



# WSEHA NEWSLETTER

WASHINGTON STATE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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Spring 2017

## 2017 AEC

The Washington State Environmental Health Association (WSEHA) is pleased to invite you to its 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Educational Conference (AEC). Based on your feedback from the 2016 AEC, this year we've moved to the other side of the Cascades and have expanded the conference length to allow for more networking opportunities with your fellow environmental public health professionals. The conference will officially start at lunch on Monday, May 1, and extend to lunch on Wednesday, May 3, allowing for travel time on each end. See our website for registration and other details ([www.wseha.org](http://www.wseha.org)).

This year's theme is "The AEC at 65 – Learning from Our Past, Working for Our Future". In the 2013 AEC program I wrote: "How do we revitalize our organization and the environmental public health profession in Washington State, particularly when faced with the 'new normal' of reduced budgets, a wave of retirements of experienced environmental health staff, and many new and emerging challenges such as climate change impacts?" One strategy is preparing the next generation of Environmental Public Health professionals to meet these challenges.

In keeping with this year's theme, we've devoted tracks on Monday afternoon and Wednesday morning to workforce development, succession planning, leadership, and "how-to's" such as informational interview tips. We have also dedicated some space (the Golden Delicious Rooms) as a "Career Development Center". Here we'll have displays and information tables for Environmental Public Health students and professionals on continuing education and internship/job opportunities. There will also be an expanded poster session highlighting student research with the Monday evening social reception. Take advantage of this opportunity to interact and engage with your current and soon-to-be colleagues.

Our featured keynote speaker Tuesday morning will be Dr. Pat Breyse, Director of NCEH/ATSDR, who will be speaking on evolving strategies to reduce environmental exposures in today's world. In addition to our normal technical program addressing foundational public health and emerging issues, before the formal AEC starts there will be a dedicated workshop on School Environmental Health and Safety all day Monday. Some of the afternoon sessions for the School workshop will be available as break-out sessions to all AEC attendees. We've also scheduled annual meetings for the WSEHA and the Washington State Board of Registered Sanitarians. After a late start, our newly resurrected International Health Committee is keeping a long tradition going by organizing a fundraiser for a deserving nonprofit doing environmental health work overseas (see page 4 for more information on this).

This year we have been blessed with an abundance of volunteers who make this conference possible. There are literally too many people to name individually, but you may want to give them thanks if you see them around. Finally, please take some time during or at the end of the conference to give us thoughtful feedback on how the AEC went and how it could be improved and, if it inspired you, please consider volunteering with the WSEHA, either on a committee or the Executive Board.

Mark Toy  
AEC 2017 Committee Chair

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*All other committee chair positions are vacant*

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**Want to join WSEHA? For information and membership applications, visit:**

<http://www.wseha.org/#!/membership/c1ulz>



Stay up-to-date on what's going on with WSEHA by [liking](#) our new Facebook page! Find out about updates when we add new educational events, job postings, goings-on in the field of Environmental Public Health, or if there are any changes to our organization. Email Dayna if you have anything you'd like her to post either on our website or Facebook page.

Another way to keep up with what we're doing is to join our mailing list. Go to [www.wseha.org](http://www.wseha.org) to join the mailing list or email Dayna Katula at [dayna@wseha.org](mailto:dayna@wseha.org).

## Next Newsletter Deadline:

July 28, 2017

The Washington State Environmental Health Association Newsletter is the official publication of WSEHA. Membership in WSEHA includes a subscription to the newsletter. Membership in WSEHA is not required for acceptance of articles in the newsletter.

Opinions expressed in articles published in the WSEHA newsletter should not be accepted necessarily as statements of policy or opinions of WSEHA.

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## NEHA NEWS FOR AFFILIATES

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*Submitted by: Ned Therien, R.S., NEHA Region 1 VP  
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### Network and Learn

The [NEHA AEC](#) is the nexus for environmental health training, education, networking, and advancement. It is the event environmental health professionals attend to acquire practical and real-world information and expertise. [Schedule highlights](#) for affiliates include:

**Sunday:** Affiliate Leadership Workshop (for Affiliate officers serving in leadership roles post-conference).

**Monday:** Invited Keynote, Debbie Stabenow, U.S. Senator (MI), Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

**Wednesday:** Brews, Blues & BBQ! This networking event will be held on the Gillett Bridge, overlooking the river next to the Amway Grand Plaza hotel.

**Thursday:** Closing Session on Sustainability, sponsored by NEHA's Business & Industry Affiliate. Join your peers in [Grand Rapids](#) to be motivated, inspired, and empowered in your career. Members save up to \$175 on [Registration](#).

*Don't forget to nominate your colleagues to be recognized with an [Affiliate Certificate of Merit](#) at the AEC. The deadline to apply is June 9, 2017.*

### Your voice IN D.C.

NEHA has been working diligently to be a champion for environmental health professionals on vital policy and legislative issues. Dr. David Dyjack, NEHA's Executive Director, and Joanne Zurcher, NEHA's Director of Government Affairs provided testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives Environment Subcommittee, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology on the importance of EPA regulations and its guidance to local practice on January 31<sup>st</sup>. Dr. Dyjack's [op-ed article for US News and World Report](#) provides support for the EPA regulations that guide much of our environmental health work.

On February 13<sup>th</sup>, a group of NEHA leaders spoke on behalf of every member and affiliate at NEHA's first [Capitol Hill Lobby Day](#) in Washington, D.C. NEHA met with legislators about building capacity for the environmental health profession and discussed the important work our organizations do for communities.

### Advance your Career

Be part of an organization that fosters cooperation and understanding among environmental health professionals, and be proficient in the current and emerging environmental health issues. [Join today](#) and get a [NEHA Credential](#).

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## FD207 FDA PLAN REVIEW FOR RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS SUMMARY

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The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-taught Plan Review for Retail Food Establishments course went off without a hitch! FDA trainers, including our very own David Engelskirchen, traveled from around the nation to hold a three-day course on March 14-16, 2017, at the Tacoma Rhodes Center in Tacoma, WA. 47 Environmental Public Health professionals from 22 different agencies learned about different aspects of the plan review process, from floors to ceilings and everything else in-between. The collaborative learning environment allowed for an open dialog amongst the different jurisdictions along the way, which encouraged networking and gave insight into how various agencies approach plan review and the issues that go along with it.



Special thanks to the Washington State DOH's Food Safety Program for hosting this workshop!

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### POOL CONFERENCE UPDATE

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If you were keeping an eye on the Pool Conferences this year, you may have noticed that they got off to a bit of a bumpy start. Long story short, the Western Washington course has been cancelled, and the Eastern Washington conference is still a go.

The Benton-Franklin Health District (BFHD) has been hard at work to offer conference participants a quality workshop with knowledgeable instructors. The class will be held on April 27, 2017 in Kennewick, WA in the BFHD Training Room. Those that should attend are regulators, pool operators, and anyone else that is interested in pool and spa safety. Registration prices are \$50 if you're a WSEHA member, \$60 if you aren't; all registrations include a copy of the Pool Operator's Manual. To find out more information, please [click here](#) to get to our website.

An enthusiastic shout-out goes to the Benton-Franklin Health District for organizing and hosting the Pool Conference!

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### INTERNATIONAL HEALTH COMMITTEE: WATER FOR LIFE

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WSEHA's International Health Committee (IHC) has chosen to sponsor the nonprofit charity, "Water for Life" at this year's AEC. For 12 years, volunteers for WFL have worked tirelessly to improve the lives of villagers in the jungles of Northern Guatemala by providing critical public health interventions. Among these are drilling over 100 new water wells to provide clean, safe water. WFL is in need of a rotary drill for a cable tool drilling rig. This low tech drilling equipment affords volunteers access to remote areas within the jungles of Guatemala where there is no safe water to drink. Areas where they have drilled new wells have seen significant reductions in infant mortality rates, according to El Petén's Ministry of Health.

Please come to our International Health Committee's Silent Auction at the AEC to support this effort. Incidentally, we have issued a challenge to all LHJ's to submit the most creative gift basket that represents their area. Personal donations are also welcomed. For more information please contact: Luis M. Flores, R.S. at 360-778-6030, or by email at [lflores@whatcomcounty.us](mailto:lflores@whatcomcounty.us) All of the money raised goes to support this wonderful cause. Be sure to bring cash or your checkbook (no credit cards are accepted at this time). Thank you!

Check out their website [h2oforlife.org](http://h2oforlife.org).

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## What Is UNCOVER EH?

- Understanding the Needs, Challenges, Opportunities, Vision and Emerging Roles in Environmental Health (UNCOVER EH) is a national initiative between NEHA, CDC and Baylor University to learn more about the environmental health (EH) profession through an online survey and in-person workshops of EH professionals working at public health departments.
- Initially, an online survey will be sent to EH professionals to collect information about demographics, characteristics, practice areas, and major challenges.
- After the online survey is completed, regional workshops will be held to discuss the survey results, identified challenges, and emerging issues.

## Who Is the Target Audience?

- This initiative is currently focused on EH professionals working at health departments.
- To understand the complexity of emerging EH issues and reported impacts to health department capacity, we need to hear *directly* from EH professionals serving in health departments *in all levels*.
- Opportunities to expand the survey to include EH professionals at other governmental agencies, non-governmental agencies, and private industry will be explored in the future.



## Why Is This Important?

- Efforts of EH professionals are critical for protecting public health and the environment, yet these efforts often go unnoticed until problems occur (e.g., foodborne outbreaks, vectorborne diseases, contaminated water supplies, disasters).
- Given the importance of EH to ensure healthy communities, it is critical to understand the EH workforce and the challenges it faces to provide solutions to these needs.
- A national-level report will provide a foundation for leaders and decision makers to make evidence-based decisions regarding workforce capacity and public health safety for their communities.
- Additionally, this information can serve as tool to plan future EH training needs and to better understand emerging EH issues within jurisdictions.

## When Will This Occur? How Can I Help?

- The online survey will launch later this year (2017).
- Find out how to participate or ways you can help spread the word to ensure that we capture information from as many health department EH professionals as possible.

Learn more at  
[neha.org/uncover-eh](http://neha.org/uncover-eh)