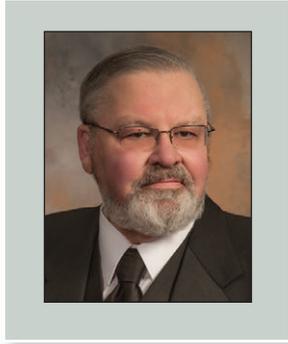


► PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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Building a Better NEHA

As I drove home a few weeks ago from a meeting in Seattle, Washington, I listened to one of the presidential debates on National Public Radio. As I listened, it struck me that the speakers did not emphasize or stress any future goals and only discussed problems without any hint of solutions. Now as I am composing this column, my first President's Message, I have the duty, responsibility, and privilege to enumerate my goals for NEHA in the upcoming year.

This year will be very important in the evolution of our association. I say that because I believe this year will be like few others in the history of NEHA. We are growing, we are becoming more fiscally robust, we have expanded our professional capacity, we have broadened our resources, and we have increased our connectivity to local, state, and federal institutions and agencies. It is in this positive and dynamic operating environment that I share my goals for NEHA.

1. Make NEHA inclusive of all the disciplines, practices, and professions that work in and contribute to the environmental health field. Although we now have a Business and Industry Affiliate that is dedicated to our colleagues working in commercial operations, there are many more professionals working and contributing to environmental health that do not have a professional association to call "home." I have traveled around the country and have met many of these practitioners at seminars and trainings. There is a myriad of professionals seeking an association where they can learn, contribute, and grow. Occupations such as industrial

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and governmental environmental health and safety, hospital environmental services, and educational environmental services are but a few of the occupational areas that are seeking a suitable professional home. NEHA must become an inclusive association that promotes professionalism throughout all environmental endeavors.

2. Make NEHA an active, vigorous, and dynamic association through the actions of its officers, board of directors, staff, and members. As a profession we must continue to promote and implement high standards, and practice sound fiscal operation, connectivity, stakeholder involvement, and elevation of the profession and our reputation. During the last year, our board of directors and executive director have made great strides in restructuring our organization and expanding our presence and influence in Washington, DC, and with federal institutions, agencies, and officials. It is vital that expansion of our presence continues and that subse-

quent expansion of our credibility and influence flourishes.

3. Make NEHA more attractive to younger, entry level, and mid-management environmental health professionals. By 2018, it is estimated that approximately 50% of the baby boomers will be retired in all areas of the U.S. labor force. Of course, this estimate includes our profession as well. The millennial generation is the largest generation and is entering the national workforce at a rate of 17% per year. As the second largest generation, baby boomers are retiring at a rate of 18%–19% per year. Additionally, a great majority of national associations, as well as fraternal and charitable organizations, have been publicly concerned over flat or declining membership.

For years we have voiced our mission to attract younger mid-management professionals, field specialists, and entry level professionals while sustaining our commitment to all environmental health practitioners. NEHA is actively instituting changes that will accomplish our mission. Changes to the format and structure of our Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition is just a beginning. Upgrading our Web site, increasing our use of social media, and digitalizing more of our content are but a few changes that are in process and will be expanded over the coming year. Establishing focus groups, surveys, and membership research will help us increase new membership recruitment and existing member retention.

4. Continue our efforts to establish NEHA as the outstanding voice of environmental

health and remain relevant to our practice and profession. Relevancy is arguably the most important goal that our association can accomplish this year, or in any future year. To be relevant to our members and their professions, ambitions, educational needs, reputations, and standards of practice is the heart and soul of NEHA. To be relevant to other associations and local, state,

and federal agencies and elected officials is the path to a “seat at the table” and national influence for all our members. Relevancy is the basic foundation upon which we will continue to grow and expand into the premier voice of environmental health.

These goals will make us a stronger, more active association, and will enable us to be the voice of environmental health. In order

to achieve any of these goals, it will take the efforts of the profession, association, and NEHA’s membership, board of directors, national officers, and staff. I am confident that we are all up to the task. 🐛

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Did You Know?

NEHA offers a wide range of memberships to fit your professional needs. Individual memberships can be selected for one to three years, and you can select how you want to receive the *Journal* (either electronically or both electronically and in print). We also offer discounted membership rates for international professionals, retired professionals, students, and recent graduates. We have a sustaining membership for organizations, government agencies, and businesses. Finally, colleges and universities can join NEHA as educational members. Membership benefits may vary but one thing is true for all, you demonstrate your support for the advancement of the environmental health profession by joining NEHA. Please visit www.neha.org/membership-communities/join to learn more about our membership opportunities. And if you aren’t a member, consider joining today!

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