



President's Message

- George Hanssen

Greetings to all current and prospective Nebraska Environmental Health Association members. I say 'prospective members' because there are a lot of people – students, industry, coworkers, etc. – that should belong to NEHA. In fact, anyone involved in environmental health should belong to this professional organization to further their education and make contacts that are so necessary within our state. Please encourage others to 'join up'. Pretty cheap membership at only ten bucks.

While you're at it, encourage anyone in the business to become a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS). Currently there are only 77 Registered Environmental Health Specialists in Nebraska. Given the number of persons working in environmental quality, water quality, sewage systems installation, and food service inspection in hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and commercial establishments, you can see the this number should be much greater.

At my presentation to the Nebraska Board of Health last fall, I mentioned the need to increase the number of sanitarians in the state. This was brought up while talking about the budget deficit that small groups like the REHS group has. When I told the Board that only one profession was required to be registered and that was in the area of food inspection, they were surprised. Perhaps that will stimulate some action to require more agencies to look at a requirement for registration.

Our Treasurer and Chair of the Membership reports that our membership has grown to 125 strong! Please welcome all the new members that have come on board.

The Board has several things planned for this year. Committees have been formed to review the current by-laws and to develop a criteria for annual awards. Doug Clark is chairing the By-Laws committee and Tim Miller is chairing the committee to review/update the Awards criteria.

(continued page 2)

Upcoming Events

March 29 – Nebraska Food Safety Task Force Conference. Villager Courtyard & Gardens, 5200 'O' St., Lincoln. The sessions will focus around the bioterrorist threat to the food supply. Speakers include Jerry Jaax, retired colonel US Army and currently with the University of Kansas and Bill Marler, the attorney that represented many involved in the 'Jack-In-The Box' – E. coli illnesses.

Registration fee is \$30.00 prior to March 20 and \$45.00 after. Contact Jeannie at 402-472-3717 for registration information.

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Annual Fall Conference: Mark your calendars for the NEHA Annual Conference scheduled for Wednesday, October 25, 2006 at the Mahoney State Park Lodge.

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Mid-Continental Association of Food & Drug Officials Annual Conference, March 8-9, 2006, Arlington, Texas. Details on the MCA website at www.mcafd.org

President's Message (cont.)

Standing Committees that have been in place include the Program, Newsletter, and Nominations Committees. I encourage all of you to become involved and work with one of these committees. Talk to one of the Board members and they'll put you in touch with the committee chair.

The Program Committee and the Board are always looking for topics for general membership meetings. If you have any suggestions at all on what you would like to see presented, contact on the Board members. The Board names and contact information are listed in this newsletter.

I look forward to seeing you at training sessions and general membership meetings this coming year. I encourage you again to become involved in your NEHA organization.

Happenings

The Food & Drug Administration-State Training Branch presented the Foodborne Investigation Course in Lincoln, February 7-9. The class was full with 58 participants. This course had not been held in Nebraska since 1997. Allen Gelfius, FDA Training Officer, was energetic, adding his own humorous personal experiences to the presentation.

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News Articles

Submit Articles, announcements, or anything else that should appear in this newsletter to:

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