

► BUILDING CAPACITY



Darryl Booth, MBA

Crumbine Award Winner Continues to Build Capacity

Editor's Note: A need exists within environmental health agencies to increase their capacity to perform in an environment of diminishing resources. With limited resources and increasing demands, we need to seek new approaches to the business of environmental health.

Acutely aware of these challenges, NEHA has initiated a partnership with Accela called *Building Capacity*. *Building Capacity* is a joint effort to educate, reinforce, and build upon successes within the profession, using technology to improve efficiency and extend the impact of environmental health agencies.

The *Journal* is pleased to publish this bimonthly column from Accela that will provide readers with insight into the *Building Capacity* initiative, as well as be a conduit for fostering the capacity building of environmental health agencies across the country.

The conclusions of this column are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of NEHA.

Darryl Booth is senior vice president and general manager of environmental health at Accela and has been monitoring regulatory and data tracking needs of agencies across the U.S. for almost 20 years. He serves as technical advisor to NEHA's informatics and technology section.

Innovation is as much an element of internal culture (read, leadership) as it is of bright and forward-thinking individuals, and this culture often runs deep and is lasting. The Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award (see www.crumbineaward.com) is presented annually to local health jurisdictions that show this kind of leadership. We've kept in touch with several past awardees.

Maricopa County Environmental Services Department, Arizona: Winner of the 2001 Crumbine Award

"In 1994, the Environmental Services Department was at a crossroads," says their Crumbine Award application. Maricopa had recently gone through a workforce reduction that the Environmental Health Division had narrowly avoided through restructuring. The county, seeking additional revenue sources, required every departmental program to be self-sufficient while still cov-

ering all statutory mandates and internal administrative procedures. Meanwhile, an independent productivity analysis indicated that staff were rushing through inspections, a symptom of covering too large an area or multiple districts.

Going forward, costs incurred by the department would have to be recovered from the regulated community. The Environmental Health Division had two options to implement this policy in a fashion that was fair to permit holders while maintaining a credible budget: 1) raise fees and hire more staff or 2) improve the efficiency of the entire organization by automating and computerizing its inspection system. At that time, the division had a limited computer system that connected offices and captured basic inspection information. Only a few supervisors had access, however, and it was not available to field staff.

Failure to become self-sufficient might have resulted in a loss of budgeted resources to every program in the division. Needless to say, the stakes were high.

Reflective of an organizational culture that values inclusion and transparency, division leaders turned to the regulated community and consumers rather than make their decision in a vacuum. The community ultimately supported automation. By adding mobile computers to its arsenal, the division was able to increase productivity by 33% and 6 years later, had not increased fees further.

Nearly 20 years later, Maricopa County's Environmental Health Division continues to operate in this spirit.

"There's been a great foundation laid for people to continue that work," said Andrew Linton, Maricopa County Environmental

FIGURE 1

Sample Inspection Report

	Maricopa County Environmental Services Department Environmental Health Division Food Inspection Report	Date: 03/10/2015 Start Time: 02:39 PM Permit ID: FD-00000 Expires: 07/31/2015
	Business Name:	Address: 10 N DOBSON RD, MESA, AZ 85
Terms:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PRIORITY VIOLATION is a major violation that directly contributes to increasing the risk of foodborne illness or injury.• PRIORITY FOUNDATION VIOLATION is a minor violation that does not directly contribute to an increased risk of foodborne illness but failure to correct this violation may lead to the occurrence of a PRIORITY VIOLATION.• CORE VIOLATION is a minor violation that relates to general maintenance and sanitation.		
PRIORITY VIOLATION(S):		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Category 19 - Proper hot holding temperatures: 3-501.16(A)(1), P Potentially Hazardous Food (Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food), Hot Holding>>>Observed beans in hot holding unit at 126°F. Per PIC food had been in unit for less than 2 hours. Food was removed and reheated to 165°F at time. Verbal RCP conducted for repeated violation. Discussed monitoring hot holding and ensuring temperature. Corrected Corrected At Time Of Inspection.• Category 26 - Toxic substances properly identified, stored, and used: 7-201.11, P Separation-Storage>>>Observed open bottle of green cleaner being stored on shelf above containers of spices and sugar. Instructed PIC to move chemical to other location at time. Corrected Corrected At Time Of Inspection.		
CORE VIOLATION(S):		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Category 37 - Contamination prevented during food preparation, storage & display: 3-307.11, C Miscellaneous Sources of Contamination>>>Observed toothpicks being stored on shelf directly above open hot holding unit with open food hot holding. Instructed PIC to move toothpicks to other location. Corrected Corrected At Time Of Inspection.• Category 41 - In-use utensils: properly used: 3-304.12, C In-Use Utensils, Between-Use Storage>>>Observed ice scoop being stored on cardboard on shelf. Instructed employee to keep scoop in container in between uses. Corrected Corrected At Time Of Inspection.		
General Comments This establishment received a(n) C Grade and had 2 Priority, 0 Priority Foundation and 2 Core violations on this inspection. No County legal action will result from this inspection. This inspection was done as a result of a citizen's complaint. No evidence was found to support the allegations made in the complaint.		

Note. Critical violations are highlighted in red at the top of the report.



The regulated community listens during stakeholder engagement meetings.

mental Health Division to include the regulated community in the committee sessions.

Based on suggestions from the subcommittees, the division implemented a policy and technical solution to automatically e-mail inspection reports to the facility's chief operating officer or manager, rather than just leave a paper printout behind. Furthermore, stakeholders wanted to be able to easily and quickly identify critical violations. In response to this need, the format of the final report was changed so that the serious violations were visible first and foremost (Figure 1). Another suggestion got more operators enrolled in the county's active managerial control classes to improve their likelihood of joining "The Cutting Edge," the division's program to recognize high performers.

In another innovative example, stakeholders felt it was difficult to constructively disagree with inspectors. In response, the division formalized the process by adding a checkbox to their inspection software that the operator can request be checked, which automatically sends a copy of the inspection to the inspector's supervisor for review. The name and phone number of the inspector's supervisor is also printed on the final inspection report, which enables the operator to contact the supervisor directly. A 3-day window following each inspection allows operators to make any formal requests for review before the inspection results get published online. If a request is made, the results don't get published until the request is resolved.

Linton admits to initially feeling nervous about the stakeholder meeting process. This feeling is understandable as many of us would probably agree that inviting your regulated community to tell you what they don't like isn't how we would prefer to spend our time! He feels, however, that it is indicative of the county's priorities and values, which

Health Division manager. "About two and a half years ago, we had what we thought was a pretty unique stakeholder process, initiated by the county's board of supervisors, where we brought in key industry stakeholders to tell us where we could be more efficient." At the time, Linton stated, history was repeating itself—the population and scope of the environmental health program was growing and new issues were occurring.

The process involved a series of meetings held over several months (see photo, top right). The stakeholders talked about things they wanted to change, and then they formed three subcommittee meetings based on the outcomes of those initial conversations. Division staff were on hand to answer any questions that arose, such as current technology,

food safety practices, and laws, but were otherwise careful not to insert themselves into the discussions. The subcommittees' final 20 suggestions went to the board for approval.

"If I were to summarize, the suggestions all related to good communication and better consistency in how we did our jobs, as well as how technology was interspersed with those two concepts," explained Linton.

This new stakeholder engagement activity formalized a previously ad hoc process under a new title: the Department Standards Committee. The standards committee is the division's effort to promote consistency amongst its offices and discuss process improvements by facilitating stakeholder involvement. Initially begun as an internal ad hoc process, feedback during the meetings encouraged the Environ-

ultimately empower him as well. “The environment here really is that the board wants to give businesses the best chance of succeeding. We are called upon to be good partners and public health educators, not just enforcers.” Indeed, another one of the subcommittees’ recommendations was to institute a “5-minute ice breaker” conversation policy for the beginning of each inspection to build rapport and support a “change from a police to coach role.”

Many subcommittee suggestions, like the conversational ice breaker, were not major investments or burdens for the county to

implement. A fair amount of the suggestions simply required minor, one-time structural tweaks. Many of the benefits wouldn’t have been realized if not for the focus on empowering a positive relationship with stakeholders.

This type of organizational culture makes the regulated community more receptive to health department activities, improves health department effectiveness, and ultimately, reduces public health risks. I’d argue that it also contributes to creating a positive and satisfying workplace for division staff. Linton’s colleague, Bryan Hare, managing supervisor in the Environmental Health Division agreed,

“Our customer service is just top notch. That’s one of the things of which I am most proud. The culture here encourages it. We enjoy interacting with our customers.” 🐼

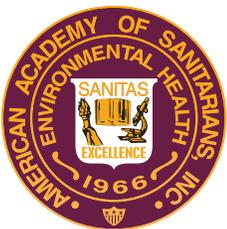
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Corresponding Author: Darryl Booth, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Environmental Health, Accela, 2633 Camino Ramon #500, San Ramon, CA 94583. E-mail: dbooth@accela.com.

Did You Know?

You can get more involved with NEHA by checking out www.neha.org/membership-communities/get-involved. Volunteering is a good way to make a positive contribution to the profession and get to know your association. Those who are ready to take on a greater leadership role may want to consider steps to become a regional vice-president or board member.

DAVIS CALVIN WAGNER SANITARIAN AWARD



The American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS) announces the annual Davis Calvin Wagner Award. The award will be presented by AAS during the National Environmental Health Association’s (NEHA) 2017 Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition. The award consists of an individual plaque and a perpetual plaque that is displayed in NEHA’s office lobby.

Nominations for this award are open to all AAS diplomates who:

1. Exhibit resourcefulness and dedication in promoting the improvement of the public’s health through the application of environmental and public health practices.
2. Demonstrate professionalism, administrative and technical skill, and competence in applying such skills to raise the level of environmental health.
3. Continue to improve through involvement in continuing education type programs to keep abreast of new developments in environmental and public health.
4. Are of such excellence to merit AAS recognition.

NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 15, 2017.

Nomination packages should be sent electronically to shep1578@gmail.com. If desired, three hard copies of the nomination document may be submitted to

American Academy of Sanitarians
c/o Craig A. Shepherd
1271 Statesville Road
Watertown, TN 37184

For more information about the award nomination, eligibility, evaluation process, and previous recipients of the award, please visit sanitarians.org/awards.