2014 WSEHA International Health Committee Silent Auction

Submitted by Ross Lytle, IHC Chair

The WSEHA International Health Committee continued what has become a tradition at the Annual Education Conference tradition – the Silent Auction to support the efforts of world relief organizations to improve environmental health and sanitation in developing regions of the world.

This year’s chosen recipient was Water 1st International. This was the IHC’s second partnering with Water 1st International. Water 1st was our featured project at the 2007 AEC, held as a part of the Joint Conference on Health in Yakima. Their focus project back then was providing safe water supplies for people in the Sunderban region of eastern India.

At this year’s AEC, the Silent Auction raised $1,500.00 for Water First’s projects. Water First’s current focus involves their ongoing efforts to establish community water points that connect to public water supply pipelines in urban slum environments in Dhaka and Chittagong, Bangladesh, as well as providing options for community toilets. Community-mapping exercises identify sites for new water points and toilets, with the goal of providing full water supply and toilet coverage in a defined area of the slum.

The goal was to provide a community of 25-60 with a toilet and household water supply in Dhaka and Chittagong. Portions of the generated funds will contribute to construction costs, hygiene education, and community training and organization.

More information on this and other projects may be found on their website at http://water1st.org

The following Board positions are open:

- President Elect
- Northwest Regional VP
- Eastern Regional VP

Remember, our association could not exist without our volunteers. If you are interested in being on the Board, contact Kerri Wagner at kerri@wseha.org or (360) 738-8946.
Next Newsletter Deadline:
Friday, August 29, 2014

The Washington State Environmental Health Association Newsletter is the official publication of WSEHA. Membership in WSEHA includes a subscription to the newsletter. Manuscripts for publication must be type-written and submitted via e-mail to kerri@wseha.org, or on a computer disk mailed to WSEHA at the address above. 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.
With all honesty, I was a little more than hesitant to write this article for the WSEHA newsletter. The first message from the incoming President has always seemed like a big deal to me. For some, it is the first time you will have heard anything from me. I want to make sure I leave a good impression. For others, the message is a way to see what the President views as important with the Association and helps to identify the direction the Association will be taking in the upcoming year. I want to make sure I state a clear vision. Still others are waiting to make any kind of decision until they read this article. I am hopeful I can keep their attention for the duration of the article.

First, let me give a brief paragraph as a way of introduction for those I haven’t had a chance to meet yet. I am currently the Director of the Whitman County Environmental Health Department. For those of you that didn’t know, Whitman County is the home to Washington State University (GO COUGS!). I have been the Director since 2008, and with county since 2003. Starting out as an entry-level food inspector, I quickly became intrigued with the way environmental health and public health interact with the public through regulations and education. As I received more training and education I was able to change my position from food inspector to generalist. At this point I was hooked. Eleven years later, here I am.

Here in Whitman County, all environmental health staff are now generalists. This is one of the reasons why I originally became interested in WSEHA and support all environmental health specialists and technicians to be involved with the Association. There is no better resource for information and professional requirements in the state. Either directly or through partnerships, WSEHA provides some of the best values in training and training opportunities. This is especially important in a rural community where access to training can be limited. Being a part of the Washington State Environmental Health Association has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. You cannot beat the Association in terms of professional development and individual growth.

The key issue that I want to address as the WSEHA President this year is the strengthening of partnerships. This is not limited to our “traditional” partners, but to those that can be (and should be) strong supporters of the work we do. Local health jurisdictions, federal agencies, agencies in Washington State, professional associations, and industry leaders are all targeted for outreach to “reintroduce” WSEHA and the benefits of improving the partnerships. WSEHA has started by reconnecting with WSALPHO. Recent changes to WSALPHO has resulted in a change of membership and direction and a commitment to support our members. Additionally, Mike Vinatieri has been working with industry and service providers to share knowledge and resources to offer additional trainings for members. As we strengthen these partnerships, I will be sure to share the results with everyone.

I will end this article and all upcoming articles with a final request: Become involved with the Washington State Environmental Health Association. We are a volunteer organization that seeks to serve the needs of our members. We cannot do this without a commitment from our members. There are many opportunities to utilize your strengths, or to assist in developing new ones. Please feel free to contact me, your Regional Vice President, or our Executive Secretary Kerri Wagner for additional information.

Thanks for reading.

Respectfully,
~Michael Baker
Submitted by Michael Baker, AEC Chair

Based on early feedback from WSEHA members, speakers and presenters, conference vendors, and attendees, the 2014 Washington State Environmental Health Association Annual Educational Conference was a success. Not too bad for an organization that was seriously considering closing the doors just a couple of years ago.

Before I go any further, let me be sure to thank everyone that put in the work (those you were able to see at the conference and those that put in many hours behind the scene to make sure the conference went as smoothly as it did). There were a ton of people that helped in numerous ways (and if I forget someone, please forgive me). Lauren Brinker (Public Health-Seattle & King County) did an amazing job of coordinating her team and getting abstracts together and tweaking the final scheduling. Even with the delay in receiving some of the abstracts, she was able to pull everything together. Megan McNelly (Pacific County) coordinated with everyone on the committee to make sure that the programs that went to the publisher were the most up to date as humanly possible. The amount of last minute changes that had a snowballing impact was truly amazing. Kathy Pierson (Snohomish County) was able to single handedly manage the group of moderators that helped with each session. Even when others weren’t able to help as originally schedule (myself included), she had a backup plan ready to go. Chuck Treser (University of Washington) was once again able to get a group of Environmental Health students interested in attending and helping out with the conference. As the students are very likely the future of the profession, it is good to see their energy and excitement. Once again, Mark Toy (Washington State Department of Health) and Ned Therien (Washington State Board of Health) were able to work with the Great Wolf Lodge to ensure that things went smoothly during the conference. Mark was also responsible to arranging the evening’s entertainment, which was very well received! Dick Pedlar (Washington State Department of Health-Retired), Lynn Schneider (Washington State Department of Health), and Gary Holt (Washington State Department of Health) did an outstanding job of coordinating with speakers to make sure their presentation went smoothly and coordinated with all the moderators to make sure everyone stayed on schedule. Mike Vinatieri (WSEHA Board and AEC Co-Chair) and Bill Angel (Whatcom County) were responsible for the great response from vendors at the conference. Once again, the vendors were pleased with the turnout and participation and as a result will like to return again to the next AEC. Ross Lytle (Kitsap County) was able to manage the Silent Auction/International Health Committee and had a great turn out. He was able to raise $1,500 for Water First. The great tote bags that everyone received were a result of the work of Sally Waters (Island County). I know I’ve used mine a couple of times already. And last, but by no means least, Kerri Wagner (WSEHA Executive Secretary). For the 2014 AEC, the role of the Executive Secretary was greatly expanded. While the program guide may have listed me as the AEC Chair, it was Kerri that made it all happen. Her value to WSEHA cannot be overstated, and neither can our appreciation.

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Post 2014 AEC Update Continued

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This year, as in the past, WSEHA received a great amount of support from the Washington State Department of Health. Maryanne Guichard (Assistant Secretary of Environmental Public Health) participated in committee work and provided valuable feedback. Additionally, Maryanne was able to give support in the form of encouraging staff to become presenters and provide resources. Maryanne was also able serve as a presenter and moderator, so her expertise was doubly appreciated.

One of the underlying goals of the 2014 AEC was to highlight the ways that the environmental health profession (and the professionals) are changing. The new track of “The Politics and Policies of Environmental Health”, co-sponsored by the Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO), highlighted the way the legislature impacts the way we perform our daily responsibilities. Senator Fraser, Representative Fitzgibbon, Dr. Bob Crittenden, Drew Bouton, Denise Clifford, and Bill Clarke were able to share their respective experiences. Additionally, Jefferson Ketchel (WSALPHO President and Grant County) added the local public health perspective. Based on the positive feedback received, it looks like this will be a track that is continued and possibly expanded.

This year, the awards presentation took a little different turn as the WSEHA Board recognized two key and long-time supporters of the Association. Ned Therien and Dick Pedlar were recognized for the outstanding dedication to WSEHA as well as the environmental public health profession in general. For the Board, this was one of the easiest votes to cast. Both Dick and Ned leave a legacy that will be very difficult for someone to step in to. I do not envy the person that is selected to fill those shoes.

Believe it or not, we are already planning for the possibility of an AEC next year. The results from the AEC Evaluation Form indicated that the attendees of the 2014 conference would prefer to have a conference every year, and not on a two year cycle. This is a change for the survey results of 2013. In 2013, the results were nearly 50/50 on a yearly versus an every other year AEC. On a nearly 2-to-1 ratio, 2014 AEC attendees felt an annual conference is the best way to move forward. The only way this that this can happen is with member support. Volunteers are currently being recruited to fill many of the positions that are needed to make the AEC happen. If you would like to see a 2015 AEC, please feel free to contact me or Kerri Wagner.

Finally, it was great to see the entire WSEHA Board at this year’s conference. I do not think you will see a more dedicated group of environmental public health professionals anywhere. I would highly recommend to anyone interested in serving in the Association. There are many leadership, supportive, and creative ways that you can choose to help. Besides the obvious benefits of professional development, the chance to work with and learn from some great people in various stages of their environmental public health is one that shouldn’t be overlooked.

Thank you again to all the volunteers that went above and beyond the call during this Annual Educational Conference. I think you will agree that their efforts showed in the final product!
2014 Cind M. Treser Memorial Scholarship Recipients

The Cind M. Treser Memorial Student Scholarship program was instituted to provide recognition and a financial incentive for undergraduate students majoring in environmental health (or in other life sciences), who have an interest in pursuing a career in environmental health in the state of Washington. The awards were presented at the WSEHA 63rd Annual Educational Conference May 12 & 13, 2014 at the Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound, Washington, to Ella Kuchmiy and Kyoji Lee.

National Environmental Health Association

Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) and the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) will be bringing their two annual conferences together to exciting Las Vegas, July 7-10, 2014. This unique event will highlight environmental health issues and solutions from around the world!

Online registration for the 2014 AEC in Las Vegas is now closed, but don’t worry...you can still participate by:
1) Registering on-site in Las Vegas
2) Registering for the Virtual AEC to view recorded session from your home or office via the Internet from anywhere in the world. Sessions will be available about two weeks after the conclusion of the 2014 AEC.

The NEHA/IFEH event will be held at The Cosmopolitan Hotel—a luxurious hotel overlooking the Las Vegas strip! Discounted room rates will be available starting at $139 USD per night plus taxes and fees.

Now Available: The NEHA 2014 AEC Brochure

Sign up for E-alerts here.