News from the International Federation of Environmental Health

Some European members of the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) have put together Local Environmental Health Action Plans (LEHAPs) and National Action Plans (NEHAPs). Their efforts have stimulated creation of a sustainability-indicators project by the European Regional Group of IFEH. The progress of this project can be viewed on the IFEH Web site at http://www.ifeh.org. The aim is to build a collection of initiatives and activities undertaken primarily by local and regional environmental health authorities worldwide, demonstrating how indicators can be used as a tool for planning and monitoring. The use of indicators also can help local authorities more accurately assess whether progress is being made toward sustainable development. A presentation on the indicators project was made during a session of the Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August 2002.

IFEH has four regional groups: the European Group, the Africa Group, the Americas Group, and the Pacific Rim Group. The Africa Group comprises environmental health associations from the countries of Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and it has been increasing its activities in anticipation of IFEHs Eighth World Congress on Environmental Health. The congress will be hosted by the South African Environmental Health Association (http://www.saiheh.co.za), February 23–27, 2004, in Durban, South Africa. (Contact e-mail: chdmhealth@awe.co.za.) The Americas Group expanded in 2002 to include the Jamaican Association of Public Health Inspectors in addition to its existing members, NEHA and Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI). Robert Bradbury of CIPHI chairs the Americas Group.

NEHA recently contributed to the IFEH Board of Directors two of its adopted position papers as possible templates or beginning points for similar position papers IFEH might create. The position papers address global climate change (position adopted by NEHA in 1997) and genetically modified organisms (position adopted by NEHA in 2000). The regional groups will be asked to undertake the project of drafting positions for IFEH.

Diane Evans, NEHA's liaison to IFEH, is also currently IFEH president, and she will conduct the next meeting of the federation council from May 31 to June 1, 2003, in Paisley, Scotland. Ms. Evans welcomes inquiries and comments about IFEH. She can be reached by e-mail at diane@vatomsky.com or by phone at (831) 479-1528.

NEHA Board Meetings

On April 11–12, 2003, the NEHA board of directors will convene at the Loews Giorgio Hotel in Denver, Colorado, for two intensive days of decision making, long-range planning, financial reviews, and other matters. Before the meeting, members who have concerns about NEHA, or ideas for improvement and growth, are invited to share their thoughts with a national officer or with their regional vice president.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held during NEHA's Annual Educational Conference on Saturday, June 7, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Reno Hilton.

Kristen Kuhar—Education Coordinator

Editor's note: Over the past few years, we have been featuring individual NEHA staff members one-by-one in NEHA News so that you can get to know us a little better. This month, we highlight the staff member behind extension 341—Kristen Kuhar.

I am extremely excited and honored to be the newest addition to the NEHA staff, working as an education coordinator for NEHAs Annual Educational Conference (AEC). My responsibilities include overseeing the development of the education programs offered at the conference. I will also be involved in market research aimed at gaining insight into issues that environmental health professionals are facing. Finally, and most exciting, is the work that I will be doing for the Association Research Center, where I will help develop the most frontline, most recent, and most relevant environmental health information into reports that will be made available to NEHA members.

I am a native Coloradan and a graduate of Colorado State University, where I received a bachelor of science degree in environmental health. After completing an internship at the Weld County Health Department, I began my working career in an environmental water-testing laboratory. Over the past five years, I have worked in various inorganic laboratories, from environmental to industrial. I also have had experience in safety management, employee training, workplace safety, compliance, and environmental reporting.

I view my opportunity at NEHA as a great way to get back to my environmental health "roots." Here, I can grow not only professionally, but also personally. My work at NEHA is unlike anything that I have done in the past, and I welcome the challenge. I am eager to acquire some of the vast information that will be available to me through this position. Also, I look forward to networking with environmental health professionals who are out there "doing it." In all these ways, I feel that NEHA can assist me in attaining my goal of becoming an integral part of the environmental health field.

Away from work, I love spending time with my husband, a fellow environmental health graduate, and our quirky cat. I enjoy antiquing and am an avid reader. My new job is an exciting opportunity, and I look forward to many fulfilling years as a NEHA employee.