Spring Conference April 18

The Ivy Tech Community College Culinary and Conference Center, 2820 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, is the selected site for the 2017 IEHA Annual Spring Conference. Conference chair JoAnn Xiong-Mercado found the second floor ballroom location to be ideal for this conference, with plenty of space and superior AV equipment.

Agenda

A wide variety of topics is slated with the agenda to be released pending confirmations from invited speakers. One of the highlights includes a “behind the scenes” look at three action plans at the Marion Co. Jail that include handling an influenza outbreak, a chemical spill, or hostage situation. Sessions on food salvage and food sampling are also set as well as information about mosquito-borne diseases. JoAnn says that student poster sessions will be included and, if there is interest, a tour of the culinary arts facility. Complete information will be posted at www.iehaind.org.

“The "Behind the Scenes” theme is to represent our line of work and what happens in areas that others do not normally get to see.”

- JoAnn Xiong-Mercado

(Continued on page 2)
From the IEHA President

Greetings,

On April 18, 2017, the IEHA Spring Conference will take place at Ivy Tech Culinary and Conference Center, 2820 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN. Vice President and Conference Chair JoAnn Xiong-Mercado has themed the day-long educational experience “Behind the Scenes.”

While I can’t say why JoAnn has themed the conference as such, the title did give me a moment of pause. That is, IEHA would not survive or thrive without the dedicated members, who so unselfishly give of themselves—behind the scenes—like JoAnn.

IEHA takes the plunge

Finally, if you didn’t know already, IEHA has taken the plunge into social media. As the saying goes, visit our website and check us out on Facebook.

See you at the 2017 Spring Conference!

Patty

Patty Nocek, REHS/RS, CP-FS

From the Ed Desk

If you know of news from your chapter, or just something of general interest to members, and you don’t see it, share it! You don’t have to write something, but just share a tip or point me in the right direction with some highlights, and I can take if from there.

Chapter news is especially welcome, but unless I know about it, I can’t write about it. Contact info is on the back page.

Registration

Fees for registration are unchanged from last year - $55.00 for members, $65.00 for non-members - until April 4. Registrations after April 4 will see a fee $5.00 higher. Parking is free and available next to the conference site. See the IEHA website for more information.
Special one day rate

NEHA AEC attendees from neighboring states to the conference site, Michigan, are being offered a one day registration fee for Tuesday.

The special rate is found by starting the conference registration process, then clicking one day options (instead of the entire conference). A discounted fee of $195 for Tuesday may be chosen. It provides a chance for those possibly within driving distance of Grand Rapids to experience a small sampling of the NEHA AEC.

NEHA conference close to Ind.

The Annual Educational Conference (AEC) sponsored by the National Environmental Health Association will be in Grand Rapids, Michigan, July 10 through 13. That means it’s close enough that IEHA members will have the opportunity to attend. Pre-conference activities are slated for July 9, including a workshop for affiliates’ officers.

AEC is worth the trip
Q. What can attendees expect?
A. The NEHA website describes the AEC as “much more than a conference. It is the nexus for environmental health training, education, networking, and advancement.” It offers “practical and real-world” information and attendees leave more trained, motivated, inspired and empowered. Continuing education credits are offered, plus there are opportunities to test for certifications.

Q. Where can I find registration information, agenda, etc.?
A. Check the website at www.neha.org, then click the link at the top of the page for the AEC. There’s the button to click for registration. There is also a link to make hotel reservations.

Q. What are the registration fees?
A. The fee to attend the entire four-day conference (plus hotel) is $595 for NEHA members and $770 for non-members. There is the option to join NEHA during registration and save the difference. One day registrations

(Continued on page 4)
(Continued from page 3)

are also offered. See more about that choice in the sidebar on page 3.

**Q. How about some of the announced highlights?**
A. The NEHA website conference announcement promises sessions that will "engage, enlighten and strengthen your environmental knowledge." Some topics include the Opening Session: Aiming for Equity, The Great Restaurant Grading Debate, Emerging Issues with Wild Foraged Mushrooms, and a special panel to discuss Antibiotic Resistance.

The AEC awards will also be an important part of the conference. They include Joe Beck Educational Contribution Award, Walter S. Mangold Award, and Affiliate Certificates of Merit. IEHA is an affiliate.

**Q. Where can I find the latest information?**
A. NEHA says information is constantly being updated, so to find the latest, check the conference website http://neha.org/news-events/community-calendar/neha-2017-aec-grand-rapids The website allows you register for one or all days, get more information about the location, and sign up for email alerts.

Now is the time to register and secure accommodations.

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**REHS exam opportunity**

For IEHA members looking to qualify for the Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) credential, an opportunity to do so may be offered at the start of the IEHA Annual Fall Educational Conference.

The NEHA certified exam may be available Sunday, September 24 at the conference site in Lawrenceburg if there is enough interest. The application and exam fees are $265 for NEHA members and $450 for non-members.

If interested, contact IEHA Treasurer Gretchen Quirk at 317 221 2281 or gquirk@marionhealth.org.

Do this before March 31. Ten people have to sign up.

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**TAHP trainings planned**

The Terrorism and All Hazards Preparedness committee has these 2017 trainings planned:

June 2, “Bombing Prevention Awareness,”

June 26, “Radiation Awareness Training,”

November 14, 15, “Managing Food Emergencies; Strategies for a Community Response.”

All are in the Brown Co. Annex Building in Nashville. Contact Jennifer Rugenstein for info.
Bison return to north Indiana

Two hundred years ago, bison roamed across Indiana and were an important part of grassland ecosystems. Bison ate grasses, which allowed wild flowers to flourish. According to the Nature Conservancy, behind a restoration project known as Kankakee Sands Preserve, barely 1% of the original inland marsh remains that stretched along the Kankakee River. The nearly one million acres of swamps, savannas, prairies, and forests, known as the Grand Kankakee Marsh, were slowly drained in the 1800s to use the land for development. Early settlers drastically changed the environment.

In an effort to restore a small part of the original land, Nature Conservancy was able to purchase 7,200 acres of land in Newton Co., which borders on Illinois, with the hope or preserving what wildlife remained and returning the land to its original state. Active efforts began nearly 20 years ago with the planting of native grasses and wildflowers and has continued each year since. The entire project is called Kankakee Sands, and now boasts over 600 native plants.

This past October, 23 bison were introduced to Kankakee Sands and will roam freely over more than 1,000 acres. Nature Conservancy has provided a visitor viewing area accessed from US 41 that will allow visitors to observe bison. Land steward Tony Capizzo, says, “We will be able to see the impacts bison have on the prairie habitat.” He said the bison seemed right at home within a short time of being introduced to the area.

Wabash Valley chapter members have been following the restoration project closely, and plan a meeting there this year.

The Nature Conservancy is a global organization dedicated to conserving all lands and waters on which all life depends, according to its website.
Southern Chapter tours
“Mother’s Cupboard”

The Southern Chapter recently toured Mother’s Cupboard Food Bank/ Soup Kitchen, located at the County Fairgrounds in Nashville, Indiana.

Mother’s Cupboard serves about 140 hot meals a day to anyone who shows up and needs a meal. No proof of identity or residency is required.

Volunteers staff the kitchen and prepare food daily except Thanksgiving. Sherry said several food drives bring in product and they have food provided through some federally funded programs.

Members learned that having school children bring in packaged food from a food drive is beneficial in many ways as it does bring in food but also gives the children the early mindset of community. Adults and many high school students volunteer, either as a community service requirement or through church-related volunteerism. She feels these children also benefit by gaining a true sense of the many populations of the County needing food assistance that are served by the food bank.

Food from many sources

The food bank can receive food from area restaurants, grocery stores and other alternatives. If a donated food item is fairly small, like a half pan of corn, it can be divided into containers, and offered as an item that can be chosen from the cooler for someone using the food bank option. Some food donations are reserved that can be used for cooking meals. A pantry is well stocked with various items such as canned tuna, but it can be used to supplement the food bank if it gets low.

There is a “backpack project” in town and some of the backpack project food is stored at Mother’s Cupboard, mostly the perishables. Children who submit a form get a backpack of food on Fridays that help get their families through the weekend. Sherry also has a raffle at Thanksgiving where they give out 12 turkey dinners that have been donated by a local resident. Volunteers on site said winners are thrilled and delighted when called.

More information on Mother’s Cupboard can be found at the website; www.facebook.com/Mothers-Cupboard-Community-Kitchen

(contributed by Jennifer Rugenstein)
IEHA to make hosting offer

With the approval of the IEHA Executive Board, incoming Vice President JoAnn Xiong-Mercado, has made a written proposal to the Board of Directors of NEHA that Indianapolis be the host city for its Annual Educational Conference in 2021. In the letter, JoAnn cites the success of hosting major events in the past, like the Conference for Food Protection, International Association for Food Protection, and the Superbowl.

JoAnn also cited many of the nearby downtown attractions, and the ease of getting around with the overhead walkways.

2017 Meetings set for TAHP

Chair Jennifer Rugenstein of the Terrorism and All Hazards Preparedness committee says meetings will continue to be in the Yoho Board Room (ISDH 3rd floor meeting room). These dates are set - March 9, June 8, August 10, and November 9. Meetings are at 9:30 AM.

Contact Jennifer for details, or to be added to the email list.

TAHP committee hosts training

Nearly two dozen attendees involved in emergency response learned how to respond to possible biological weapons and the many facets of an attack. The training, “Emergency Response to Domestic Biological Incidents,” was sponsored by IEHA’s Terrorism and All Hazards Preparedness Committee (TAHP).

Training modules included Emerging Threats, Surveillance and Detection, Biological Agents, Production and Dissemination Considerations, Response to a Biological Incident, Transitioning to Recovery. This was followed with a tabletop exercise.

Participants included Local and State Health Departments, Law Enforcement, Fire Departments, and IU security personnel. The interaction and experiences of the participants added greatly to the overall success of the course.

TAHP provided light refreshments throughout the two-day course and signed up several more members for the committee. Flyers were very visible explaining and promoting IEHA and the TAHP Committee.

More trainings are planned in 2017. Chair Jennifer Rugenstein invites any IEHA member to join the committee, which meets quarterly and includes a call-in number.

(Contributed by Jennifer Rugenstein)
Mystery meat prompts warning

The Brown Co. Health Dept. is taking steps to protect its citizens after discovering unlicensed raw meat vendors peddling product within the county’s borders without obtaining the necessary permit.

While the problem is not unique to Brown Co., Environmental Health Specialist Jennifer Rugenstein said the department has issued a warning via a local newspaper, the Brown County Democrat, and this caught the attention of Food Safety News. The warning advises consumers not to purchase product from such vendors and outlines the risks associated with such purchases, such as the product may not be fresh, possibly discarded by another vendor, and might contain one or more of several strains of pathogenic bacteria. Such meat products might have been repackaged and frozen. The warning asks readers to call the health department or law enforcement if illegal meat sales are spotted. Jennifer says the problem is ongoing and they once found recalled meat being sold.

Legitimate vendors will have permits

Brown Co. health officials warn that all vendors will have a printed license on hand and advises citizens who are approached to ask to see it. The published advisory says that if a license or permit can’t be provided, don’t buy from the vendor. (Editor’s note: Permits are issued by each county. There are no “state” permits!)

Legitimate vendors will be honest

Besides a valid permit, proper vendors will have identifying information about who they are and where they are from. There will be identifying information on the vehicle, like name, address, and phone number.

USDA’s FSIS guidance

Meat sales from questionable vendors is not a problem unique to Indiana. The USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) offers these suggestions when encountering a mobile meat vendor.

ASK for literature or a brochure, and read it. Reputable companies have contact information and a price list.

READ labels on packages. Find out where the meat was inspected. There must be an inspection mark.

CHECK for grading information. Companies can choose to have USDA grade the product, an indicator of quality. Company added grades like “restaurant quality” mean nothing.

UNDERSTAND the meat cuts and what the vendor is selling. Vendors may be counting on customers not knowing the difference in value of various cuts of meat.

ALWAYS check to assure meat products have been transported under refrigeration. Mechanical refrigeration is preferred.

Finally, the Federal Trade Commission Cooling-Off Rule allows 3 days to cancel a purchase value over $25 for sales made at a home, away from the seller’s permanent place of business. Sellers are to inform customers of this right.
Executive Board changes meetings

IEHA President Patty Nocek believes that the Executive Board can operate more effectively with fewer monthly meetings. In past years, the Board has met ten times yearly, not officially meeting during April or September, when annual conferences are held.

Patty has noticed that it has been difficult to achieve a quorum of voting members, and by reducing the meeting numbers, more members will be able to attend. She has also elected to move meetings to the second Thursday of meeting months, away from the usual third Friday, in an effort to reduce on-going conflicts for some Board members.

Voting members of the Executive Board consists of officers and chapter representatives, but includes liaisons to various other agencies in non-voting roles.

After having met in January, the Executive Board will meet in March, June, August, November and December.

H7N9 avian flu persists

The CDC is reporting that China is seeing some of the worst Avian influenza outbreaks in years, and it shows no signs of slowing. First reported in 2013, annual epidemics of sporadic human infections have been reported since. CDC says that like other viruses, avian influenza A circulates at higher levels in cold weather and less in warm weather. China is currently facing its fifth epidemic of human infections from H7N9. As of February, the World Health Organization says 424 human infections with H7N9 virus have been reported during this latest epidemic.

The CDC says human infections mostly occur after direct contact with infected poultry, with the most common symptoms reported as severe respiratory illness (like pneumonia). About 40% of the patients have died. Only rare instances of person-to-person spread of the virus have been documented in China. These have been limited cases, and there has not been any sustained person-to-person spread of the disease.

What is the risk here?

The CDC says it is concerned about the pandemic potential of H7N9. This is partly because such viruses tend to change, and therefore the possibility exists for it to be more easily spread among people. It is possible that it could spread to China’s neighbors, or could be transmitted by persons traveling from China to other countries farther away.

But as long as the situation remains stable, there’s little concern.
Food date labels could change

Conscious of the fact that consumers are still confused by exactly what the date labels on manufactured food products really mean when it comes to food safety, two industry trade groups have teamed up to offer a simplified solution.

Food Marketing Institute and Grocery Manufacturers Association said in a joint statement that with as many as ten ways to designate food dates, food that is otherwise safe is being wasted. Now consumers see “best by,” “sell by,” “best if used by,” “better if used by,” or even “expires.” There are no laws governing the use of dates, but rather industry sets its own standards, most of which reflect quality (color, taste, texture, or freshness) and not safety. Some dates are intended for inventory control, that is, telling a store owner its time to rotate stock.

Out of many, two

According to a joint statement, the new voluntary initiative streamlines the myriad date labels on consumer product packaging down to just two standard phrases. “BEST If Used By” describes product quality, where the product may not taste or perform as expected but is safe to use or consume. “USE By” applies to the few products that are highly perishable and/or have a food safety concern over time; these products should be consumed by the date listed on the package – and disposed of after that date.

These still remain voluntarily guidelines but the trade groups recommend implementation by 2018. Inspectors should keep in mind that this changes nothing with regard to citing date mark violations.

IEHA is on Facebook

IEHA President Patty Nocek is pursuing a plan to give IEHA a Facebook presence. Patty believes that a business page will give IEHA suitable social media exposure.

The Executive Board recently voiced its approval, but agreed that there needs to be clarity as to who is allowed to post, and what may be posted. It was agreed that some “policing” will be necessary, and any posting will be reviewed first.

All chapters will be encouraged to contribute and links may be possible for those chapters that already are active on line. The IEHA web page will have a link allowing members to see the IEHA’s Facebook content without logging in.

GEHS meetings set for year

General Environmental Health Services committee chair Ellie Hansotte, says the GEHS committee will see if monthly meetings are desirable, but at this point, these meeting dates are set. March 8, May 10, June 14, August 9, September 13, October 11, and November 8.

All meetings begin at 11 AM at the IDEM conference room 2525 N. Shadeland Ave., in Indianapolis. Contact Ellie for more information.
FPC sets meeting dates

Co-chairs Lisa Chandler and Jennifer Asbury have announced the meeting schedule for the Food Protection Committee.

The dates are March 23, June 29, August 31, and November 30. All meetings start at 10:00 AM and run until about noon. The location is the Conference Room at IDEM, 2525 N. Shadeland Ave, Indianapolis. A conference call-in line is usually available and is announced with the meeting reminders.

To be added to the email list or for more information, contact one of the co-chairs.

Wastewater Management meetings

The Wastewater Management Committee has announced meeting dates for the remainder of 2017. They are March 9, May 11, June 8, August 10, and November 9.

Meetings are held in the IDEM conference room as mentioned above and begin at 1:00 PM and last about two hours. Alice Quinn is committee chair. Contact her to get meeting information.

Support sustaining members

Here are the sustaining members that support IEHA in 2017. Check out their websites, and give them your business.

- A&R Wastewater Management - www.arwwm.com
- Crisis Cleaning – www.crisiscleaning.com
- DonLevy Laboratories
- ECC Horizon
- Indiana Restaurant & Lodging Association – www.inrla.org
- Infiltrator Water Technologies – www.Infiltratorwater.com
- La Porte County Convention & Visitor Bureau – www.michigancitylaporte.com/
- Meijer – www.meijer.com
- NIPSCO – www.nisource.com
- Watermark Engineered Product Sales
- WDD Software – www.wddsoftware.com
IEHA Officers
President: Patty Nocek
President Elect: Jason Ravenscroft
Vice President: JoAnn Xiong-Mercado
Past President: Mike Sutton
Secretary: Kelli Whiting
Treasurer: Gretchen Quirk
Auditors: Tara Renner, Jennifer Warner
Executive Board Secretary: Tami Barrett
Journal Editor / Publisher: Ed Norris
IEHA Severe Weather Observer: I. C. Rhodes

IEHA is an Indiana not for profit organization in existence since 1951.

The Mission of the Indiana Environmental Health Association 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 (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, South-eastern, 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 voting privileges and active participation are limited to voting members only.

Find us on the Internet!
www.iehaind.org