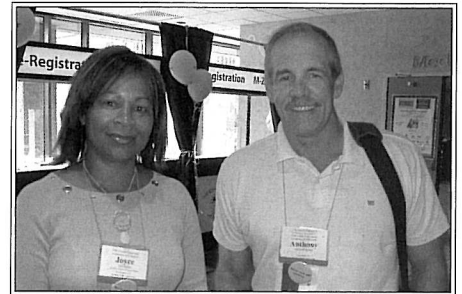
In addition, Moore focused on two new U.S. EPA tools: the *Handbook for Managing Onsite and Clustered (Decentralized) Wastewater Treatment Systems* and a new software program called The Wastewater Information System Tool (TWIST). The handbook describes a step-by-step approach for the development of a community management program for decentralized wastewater systems. It is a resource for



Jane Moore, deputy director of U.S. EPA's Office of Water/Wastewater Management, addressed NEHA conference attendees.



Project Officer Gajindar Singh and Senior Environmental Engineer and Decentralized Wastewater Program Manager Joyce Hudson, both with the U.S. EPA Office of Wastewater Management, and NEHA's Christl Pokorney and Nelson Fabian, at Jane Moore's presentation.



U.S. EPA's Joyce Hudson and Anthony Smithson, director of environmental health at the Lake County Health Department in Illinois.

communities looking for creative and affordable ways to address their wastewater management needs. TWIST is an adaptable online database tool for tracking and managing onsite and clustered wastewater treatment systems. It comes in CD ROM format and is targeted toward small communities and other entities that may not have the funds to purchase proprietary software or hire a consultant to develop electronic data systems. Users can adapt it to their own purposes—use of the software is unrestricted. Both tools can be found at www.epa.gov/owm.

In addition to developing these products, U.S. EPA has

- updated technical-design manuals to promote a performance-based approach,
- developed a homeowner's guide to help educate the primary users of these systems,
- supported technology demonstration projects, and
- conducted an outreach campaign to elevate industry awareness about the decentralized wastewater concept.

Moore explained that U.S. EPA has been working on a Sustainable Infrastructure Strategy to guide efforts in changing how the nation views, values, manages, and invests in its water infrastructure. U.S. EPA also believes that working with utilities to encourage incorporation of better management practices will improve performance and efficiency, that promoting wise use of our water resources just makes sense in a resource-limited environment, that full-cost pricing of services will help utilities better meet their investment needs, and that watershed approaches afford great opportunities for protecting drinking water from contamination.

In closing, Moore noted that during the time she'd spent at the AEC educational sessions and visiting the exhibit hall, she saw a strong commitment to providing sustainable

wastewater services that protect public health and the environment. She also noted that the collaborative efforts U.S. EPA has engaged in with NEHA and its members will be critical in successfully protecting public health.

Association Business

At the AEC & Exhibition, important business meetings of all kinds take place. Two of the most important are the business meetings of the NEHA Board of Directors and the Council of Delegates. Just as important is the General Assembly, which gives members an opportunity to provide suggestions and ask questions of the board of directors, as well as to hear firsthand what is occurring within the association. The summaries below present the highlights from each of these meetings.

Board of Directors Meeting

- Past President Balsamo rotated off the board at the end of the 2006 AEC, while President Ron Grimes moved into the Past President position and President-Elect Rick Collins moved into the President's role. Each expressed his deep appreciation for the support of the board and commented on the accomplishments made this year. A special resolution of appreciation was approved to thank outgoing President Ron Grimes for his service this past year.
- Steve Marlin and Barbara Klemm from Prestige Accommodations were introduced to the board. This is the first year that NEHA has used outside meeting planners for the AEC. Executive Director Nelson Fabian noted that NEHA is satisfied with the relationship and that both parties look forward to continuing this new arrangement.
- The NEHA office moved to a new location on July 28th. NEHA has the same address but a different suite number—970 S. Colorado Blvd., Suite 1000-N, Denver, CO

80246. The phone and fax numbers will remain the same.

- Executive Director Fabian reported on the successful implementation of a new feature on the NEHA Web site to give NEHA members the ability to register continuing-education information online. The feedback on this new program has been very positive.
- Last year, President Ron Grimes created an ambassador pin project to reward members who bring in new members. It has had some success but not as much as hoped for. The project will continue into 2007.
- Dr. Welford Roberts was elected via a mail ballot for the office of second vice president. Regional vice presidents (RVPs) Alicia Enriquez, Tom Gonzales, and Bob Custard ran uncontested for additional terms in their respective regional positions. The board created an elections committee to review NEHA's election procedures and also to investigate online balloting for future elections.
- The executive director reported on the status of NEHA Training, a company co-owned by Chadwick House and NEHA. NEHA Training had a board meeting scheduled a few days later to discuss changes in the organization of the company.
- The executive director reported on the status of the current AEC. The size was similar to that of last year's conference in Providence, Rhode Island. In the final weeks before the conference, new hotels had to be added to the room block. The number of exhibitors was down, but overall attendance at NEHA AECs shows continuing growth. This year, almost all of the conference materials were placed on a CD that all attendees will receive. In addition, in response to feedback from previous conferences, the awards ceremony and the speeches at the President's Banquet were shortened.



Daneen Farrow Collier, environmental health program coordinator, and Dr. Sharunda Buchanan, acting director of the Division of Emergency and Environmental Health Services, both with CDC's National Center for Environmental Health, and NEHA Executive Director Nelson Fabian, at the Networking Luncheon.



Several meetings took place at the AEC, including the American Academy of Sanitarians Luncheon and Business Meeting.

- The board approved the text of four NEHA positions: 1) to support the reauthorization of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, which is due to expire soon; 2) to support the Healthy Places Act of 2006, which deals with environmental health impact assessments with respect to "built-environment" planning activities (the board amended the wording to address the funding of initiatives at the local level); 3) to oppose H.R. 4167—the National Uniformity for Foods Act of 2005, which, if passed, would have negative impacts on local food protection programs; and 4) to join with other NGOs to support CDC in fighting environmental health budget cuts.
- The committee on workforce development reported that two presentations were scheduled at the Council of Delegates on this subject. One would address issues involved in drawing more people to the profession. The other would profile the condition of environmental health in California and implications for the future of the profession nationwide.
- A special board committee has been formed to look into the details of establishing a tiered C.F.S.P. credential (the idea was approved in concept at the April board meeting). The two tiers that the board is considering would apply to the eligibility criteria. One tier would require a college degree, and the other would not.
- The board explored the possibility of moving the AEC keynote session from Sunday to another day. Further analysis may uncover whether conflicting events and activities are causing sometimes poor attendance at the keynote event on Sunday, or if too many variables affect attendance for

it to make sense to consider changing the format. The 2007 AEC begins on Monday. Attendance on the first day of the conference will continue to be watched to determine if changes should be made.

Council of Delegates

The NEHA Council of Delegates meets once a year at the AEC. The council is made up of all members of the NEHA Board of Directors and the presidents of all of NEHA's affiliates. A major purpose of this meeting is to inform affiliate presidents about the many important activities being undertaken by the national association and the ways in which they relate to NEHA's affiliate organizations. Presentations and meeting packet information are provided to the affiliate presidents so that they can more easily convey to their members what NEHA is doing and why. Highlights of the meeting can be summarized as follows:

- It was announced that Welford Roberts was the winner of a mail ballot election for the position of second vice president. Region 2 RVP Alicia Enriquez, Region 3 RVP Tom Gonzales, and Region 8 RVP Bob Custard ran unopposed and will each continue another three-year term of office. At the Council of Delegates meeting, the officers rotate. President-Elect Rick Collins became president, Rob Blake became president-elect, Dick Pantages became first vice president, and Welford Roberts assumed the role of second vice president.
- Keith Krinn from Columbus, Ohio, was presented as the sole candidate for second vice president in 2007. Because no additional nominations were taken from the floor at the General Assembly, Krinn will begin a five-year commitment to serve the association, advancing through the roles of second

vice president, first vice president, president elect, president, and past president.

- Dr. David Dyjack, assistant dean of the Office of Public Health Practice and Associate Professor of Global Health at Loma Linda University, presented a profile of environmental health in California and discussed how environmental health services are organized in that state. He also made recommendations that are applicable across the profession and outside California. A summary pamphlet is available at the NEHA office.
- Dr. Steven Konkel, associate professor of environmental health science at Eastern Kentucky University, gave a special presentation on a NEHA workforce development initiative. A committee chaired by Dr. Joe Beck is working on this initiative. Its mission is to develop an effective and efficient student recruitment tool for the environmental health profession. This presentation, which describes ways to effect an increase in student enrollment in environmental health, is available at the NEHA office.
- Larry Marcum, manager of NEHA's Government Affairs and External Liaison Program, described ways NEHA is working to establish working liaisons with other relevant organizations, including governmental agencies, other NGOs, and private industry. NEHA is also being attentive to policy and legislation, and it is developing position statements for presentation to the people who are creating public policy. Marcum reported on the positions adopted by the NEHA board earlier in the conference: 1) to support the reauthorization of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, 2) to support the Healthy Places Act of 2006, 3) to oppose HR 4167—the National Uniformity



President Rick Collins at the Council of Delegates.



Stefanie Woods, of the Combined Health District of Montgomery County, Ohio, at the General Assembly.



NEHA Board members CAPT John Steward and Tom Gonzales at the General Assembly.



Immediate Past President Ron Grimes at the General Assembly.

- for Foods Act of 2005, and 4) to join with other NGOs to support CDC in fighting environmental health budget cuts. Conference attendees were urged to contact their Congress people on this last issue. Affiliate presidents were given an extensive overview of this program in their packet and urged to share that information with their members.
- Executive Director Fabian presented an overview of NEHA's strategic directions, of which the primary direction is to strengthen NEHA's presence and visibility in the area of terrorism response and emergency preparedness. The association has nine strategic directions: 1) strengthening the stature of the R.E.H.S. credential; 2) strengthening NEHA's financial viability; 3) increasing awareness and appreciation of environmental health; 4) improving NEHA's Web site (e.g., member-only information); 5) expanding educational offerings; 6) leadership development and succession planning; 7) defining NEHA's niche in the international community; 8) creating the capability of staying on top of emerging issues; and 9) using all available means to provide information to NEHA members. Affiliate presidents were given detailed descriptions of each of these strategic directions.
 - NEHA Training LLC Business Development Manager Patty Esparza raised awareness of the products and purpose of NEHA Training. NEHA Training is one of a handful of companies and organizations that provide training and certification for food managers.
 - Meeting attendees were directed to their materials for information on opportunities for NEHA affiliates and their members through affiliation with the national organization. These opportunities include nominating someone for various awards such as the Mangold Award or the Snyder Award. President Collins noted that he or the executive director is available to visit at affiliate conferences. Scholarships and a sabbatical exchange program also are available.

- Meeting attendees were advised of numerous NEHA-sponsored educational opportunities, including one on local indoor air quality and radon control, which is available through funding from the U.S. EPA. A course in epidemiology, especially as it relates to food safety and protection, also is available. Additional information can be obtained from the NEHA office.
- The issues surrounding eligibility requirements for the C.F.S.P. credential were discussed. A NEHA board committee has been established to oversee analysis of a two-tiered approach to the C.F.S.P. credential, with one track being suitable for college-degreed candidates and the other for those without college degrees.
- Every year, affiliate presidents participate in focus groups before the meeting to discuss a single issue in depth. This year the issue was the role of environmental health in pandemic-flu preparedness. See the Managing Editor's Desk column in this issue of the *Journal* for a synopsis of the focus group recommendations.

General Assembly

President Ron Grimes explained that this assembly is held so that individual members can ask questions of the president and the BOD, hear firsthand about what is going on within the association, and express views directly to the president and the BOD. He began by giving a report on the accomplishments of this past year, in which NEHA

- researched and prepared the article "HN51: A Special Report—What Is the Threat and Why Should the Environmental Health Profession Be Concerned?" which appeared in the January/February 2006 *Journal of Environmental Health* (this article is now being used by environmental health programs throughout the country as a basis for planning a pandemic-flu response);

- sponsored an inspirational keynote speaker, Dr. Michael Olesen, on the subject of avian and pandemic flu at the Region 4 conference in Fargo, North Dakota;
- presented keynote addresses (by Executive Director Nelson Fabian) on avian and pandemic flu throughout the country;
- developed two online courses on avian and pandemic flu that are hosted by NexPort, a division of Advanced Systems Technology;
- continued the development of special programming for emergency preparedness and terrorism response for the AEC;
- included emergency preparedness in the rewrite of the R.E.H.S./R.S. credential exam to ensure that the environmental health profession possesses competence on this issue;
- fine-tuned the NEHA signature Epi-Ready course, orienting the content to include terrorism and emergency response considerations;
- acquired funding through a subcontract with the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease and Preparedness to develop educational material to support training for environmental health professionals in the area of biosecurity;
- featured a compilation of useful and relevant emergency response resources for the environmental health profession on the NEHA Web site;
- recognized the potential effect that a legislative issue could have on local food



The NEHA Board of Directors at the General Assembly.

programs and established a position on H.R. 4167 (the National Uniformity for Foods Act of 2005);

- completed a multiyear task to update and upgrade the R.E.H.S./R.S. credential (a new credential exam and a new R.E.H.S./R.S. study guide were presented at the 2006 AEC);
- simplified the continuing-education component of the credentialing program so that credentialed people can directly enter their continuing-education experiences through the NEHA Web site;
- increased awareness and appreciation of the environmental health profession, as indicated by the following developments:
 - U.S. EPA increased its funding to NEHA this year, in an era of diminishing funding;
 - NEHA has received more requests for participation, input, and comments from various levels of federal, state, and local government than ever before; and
 - NEHA has received attention outside the traditional areas of environmental health (e.g., several organizations have asked NEHA to keynote or participate in conference events, and the American Society of Association Executives identified NEHA to over 50,000 associations around the country as one of the few places to go for helpful information on pandemic flu);

- is working on establishing a members-only section on the NEHA Web site, to provide more member access to records, and on establishing e-commerce as a way of driving the business of the association through the Web site;
- enhanced the popular online job center;
- continued a partnership with Colorado Vintage to expand online-learning programs to include training courses that will help with preparation for our credentials;
- arranged with Colorado Vintage to tape selected AEC speakers and develop new online-learning courses that will feature interviews with the speakers;
- established a presidential committee to find ways to draw more students into the practice of environmental health;
- launched a major student recruitment campaign through faculty advisors that is aimed at students graduating from accredited environmental health degree programs;
- offered the reduced student membership price to recent graduates;
- is participating, at the invitation of Dr. Frumkin, on the planning committee for the NCEH conference in Atlanta (December 2006);
- was represented (President Ron Grimes was NEHA's representative) at the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Annual Meeting and hosted a CIEH delegation at the 2006 AEC;

- operated a joint-venture company as a partnership with Chadwick House;
- maintained good relations with the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI) and supported a joint conference of NEHA and CIPHI;
- developed AEC educational programming that featured current issues such as hurricanes Katrina and Rita and pandemic flu; and
- used *NEHA E-news* to report to our members when issues surfaced.

Grimes then explained that NEHA's articles of incorporation and bylaws allow for nominations from the floor for any NEHA office, and he invited any member who had filled out the proper paperwork to make a nomination. No nominations were made, however. The floor nomination process supplements the regular nomination process, which officially cleared one candidate to run in next year's election.

The candidate running for second vice president, Environmental Health Administrator Keith Krinn of Columbus Public Health in Ohio, opened his presentation with a brief history of his deep roots in the Midwest. He has been an environmental health professional for 32 years and has degrees from Indiana State University and Central Michigan University. The bulk of his career has been in Environmental Health Services in Oakland County (Michigan), where he rose to the position of chief of environmental health field

activities. Krinn has served on various boards and currently holds the chair of the National Conference of Local Environmental Health Administrators. He is also a diplomate of the American Academy of Sanitarians.

Krinn's desire as a member of the NEHA Board of Directors is to raise awareness and focus on workforce development with respect to students and new professionals, as well as to examine accredited academic environmental health programs in the United States. He echoed one of NEHA's strategic directions with his statement that "students are the future of the [environmental health] profession." To ease the impact of retirements, whose numbers now exceed the number of graduates each year, he feels that relationships should be nurtured with academia and that the student NEHA association should be revitalized. Krinn also desires to work on boosting membership numbers in general and expanding technology initiatives like the virtual university to support NEHA as the voice of the profession. Finally, he focused on working diligently with the board, collaborating and gaining experience in the roles of NEHA board officers to effectively address all the challenges NEHA faces.

After hearing from Keith Krinn, NEHA Research and Development (R&D) Manager Larry Marcum gave brief updates on NEHA's R&D program, as well as the recent accomplishments of the Government Affairs and External Liaison program. On the federal grants front he reported that NEHA was successful in obtaining a new three-year cooperative agreement from U.S. EPA to support NEHA's indoor air education program. In addition, NEHA has continuation funding to support activities in cooperation with CDC in the areas of workforce development, health tracking, and community design. Marcum also announced new funding to support the Biology of Insects and Rodents workshops. This is a new project with CDC, expanding NEHA's involvement in vector control and vectorborne-disease education.

Marcum also noted that the San Antonio AEC marked the unveiling of NEHA's newest credential. In cooperation with U.S. EPA and the onsite wastewater industry, NEHA has developed a certification called Certified Installer of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (C.I.O.W.T.S.). This is the first in what NEHA and U.S. EPA hope will be a series of certifications for onsite wastewater professionals that will improve

the operation of onsite systems across the country. Finally, Marcum announced that NEHA was conducting discussions with CDC about additional projects in the coming year that would involve workforce development and retention, and definition of the role of environmental health professionals in emergency response.

Marcum said that the Government Affairs and External Liaison Program continues to be an active and increasingly important part of NEHA's work in representing the environmental health profession on a number of different policy fronts. He announced the following recent developments:

- NEHA communicated support to Congress for maintaining current funding levels for the National Center for Environmental Health.
- NEHA supported the Healthy Places Act of 2006.
- NEHA supported the reauthorization of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002.
- NEHA continued to work in opposing the National Uniformity for Foods Act of 2005.

Marcum also recapped the Government Affairs accomplishments in the past year, which include NEHA being active in 18 separate national coalitions and initiatives.

Before adjourning the meeting, outgoing president Grimes encouraged people to apply for the sabbatical exchange program, which now features two- to four-week sabbaticals to Canada or England, all expenses paid. Grimes also encouraged everyone to attend next year's AEC in Atlantic City.

Conclusion

"Attend! You will learn, you will share, and you will change."

That's just one of the positive comments we received about the San Antonio AEC & Exhibition. Attendees were thrilled to think outside of the box for four straight days, as well as experience numerous networking and social activities. Whether they were concerned about how their community would respond to a flu pandemic or what they could learn from the response to the 2005 hurricane disasters, attendees came to learn, share, and change. We hope you will do the same next year at NEHA's AEC & Exhibition in Atlantic City, New Jersey, June 18-21, 2007.

Thank you to all of the 2006 AEC & Exhibition attendees for their dedication and commitment to the environmental and public health professions! 🚗

2006 Conference Grants and Sponsors

NEHA received valuable financial support from the following organizations and gratefully acknowledges their contribution to the conference.

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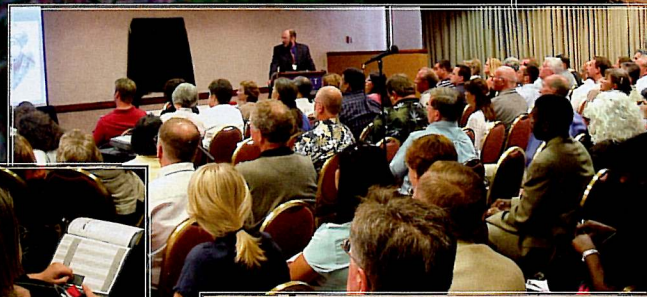
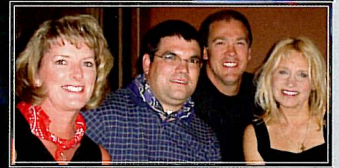
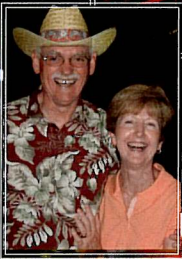
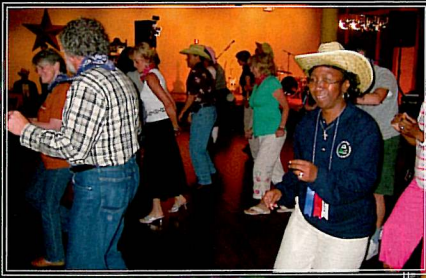
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