

**Highlights:**

- Around 106 members attended the spring conference.
- A highlight was the panel discussion on HEA 1149,
- A “town hall” style discussion focused on ways IDOH food protection will work with local health departments.

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## IEHA spring conference draws over a 100 attendees

It is not an exaggeration to say the meeting room was full at the Embassy Suites Conference Center in Plainfield as around 106



**IEHA president Holley Rose welcomes attendees to the IEHA Spring Conference.**

members and guests assembled for the Indiana Environmental Health Association annual Spring Conference. The line up of speakers and topics, plus the chance to meet in person, were factors spurring attendance.

The new HEA 1149, known as the homebased

vendor rule (HBV), was discussed by a panel representing various interests that are affected by the bill going into affect July 1. The Food Protection Division of IDOH has prepared a guidance document

for the new bill that outlines changes, and how the changes are interpreted. But foods and processes not approved before are still not allowed, but some definitions are changed, Sharon Pattee told the audience.

*(Continued on page 3)*



**The new Homebased Vendor bill, known as HEA 1149 is discussed by a knowledgeable panel from various groups affected by the bill. From the left are: Jeff Cummins, Indiana Farm Bureau; Sharon Pattee, IDOH; Chris Borowiecki, Vanderburgh Co. Health Dept., and Christina Ferrol, Indiana Development Cooperative Center.**

## Annual fall conference on track for September

Is your official calendar marked for September 19, 20, 21? If not, do that now so you will remember the IEHA Annual Fall Educational Conference (AFEC) to be held in Brown County State Park’s Abe Martin Lodge. Reserva-

tions may be made now for accommodations at a variety of prices, including the state rate. One may call 877-563-4371 for reservations. Be sure to mention code 0918EH.

The conference theme announced by chair Jen-

nifer Heller is “Environmental Health - Impact, Progress and Issue Mitigation”, and will feature general sessions on all three mornings, and several concurrent breakout sessions on

*(Continued on page 3)*

## From the Ed Desk



**A**s sure as life goes on, life changes. Remember when the “good old days” didn’t seem all that special at the time? Like when there wasn’t a pandemic? But, after you read the Journal cover to cover, of course, be sure you are registered for the coming IEHA Annual Fall Educational Conference. Executives of the National Environmental Health Association have often noted what a superb value our conferences are, and well worthy of your time and cost to attend. Think about this: food accounts for nearly 100% of the registration costs. Imagine the challenge conference organizers face finding outstanding speakers who are willing to join us at their own expense! Don’t ever judge a conference’s value by tentative agenda titles. The most informative, and even entertaining topics are often unexpected.

*Ed*

## From the President

**“Take a moment to remember why you chose a career in public health and why you stay in this field.”**

**I**t is hard to believe we are halfway through the year already! Summertime is in full swing for Environmental Health and keeping everyone busy with all the many added duties that warm weather brings to Public Health. Each day brings new work to complete along with unexpected issues that always arise. It is easy to feel frustrated and many of you may end your workday feeling stressed, tired, worn out and sometimes defeated over a circumstance that perhaps did not get resolved or not resolved in the manner you wished for after investing so much time.

Take a moment to remember why you chose a career in Public Health and why you continue to stay in this field. There is a passion within a Public Health servant's heart and mind, and perhaps sometimes it just gets dulled or tucked away. I am encouraging each of you to reignite that passion within yourselves! Recall a time when you ended your workday feeling proud of an accomplishment where you saw firsthand results of your hard work. I have spoken with many of you about how much I have always felt that IEHA is such a great source of Mental Health therapy - whether you realize it or not. Stay involved with your local chapter meetings and activities and attend the annual spring and fall educational conferences. These events provide a time not only to network and share ideas, but also engage with colleagues across the state who can relate to you as perhaps your family and friends might not fully understand.

I strongly encourage you to attend the 2022 IEHA Fall Conference in September. More information about the conference is elsewhere in this journal and on our website at [www.iehaind.org](http://www.iehaind.org). Stay safe and healthy my fellow IEHA friends. I'll see you all in the fall!

*Holley*

## IEHA Spring Conference (continued)

*(Continued from page 1)*

Since HBVs often sell at Farmers Markets, Chris Borowiecki reminded listeners that new items keep “creeping in” and inspectors should be alert for new food items. He suggested working with Market Masters on what foods are allowed. Market Masters decide what vendors may operate.

+ + +

Judi Magaldi of IDOH discussed “Environmental Asthma Triggers”. She



mentioned that one in ten people over 18 years of age

have asthma that is long term or chronic, and there is no cure, but it can be controlled.

+ + +

The Governor’s Public

Health Commission is developing recommendations on improving public health services especially to local health departments in the state. Mindy Waldron, a member of the commission, shared their objectives and progress, the “strength and weaknesses” of public health, and explained how anyone can share a comment. She added that there is no plan to “regionalize” local health departments, but support could be regionalized.

+ + +

Chase Cotton, from the Willow Center



told attendees that mental health is the “thing behind all other things.” He explained that we can experience various levels between “illness and well-

ness.” Feel anxiety or depression? He said that you aren’t alone. With substance abuse, Cotton said that drugs lead the brain to believe it needs the substances to survive.

+ + +

Sandy Banes talked on the current rules that cover “Eyelash Extensions, Tattoos, and Body Piercings”.



All types of piercings are covered by law, with a new law for eyelash extensions. Rules cover what can be done, where, and by whom.

A conference highlight was the “town hall” style discussion by several IDOH staff on improvements to the food program as it works with local health departments.



Seated from the left, Dr. Shirley Payne, Vivien McCurdy, and Nicole Morley representing IDOH discuss how the agency will work to improve cooperation and desired training with LHDs.

**“Training provided for local health department inspectors will improve as more FPD staff are hired and trained.”**

## Annual Fall Educational Conference (continued)

*(Continued from page 1)*

Monday and Tuesday afternoons. Dr. Kris Box, IDOH Health Commissioner, will give the keynote address.

Other speakers of note include Bill Marler, nationally recognized food-borne illness litigation attorney, Indiana State

Veterinarian Bret Marsh, and Greg Prince representing the International Association of Food Protection.

The golf outing will return on the Sunday preceding the conference, and the annual awards banquet will be Monday evening. The popular si-

lent auction will continue with proceeds going to the four standing subcommittees. See the IEHA website (or your inbox) for the latest information.



The Abe Martin Lodge in Brown Co. State Park will be the host site for the AFEC slated for September.



Lifting the tailgate on this rental truck revealed large amounts of unrefrigerated food.

(Thanks to Beth Bowlen)

**“Orphan wells  
in states  
including  
Indiana could  
number over  
130,000,  
allowing gas  
and oil to  
seep.”**



Lightning “sprites” are one of lightning’s strange relatives.

## Jackson County HD finds food truck unrefrigerated

A rental truck on Interstate 65 in Southern Indiana raised the suspicions of a nearby motorist who saw the truck continuing to travel on a flat tire. According to accounts in *The Tribune* in Seymour, the damaged tire was shedding bits of tire that created a hazard for other motorists, as the driver struggled to control the vehicle.

Indiana State Police (ISP) stopped the truck only to discover it was overloaded with food that should have been refrigerated, and also fruits, vegetables, and alcohol. The load was 15,000 pounds more than the law allows.

ISP contacted the Jackson Co. Health Dept. whose environmentalists inspected the truck’s contents, and monitored the

offloading and destruction of about 200 pounds of fish, and 400 bags of vegetables. Around 400 cases of untaxed beer were seized by Indiana Excise Police.

After the truck was impounded for several days, and receiving numerous citations, the driver was allowed to continue to Indianapolis with remaining foods deemed OK.

## Abandoned oil and gas wells still polluting

“Gone but not forgotten” was the headline in a recent *Solutions* newsletter put out by the Environmental Defense Fund. EDF says “orphan” wells in states including Indiana likely number over 130,000. These wells were abandoned and were unsealed allowing them to seep gas and oil to the surface. Records

are sketchy so many more may exist that no one knows about. Gas like methane can leak and even be concentrated enough to explode. As many as 9 million Americans live within a mile of an orphan well.

The federal government is funding a program to find and plug orphan wells. But the \$4.7 million

allotted is just the start of what might be needed, which could top twice that amount.

With federal funds, each state will be responsible for plugging its orphans, and stronger regulations may be tied to receiving funds. Companies may be required to put more money into plugging polluting wells.

## Lightning sprites (not strikes) in a storm near you?

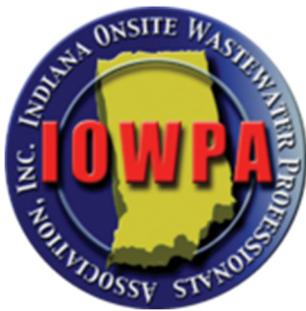
We are all familiar with lightning strikes, the electrical discharge between storm clouds and the objects on the ground. But, what are “sprites”, what the *Almanac* calls “lightning’s strange cousin”? A sprite describes flashes that happen above

thunderstorm clouds and used to be dismissed as fiction. But in 1989, scientists at the University of Minnesota were able to actually record a sprite, as have many more photographers since.

Scientists learned that electrical energy (sprite,

or Transient Luminous Event) can shoot up as well as down in the electrically charged atmosphere and may be triggered by a lightning discharge below. Sprites are usually reddish in color and can soar up to 60 miles.

## Support IEHA’s sustaining members



*“Sustaining members are vital to IEHA’s success as an organization. Can you spot the newest members?”*

## Crisis Cleaning®

*Crisis Cleaning, long time platinum sponsor of IEHA has closed its doors. Owners Donetta and Rich Held said it was time to retire and go on to other activities. Both commented they will miss all the friends they made at conferences over the many years.*



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## Air pollution is affecting nearly all the world's people



Nearly all the world's people are now affected by air pollution.

The World Health Organization (WHO) says that 99 percent of Earth's population live with harmful air pollution, up from 90 percent a few years ago. WHO says that India has the 10 cities with the worst air quality from a pollutant called PH2.5. PM10 pollutants top ten locations include other places besides India, including Bah-

rain, Iran, Iraq, South Africa, and Saudi Arabia.

These pollutants come from cars burning fossil fuels, power plants, but also from farming.

WHO says Chinese cities, such as Beijing, known for apocalyptic smog events in the past, has cleaned its air a lot. Although still dealing with pollutants, it's ranked

76th globally.

WHO says it has updated its guidelines for the two pollutants plus nitrogen dioxide in hopes countries will voluntarily improve air quality. It adds that low to middle income countries are most affected by particulate matter (PM) compared with the global average.

**“Avoid trees as roots can invade fields, but most shallow rooted plants should be fine.”**

The new onsite sewage disposal system has gone in and the owner wants to know what kind of plants will work to improve the appearance. Not all plants are suitable as the integrity of the absorption field must be protected to assure the longest possible life.

Besides improving the appearance, one main reason to add plants is to reduce soil erosion. Clemson University's Cooperative Extension, says plants can help the system by optimizing oxygen exchange and promoting transpiration. They add a lawn might be best. Plants with extensive root systems should be avoided as roots will invade absorption fields negatively affecting it's functioning.

Only minimal soil should be added to not alter the system's functioning. Although lawns are a good choice, most ornamental grasses are not due to their extensive roots.

If planting a ground cover, avoid a species that would create a thick canopy and “shade” the ground below and collect organic material. The cool, moist environment created will not allow enough evaporation and soil oxygen exchange for the onsite system to function optimally, says Clemson's Cooperative Extension.

The website *gardenknowhow.com* suggests plants like butterfly weed, sedum, daffodils, hyacinth, and black eyed susan as good plant choices.

One thing to be avoided several sources say, is any food plants. Nothing is considered safe to eat harvested above a septic field. Although according to Virginia Cooperative Extension, there is a lot of variability in soils' ability to filter bacteria and viruses, adding that clay soils work best and can eliminate bacteria within a few inches of trenches. But they add that sandy soils can allow bacteria movement several feet. Because of the potential risks, avoid vegetable gardens but fruiting gardens might be safe if fruits are kept above the ground. Thoroughly wash any fruit harvested before eating.

Also, when working in with any plants, wear gloves.



Fruiting plants may be safe, but avoid vegetable gardens over onsite septic systems.

## Pet owners risk infection by not following food safety

Food handlers are usually careful about handling food consumed by others. But what about food handling practices when it comes to dogs or cats? According to a recent survey, not so much.

As reported by *PLOS ONE*, food handling and food dish hygiene practices can have adverse effects on the health of both the pets and their

humans. A recent study in North Carolina investigated dog owners' feeding habits and considered the FDA's hygiene protocols for contamination. The survey covered over 400 dog owners' feeding habits including swabbing of food dishes to test total aerobic plate counts (APC).

Most dog owners do not wash hands properly after

handling foods, and fewer yet knew about pet food safety. Most were not aware FDA food safety guidelines even existed. Not surprisingly, bacteria counts were lower when owners followed food safety guidelines.

Do as you would with human food - wash, rinse, sanitize dishes regularly, and handle pet food with a suitable utensil.



Pet owners often pay little attention to their pet's food or bowl.

## Could a future NEHA conference come to Indy?

In 2017, IEHA member and past president JoAnn Mercado proposed to the NEHA Board that it consider Indianapolis for a future convention. She says nothing came from her letter.

But while attending this year's convention in Spokane, Washington, as a presenter, JoAnn hoped for the opportunity to talk to Dr. David Dyjack, Execu-

tive Director and Chief Executive Officer at NEHA about the chance for hosting the 2024 convention, for which a location has not been chosen. New Orleans is the site next year. JoAnn believes NEHA takes care of most of the planning along with IEHA. The IEHA Executive Board will discuss how best to pursue the hosting opportunity.

**“New Orleans is convention site for 2023, but the spots for 2024 and 2025 have not been chosen. Could Indianapolis be host?”**

## IEHA member's presentation popular at NEHA

Long time member and past president of IEHA got a warm reception to her presentation at the recent national conference of the National Environmental Health Association in Spokane, Washington.

JoAnn Mercado's development of her “Ethnic Tool Kit” got the attention of conference organizers, who asked her to

present it to a breakout session at this year's gathering. The tool kit is an extensive project designed to help food inspectors who are inexperienced in dealing with ethnic food items that may be found at certain restaurants.

Her presentation got the attention of several FDA representatives who suggested sharing it on the

national food safety website “FoodSHIELD”. JoAnn said that she never realized “how important or impactful” this would be until her work supervisor told her.

Her presentation was presented to the IEHA Food Protection Committee as a dress rehearsal and she plans to share it with FPC members and others interested.



## Coal still has major environmental impact worldwide



The Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) says that the approximately 400 coal-fired power plants in the country account for over 30 percent of the country's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuels. Plus there are soot particles, mercury, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides that are known to lead to serious health concerns.

EIP adds that there is also concern that the same plants cause pollution to waterways and poison fish. And despite the Clean Water and Clean Air Act, thousands of tons of pollutants are still released. Their concerns about pollution continue with the fact that coal power plants can create over 100 million tons of coal ash and waste sludge

each year, enough to fill a line of rail boxcars from the U.S. to Australia. Much of the untreated waste is dumped into ash ponds, many of which have leaked or overflowed into waterways.

EIP is strongly urging EPA to take stronger actions against polluters and for citizens to hold EPA accountable when it doesn't.

**“The training aimed at both new and experienced inspectors attracted over 120 IEHA members and guests to join.”**

## “Foods 102” training draws attendees from all over

Dubbed “Foods 102” mostly to distinguish it from the virtual and on-site training done in the past, the latest food safety training aimed for inspectors garnered over 120 attendees ranging from experienced to newbies. Presented by members of the Wabash

Valley Chapter, the virtual event included a sampling of topics like, “Rolling Retail Food Establishments”, “Things You Thought You Knew” and “Dealing With Pests, Critters, Not People”. Plus the team took time to answer questions and accept feedback from attendees and added a

“buffet” section to talk about a variety of food related items of interest to food inspectors.

Members of the Wabash Valley training team included, Jennifer Asbury, Claire Fuller, Lauren Hagen, Mackenzie Lovelace, Ed Norris, and Sharon Pattee.

## PFAS: the chemicals that won't go away



Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) are a group of manufactured chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products for years because of their unique properties. According to the U.S. EPA, they can also cause serious health problems in humans. And

there are thousands of them.

Although health concerns have led to the chemicals being replaced, they are known to break down very slowly and will build up in people, animals, and the environment. While there were no official standards for many years,

EPA has announced drinking water health advisories believing that the proposed safe limits for any PFAS chemicals should be updated.

Not only does drinking water have PFAS contaminants, chemicals were or also used in fire fighting foam and food packaging.

## How crowded is space? More than you'd guess

How many satellites are orbiting Earth on any given day?

Are there

- a. 500
- b. 1000
- c. 5,000
- d. over 7,500

If you said "d", you are correct.

According to space.com, more than 1,300 satellites were launched in 2020 alone, and another 1,400 went up in 2021. Upwards of 100,000 more satellites are planned for launch soon.

It's getting so crowded that orbiting objects are interfering with astronomy observations. Then there is the issue of all the space junk.

The thousands of pieces of space debris always pose a risk of colliding with an active satellite, or even the International Space Station. Even a small piece of junk

colliding with a satellite at high speed can cause a lot of damage, possibly disabling its electronics. The "vastness of space" around the planet is filling up.



## You've heard the ads for 5G. But what is that?

We hear ads continually about the latest smart phone with "5G". But how well do we understand what that means? First, 5G simply stands for "fifth generation" cellular technology. A 5G phone connects to one of the cellular networks that has the service. Note that this is not the same as the 5 GHz frequencies on a wi-fi router. One can think of bandwidth like a highway. The more lanes, the more traffic it can handle at one time. Using 5G is like the "highway" has ten lanes. This is ten times the capability of its predecessor, 4G. A 5G network can provide from about 50 megabits per second to more than a gigabit per second. In real terms,

a 5G connection can allow an entire high-definition movie to download in under a minute. But as 5G popularity grows, it will still be possible to use up the available bandwidth, meaning customers could still experience delays and slowdowns, even though over a million devices could be accommodated in a square kilometer area. Right now, coverage is spotty and is found only in dense population areas. A 5G signal travels a much shorter distance than 4G, meaning more cell sites will be needed. To reach its potential, 5G needs dedicated channels perhaps 50MHz or wider, or it's no faster than its predecessors. But the expected use of unused

satellite channels for 5G will hopefully solve this. But providers say 5G and its successors could be fast enough to make even wired internet connection obsolete.

But recent rollout of 5G has been slowed somewhat as competing carriers vie for spectrum to carry their signals. Many 5G signals are using frequencies once assigned to old satellite TV ground stations. Concerns have been raised that these channels are too close to frequencies used by airplane altimeters near US airports, potentially causing interference. But airports in other countries claim to have no interference issues.

(some info from *The Daily Beast*)

**"5G simply stands for fifth generation but signals travel a much shorter distance than 4G meaning more cell sites are needed."**



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*"The Mission of the Indiana Environmental Health Association, Inc. is to promote, preserve and protect environmental public health in the state of Indiana, and to encourage a spirit of cooperation among all environmental health stakeholders while serving its members in the regulatory, industry, and academic communities."*

## **More about IEHA**

The Indiana Environmental Health Association, Inc. (IEHA) was founded in 1951 as the Indiana Association of Sanitarians (IAS). There were 16 charter members. The name was officially changed to the Indiana Environmental Health Association in 1985. IEHA is affiliated with the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), and the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP).

IEHA is comprised of eight regional chapters. They are Central, East Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeastern, Southern, Wabash Valley, and West Central. There are four standing committees, which include Food Protection, General Environmental Health Services, Terrorism And All Hazards Preparedness, and Wastewater.

The operations of IEHA are governed by an Executive Board that meets regularly. The Board and various standing committees are made up of voting and non-voting members. Information plus meeting dates, times and locations for the chapters and standing committees may be found on the IEHA website listed on this page. All meetings are open to any member or guest but only "voting members" as defined may vote or hold an office.