

## ► PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



David E. Riggs,  
MS, REHS/RS

## Professional and Personal Growth

**E**nvironmental health is an incredibly diverse and complicated profession. As professional practitioners, we face technical, political, economic, and social challenges that are constantly evolving. In the governmental environment in which we must now and in the future operate, it is incumbent upon us to become highly skilled, technically proficient leaders in our field. Education, training, and leadership development will enable us to not only survive but also prosper in what, at this moment, seems like a limited outlook for environmental health professionals.

Supervisors and managers want their employees to excel personally and professionally while participating in continuing growth. In most cases, supervisors and employees negotiate employee involvement in job related or sponsored training. Examples of continuing growth include continuing education, enrollment in training programs, research, improved job performance, and increased duties and responsibilities.

As budgets are, however, restricted for government agencies, and even for many private companies, it is up to the individual environmental health professional to broaden and deepen their skills by implementing their own personal professional development plan.

Deepen and broaden your technical and professional knowledge. While there may be limited training and education opportunities, other avenues to increase your professional knowledge are available. Attend local, state, regional, and national meetings, conferences, and workshops. State affiliates, as well as NEHA, sponsor many of these educational opportunities that can benefit the environ-

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mental health professional. In addition to traditional environmental health training opportunities, look for others outside of our profession. Over the years, I have received free training from land-use planning professionals, first responders, and labor and industry regulators. I have found that there are many areas of education and training in other fields and from other agencies that directly impact environmental health.

Present papers at conferences and workshops. These presentations allow you to share your knowledge and enable you to sharpen your speaking and presenting skills.

Serve as an officer, board member, or committee member in your state affiliate or in NEHA. Participation as an active member in your state affiliate or NEHA allows you to become familiar with the legal and political environment in which all environmental health professionals practice.

Increase your duties and responsibilities in environmental health. Take on an entirely

new job or add a responsibility to your current position. A new job or responsibility can enable you to broaden and deepen skills, technical knowledge, and experience. Constant challenges enable us to flex our professional muscles. Learning by doing, such as working on a real-world problem or dilemma, is the application of our technical and social skills to actual situations, which empowers us to use our knowledge and judgment, and to expand our professional views. Challenge, or something that stretches us beyond our known spheres, is a key element in growth development. Choose assignments that push you out of your comfort zone. To be the most effective, we need to think and act differently.

Another way to continue growth and development is by using developmental relationships. Development relationships are learning through interaction with other environmental health professionals and peers. There are two major ways to use these relationships to maximize potential. The first way is an assessment that consists of feedback, using peers as sounding boards, and using these personal relationships as points of comparison. The second way is to challenge and engage others as dialogue partners and role models.

Another factor in personal professional development plans is the development of a leadership presence. Improve your ability to command a room. Communicate in an authentic way that inspires others. Along with being a leader, become a catalyst for change. Learn and put into practice talents that implement and sustain change in your organization, agency, or company. Improve your time management abilities. Good time management

is one of the most difficult, but sought after, professional skills. If you can focus on value added activities, it will improve your ability to prioritize and work more efficiently.

The personal professional development plan should also include expanding collaborations and improving relationships with peers. Become a better partner and understand your peers' and supervisors' goals and needs. Work together as a team to help achieve each other's goals.

In the foreseeable future, the successful or "grade A" environmental health professional

will need to create and implement a personal professional development plan that takes into consideration their individual needs, goals, and talents. Research plans will be different from management plans, just as plans will be different between laboratory, office, and field work positions. No matter what your plan looks like, however, an integral part must be assessment of your progress and standing.

The critical component of an effective personal professional development plan is assessment. First, establish a standard of success that describes the attributes of success-

ful individuals. The next step in assessment is devising a means to compare yourself against this standard. This assessment is a continual comparison that must be made.

It is important for environmental health professions to create, implement, and assess their own personal professional development plan.

How about you? What's on your personal professional development plan? 🐼

David E. Riggs

davidriggs@comcast.com

# Did You Know?

Attendee registration for NEHA's Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition is still open, and while early bird pricing will end on April 15, you don't want to miss out on the opportunity to see engaging educational sessions, an opening and closing session that will keep you on the edge of your seat, or events that will have you looking forward to the 2018 AEC before you've even left Grand Rapids! Register today at [www.neha.org/aec/register](http://www.neha.org/aec/register).

## 2017 Walter F. Snyder Award

### Call for Nominations

Nomination deadline is April 28, 2017.

Given in honor of NSF International's co-founder and first executive director, the *Walter F. Snyder Award* recognizes outstanding leadership in public health and environmental health protection. The annual award is presented jointly by NSF International and the National Environmental Health Association.



Nominations for the 2017 *Walter F. Snyder Award* are being accepted for environmental health professionals achieving peer recognition for:

- outstanding accomplishments in environmental and public health protection,
  - notable contributions to protection of environment and quality of life,
  - demonstrated capacity to work with all interests in solving environmental health challenges,
- participation in development and use of voluntary consensus standards for public health and safety, and
- leadership in securing action on behalf of environmental and public health goals.



Past recipients of the *Walter F. Snyder Award* include:

2016 – Steve Tackitt	2007 - Wilfried Kreisel	1997 - J. Roy Hickman	1988 - Mark D. Hollis	1979 - John G. Todd
2015 – Ron Grimes	2006 - Arthur L. Banks	1996 - Robert M. Brown	1987 - George A. Kupfer	1978 - Larry J. Gordon
2014 – Priscilla Oliver	2005 - John B. Conway	1995 - Leonard F. Rice	1986 - Albert H. Brunwasser	1977 - Charles C. Johnson, Jr.
2013 - Vincent J. Radke	2004 - Peter D. Thornton	1994 - Nelson E. Fabian	1985 - William G. Walter	1975 - Charles L. Senn
2012 - Harry E. Grenawitzke	2002 - Gayle J. Smith	1993 - Amer El-Ahrif	1984 - William Nix Anderson	1974 - James J. Jump
2011 - Gary P. Noonan	2001 - Robert W. Powitz	1992 - Robert Galvan	1983 - John R. Bagby, Jr.	1973 - William A. Broadway
2010 - James Balsamo, Jr.	2000 - Friedrich K. Kaerferstein	1991 - Trenton G. Davis	1982 - Emil T. Chanlett	1972 - Ralph C. Pickard
2009 - Terrance B. Gratton	1999 - Khalil H. Mancy	1990 - Harvey F. Collins	1981 - Charles H. Gillham	1971 - Callis A. Atkins
2008 - CAPT. Craig A. Shepherd	1998 - Chris J. Wiant	1989 - Boyd T. Marsh	1980 - Ray B. Watts	

The 2017 Walter F. Snyder Award will be presented during NEHA's 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition to be held in Grand Rapids, MI July 10-13, 2017.

For more information or to download nomination forms, please visit [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) or [www.neha.org](http://www.neha.org) or contact Stan Hazan at NSF at 734-769-5105 or [hazan@nsf.org](mailto:hazan@nsf.org).

