The World Is in Our Hands

Alicia Enriquez Collins, REHS

2014 is a special year for NEHA! We have the honor of partnering with the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) to host this year’s World Congress in conjunction with our 78th Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition in Las Vegas, Nevada. After years of preparation for this year’s unique educational event, the NEHA staff and our technical advisors are in the final stages of planning our program and combing through the details. It is with distinct pleasure that we anticipate convening with environmental health professionals from around the world, July 7–10, 2014, at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas.

IFEH
IFEH was envisioned by a friend and colleague from England, Mr. Eric Foskett (1920–2001). In 1982, Eric took his idea to his professional organization, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, and by 1985, IFEH was formed. The original four member associations of IFEH included Australia, England, Wales/Northern Ireland, and Republic of Ireland/Scotland. Nearly 30 years later, IFEH now has 42 member environmental health organizations (including NEHA) and 23 academic associate members from various parts of the world.

Here is just a sampling of the aims of the federation:
• provide a focal point for national organizations of practitioners, whether in state or local government, or private employment, whose concern is the care of the environment in the interests of the public health;
• provide a means of exchanging information on environmental health matters, including systems of organization and management;
• publish an international journal of environmental health and other publications relating to environmental health;
• hold congresses and other meetings for the consideration and discussion of subjects relating to environmental health;
• represent the interests of environmental health to national governments, state agencies, and international organizations; and
• promote the study of environmental health and exchange information about training and educational methods.

Last July, we had the honor of meeting Dr. Peter Davey, IFEH president. He traveled from Australia to Washington, DC, to participate in our conference, strengthen our partnership, and promote collaboration for the World Congress. For additional information regarding IFEH, visit their Web site at www.ifeh.org.

Hosting the World Congress!
For each World Congress, IFEH accepts bids to host the event. Four years ago, NEHA submitted a bid to host this year’s conference. Once we were notified that our bid was accepted, the NEHA staff initiated a magnificent collaborative effort to plan an educational event and gathering place for environmental health professionals from over 40 countries.
Each year, NEHA strives to stay abreast of the latest trends in environmental health and provide conference attendees with the most up-to-date technical information available. I am very excited to report that NEHA’s outreach efforts during the call for abstracts last year resulted in the submission of nearly 275 abstracts and posters for consideration. This provided a welcome challenge to our education coordinator and technical advisors as they culled through hundreds of proposals in preparation for the technical agenda. With this response and the scrutiny needed to determine a final agenda, we can anticipate a high-caliber program. Abstracts were posted online and people were encouraged to view the proposed abstracts and leave comments. Sessions for the 2014 AEC are being confirmed and you can view the agenda at www.neha2014aec.org. NEHA will update the online session listings as the educational program moves towards being finalized.
In addition to the educational sessions and events offered at the combined AEC and World Congress, IFEH will also host its Annual IFEH Council and Regional Group meetings, the IFEH Annual General Meetings, and the IFEH International Faculty Forum for academics and students on July 5–7.

Keynote Speaker
We are also pleased to welcome our guest and keynote presenter, Mark Keim, MD. Dr. Keim is the associate director for science in the Office for Environmental Health Emergencies, National Center for Environmental Health/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He is also an adjunct professor at the Emory University Rollins School of Public Health and guest faculty at the Harvard University School of Medicine.

Dr. Keim twice received the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary’s Award for Distinguished Service for his work as co-lead of CDC’s emergency operations during the World Trade Center and anthrax letter emergencies in 2001 and again for Hurricane Katrina. In 2005, he also received the CDC’s Special Act or Service Award for leading the U.S. health sector response after the Indian Ocean tsunami.

NEHA’s Conference Planning Team
On behalf of the board of directors and our entire membership, I would like to extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude to both NEHA’s conference planning team (Laura Brister, Jill Cruickshank, Nelson Fabian, Matthew Lieber, Terry Osner, Barry Porter, Jill Schnipke, and Clare Sinacori) and our technical advisors (see page 65 for a complete listing) for their hard work, diligence, and attention to detail while planning NEHA’s 78th AEC and World Congress.

See You There!
Having the opportunity to host and participate in an environmental health meeting with an international focus is extraordinary. The technical program will be comprised of a combination of educational lectures, hands-on demonstrations, tabletop exercises, panel discussions, poster presentations, roundtable discussions, and other types of interactive and innovative presentation formats. The venue is easily accessible and has much to offer first-time or returning visitors. So, if you haven’t yet registered for the conference or haven’t yet made your decision to attend, I invite you to visit the event Web site at www.neha2014aec.org for more information and to register.

I look forward to seeing you there!

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Message From the IFEH President
As president of IFEH I would like to promote the 13th IFEH World Congress on Environmental Health, July 7–10, 2014, in Las Vegas, jointly run by NEHA and IFEH. I encourage all country members, academic associations, and individual members and sponsors to attend and work together to promote this 13th IFEH World Congress event to colleagues and nonmembers. I attended the NEHA 2013 Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition in Washington, DC, and it was one of the best conferences I’ve attended for environmental health science and policy content and networking.

Hope to see you all in Las Vegas in 2014.
Dr. Peter Davey, MIFEH
President, IFEH

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