From the President’s desk

After attending the National Environmental Health Association’s 2011 Annual Education Conference in Columbus Ohio, I have a better appreciation and perspective of how NEHA strives to enhance and grow our profession. Nelson Fabian, Executive Director was generous in providing his experiences and wisdom in operating and sustaining a state level environmental health affiliate organization. One suggestion Mr. Fabian put forth that IEHA may want to consider implementing in the future involves sharing one conference facility or location with a related professional organization promoting environmental health education. Several benefits from this arrangement come to mind: improved networking and sharing of knowledge among the organizations, potential new members to IEHA, and potential discounts in terms of facility and conference costs. Speaking of educational conferences, IEHA’s 61st annual Fall Educational Conference is scheduled for September 19-21 2011 at the Potawatomi Inn in Pokagon State Park. I am looking forward to seeing everybody in September, until then have a safe and enjoyable summer.

Adam

From the editor

Inside this Journal you will find an invitation to submit an idea for a mission statement for IEHA. An inquiry by a member led to the discovery that IEHA apparently doesn’t have one.

That is but one way a member might contribute to his association. Other ways include attending meetings, conferences, and serving on committees. Each member can decide his or her own level of involvement.

A significant way to contribute is to submit something to the Journal! Not a writer? Then highlights or bullet points will do. It’s your ideas that are important. Contact info is on the back.

Ed
IEHA’s Spring Educational Conference, held April 13 in Greenwood, appeared a hit with attendees, with speakers and panels covering topics from earthquake preparedness to handling temporary food vendors at large special events.

Over a hundred public health enthusiasts listened to discussions ranging from mold remediation to what kind of members make an effective health board.

The conference was headed by Travis Goodman with the assistance of Christine Stinson.

“Effective health boards start with the right people who know their jobs, are committed to goals, and work as a team.” Janet Ayres, Purdue Professor talking on the topic of motivating and building effective boards.

“All mold is able to solicit a negative health response, so it doesn’t matter what kind it is.” Bill Bruner from Advantaclean, talking about mold removal.

“Our goal is to serve safe food - not just that it is safe, but that it gets served.” Larry Stringer, FDA, speaking about vendors serving food at major national events.

“Those who didn’t attend the Spring Conference missed a great conference with an effective variety of speakers and topics.” Ed Norris, interim Journal editor.
REHS reinstatement on hold

Efforts by several IEHA members to have the Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) credential reinstated by the Indiana Legislature have fallen short this legislative session.

The effort, spearheaded by John Hulewicz of the Elkhart County Health Dept., had the full support of the IEHA Executive Board and was intended to reverse a legislative move last year to eliminate the REHS as a supposed cost-saving move.

The group had consulted with several legislators in hopes of gaining their support, and to educate them on what the REHS is and what the credential means.

The best hope of achieving the reinstatement was to find a suitable bill to which an amendment could be attached.

The problem, John says, was that no suitable bill could be found. The amendment has to have some relationship to the bill to which it is attached, and there were none during this session.

Tracking Hoosier onsite systems

A new software program developed in part by the Indiana State Department of Health’s Environmental Public Health Division has gained national attention.

A recent issue of Coastal Services, put out by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), discussed how the software program is able to track on-site sewage disposal systems, often a point source cause of pollution of Lake Michigan waters. Indiana’s network for Tracking of Onsite Sewage Systems (iTOSS) tool creates a centralized database that county health officials can use to document septic system information, such as location, soil and system type, permit, and permit violations.

The Coastal Zone Management Act, administered by NOAA’s Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, provides for management of the nation's coastal resources, including the Great Lakes. The Lake Michigan Coastal Program of the state of Indiana is part of that effort.

Program Director Mike Molnar says iTOSS could be used by other coastal states as a template.

“Prior to iTOSS, there was no single state database to track those systems, and the majority of county health departments used paper records,” he says.

Work on the database began in 2007 when

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IEHA displays at PH Conference

The Indiana Environmental Health Association (IEHA) was prominent at the recent Public Health Week Conference held in April at the IU-PUI campus. The conference was sponsored by the Indiana Public Health Training Center (IPHTC) and was held during National Public Health Week.

IEHA member volunteers manned an information booth during the conference and had the opportunity to present the positive aspects of IEHA to many prospective members among the conference attendees.

IPHTC Director Kate Nicholson reports that around 370 attended the conference, which included more than fifty breakout sessions. This was the 4th annual conference.

What’s the IEHA Mission?

That’s a good question, and research into the matter has shown that IEHA apparently has never had one!

A member may become part of the IEHA folklore by submitting a “mission statement” proposal to the IEHA Executive Board by the July 15th award application deadline.

Send your ideas to Tami Barrett, Executive Board Secretary. Contact information is on the back page of each Journal or may be found on the web site at www.iehaind.org.

The winner will win a paid one year membership in IEHA.
Tracking systems (continued)

ISDH convened a committee of state and county health department staff to determine what a statewide database should do. Mike Mettler, director of the Environmental Public Health Division of the Indiana State Department of Health, says one advantage of the system is that counties don’t have to buy or maintain any software. “It’s Internet based so they just log into the system,” he says.

At this point, 12 counties have begun using the system, which was completed in 2010, including two of the three coastal counties bordering Lake Michigan.

Colin Highlands, non-point source coordinator for the Lake Michigan Coastal Program, says, “Any county that is still using paper records would benefit from this database. Paper records are an impediment for setting ordinances on the operation, on-site inspection, and maintenance of septic systems.”

Mettler adds that two other states have asked for demonstrations of the software program.

New FDA Division will help states

The newly formed Division of Federal State Relations (DFSR) is expected to make the jobs of state health departments a little easier.

DFSR is one of five work units within the Office of Regional Operations, Office of Regulatory Affairs, Food and Drug Administration, and serves as the primary agency contact for state and local entities and stakeholders.

DFSR is composed of three branches: Contracts and Grants, Development and Integration, and Public Affairs and Information.

Each year, DFSR sponsors grants and cooperative agreement programs that can provide state agencies opportunities to improve existing programs or develop new programs in areas of food safety and defense. The division also oversees contract programs that benefit states with technical training, information about federal requirements, and uniform enforcement. The focus is to create positive working relationships with states.

Development and Integration has worked with selected state program managers to develop a guide for improving state food manufacturing programs. States may opt to implement these Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards (MFRPS) with DFSR assistance.

“DFSR sponsors grants and cooperative agreements that can provide state agencies opportunities to develop or improve food safety and defense programs.”

Public Affairs and

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Safety first, call!

Beneath our state is an infrastructure of pipelines, wires and cables that make essential services work for all Hoosiers. Striking a utility line while digging can cause harm to you, your crew or the surrounding community, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood and potentially result in fines and repair costs. “Indiana 811” is a free, non-profit safety service dedicated to protecting the citizens of Indiana from underground utility damage. If you plan to dig, you must call 811 at least two full working days before every digging project, large or small, professional, or do-it-yourself.

Ten underground lines are damaged during excavation every day across Indiana, and one out of every three incidents is the result of not calling 811. Don’t become part of the statistic. Call 811 before you dig!

Chuck Muller, contributed by Denise Wright

State Egg Board regulates eggs

Mark Straw of the Indiana State Egg Board says there are about 5,000 egg retailers and 500 egg producers serving farmers markets in Indiana. He says this may be just the tip of the iceberg and a monumental task for three state inspectors.

Straw spoke to attendees at a recent Food Protection Committee meeting. He said they can use the assistance of local health department inspectors to report issues. They will respond to questions and complaints, he added.

While most eggs are from huge operations, many of the smaller egg retailers to report issues. They will respond to questions and complaints, he added.

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New FDA division (continued)

Information is the branch intended to keep stakeholders informed and coordinates communications with the federal agency. It can also be used to provide emergency emails and alerts to stakeholders.

Since January 2010, the DFSR staff more than doubled from 11 to 25 full-time employees. Over $18 million in grants and cooperative agreements have been awarded, and state contracts valued at more than $23.2 million have been given out.

Efforts are ongoing to strengthen the outreach of the Public Affairs and Information Branch, and state coordination.

(Thanks to Travis Goodman and DFSR website)
Eggs (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

producers will offer eggs for sale at area farmers markets. This is fine as long as certain requirements are met.

Although eggs may be sold without restriction from the farm housing the chickens, eggs sold away from the farm must be licensed and inspected by the State Egg Board.

Straw reiterated that only chicken eggs are regulated, not duck, turkey or quail. Also flocks with fewer than 3,000 birds are exempt.

Eggs sold at farmers markets must be labeled with grade, size, and safe handling instructions.

Cartons must also be date marked with the packing date and expiration date, generally 30 days later.

Eggs must have temperature control: 45°F in transit, and 41°F or below when stored. The Retail Food Code applies for egg sellers.

Straw said that egg cartons may be re-used providing all existing labeling is covered with new information.

Members making news

Alan Dunn, Environmental Public Health Division at ISDH, has been given the L. A. Brown Volunteer of the Year Award by the Indiana On-Site Wastewater Professional Association (IOWPA). Alan was recognized for his hours spent working with the IOWPA Board to provide training, assist with the certification program, and help write examinations. The award was given at the groups annual conference last January, and is named after Lewis Brown, an installer from Wells County.

Loren Robertson, ISDH Deputy Commissioner, has left ISDH. Loren has accepted a position with the Public Safety Academy of Northeast Indiana in Fort Wayne. The Academy is a regional facility that utilizes state of the art training and education for first responders and future public safety leaders, both on-site and with distance learning throughout 12 northeastern Indiana counties.

Robertson’s last day at ISDH was May 20th following a six year tenure as an Assistant Commissioner then the Deputy Commissioner.

Some information provided by Denise Wright

“Eggs sold at farmers markets must be properly labeled and held under temperature control.”
A recent study by NSF International has led to some surprises about where the most germs reside in one’s home. The study, “Germiest Places in the Home 2011” attempted to identify germ “hot spots” by measuring levels of yeast, mold, coliform bacteria including E. coli and Salmonella, and staph. NSF conducted swab analysis of 30 household items in 22 different homes.

While people often believe that the bathroom would have the most germs, the survey results showed that the “germiest” location is the kitchen, with the kitchen sponge leading the list, something often used for cleaning dishes and countertops.

“Sponges pick up bacteria during cleaning and are typically not properly sanitized before their next use,” explained Dr. Rob Donofrio, Director of Microbiology at NSF and lead researcher in the study. He added that sponges are often left damp, and contain many nooks and crannies for germs to multiply.

Here are the top ten locations for germs.

1. Dish sponge / rag
2. Kitchen sink
3. Toothbrush holder
4. Pet bowl
5. Coffee maker reservoir
6. Bathroom faucet handles
7. Pet toys
8. Kitchen countertops
9. Stove knobs
10. Cutting boards

While the study showed where germs are more likely to be found, Dr. Donofrio points out that it is important to remember that germs are everywhere. He says the key is to be smart about bacteria and be aware of the hot spots.

“Be smart about protecting yourselves,” he concludes.

Before conducting the study, NSF asked a volunteer from each home being surveyed what they believed the results would be. The majority said “toothbrush holder” followed by “dish rags” and “money.”
Mega Fusion visits conference

If you thought conference attendees were getting younger, your eyes were not fooling you. Three Clay Middle School students attended Spring Conference on a fact finding mission for their First Lego League (FLL) team “Mega Fusion.” FLL is a non-profit organization that uses robots, research, cooperative competition plus team work to facilitate the learning of programming, problem solving, and management of challenging tasks.

The all girl team was organized by Kamna Gupta in 2010 as a part of her Girl Scout Silver project. She wanted to find fun and innovative ways to introduce girls to the field of science. Joining Gupta on the team were Alex Isler, and Elyse Ackerman.

Conference giveaway items sought

President Elect Josh Williams has issued this reminder to all IEHA chapters that now is the time to plan for each chapter’s giveaways.

Each chapter should contribute a door prize, such as gift cards, business articles, or food.

Items for the silent auction are also requested. These may be from chapters or individuals. Proceeds from silent auctions in the past have been dedicated to the scholarship fund.

Josh adds, “Each Chapter should try to provide at least one promotional item to be inserted in the conference attendee bags. "Small advertising items that have been provided in the past include: hats, rulers, pens, flashlights, candy, cups, and similar items,” he says. About 250 items are needed for the bags.

Bring all articles to the conference by Sunday evening when the Executive Board meets.

By the numbers

- **267** - number of current members
- **21** - new members included in the above
- **12** - number of sustaining members
- **6,900,000,000** - number of people living on earth
- **3** - number of people living in space (NASA)
Mega Fusion (continued)

(Continued from page 9)

Ackerman.

Too often, pre-teens are not interested in math and science or do not understand how this knowledge is of value to them. Add to this the fact that most school curricula do not include real life practical activities or problem solving challenges where students have opportunities to apply learned concepts and generate new ideas.

First Lego League sets the topic for all the teams across the country. This year’s topic is Food Safety. Once the team identifies a problem through literary research, industry professionals, academia, and site surveys, the teams must create a hypothesis on how robotics can possibly address the chosen problem. From there they will create table top, PowerPoint, and panel presentations for judging. And do not forget the fun of building and programming the robot for competition.

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New PLAN will reach citizens

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chairman, Julius Genachowski, says current communications technology has the potential to revolutionize emergency response and save lives.

He commented recently in New York, adding that one shortcoming exposed during the 9/11 attacks was that authorities didn’t have the capability to send alerts and instructions to individuals via their mobile devices.

That, he says, is changing with the introduction of the Personal Localized Alerting Network or PLAN. PLAN will allow government officials to send text alerts to people in a specific geographic area.

New York City will be rolling out PLAN before the end of the year, thanks in part to a public-private collaboration between the city, the FCC, FEMA, and several wireless carriers.

By April, 2012, it will be deployed in cities across the country using cell phone providers including AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, Verizon, and USCellular, plus some smaller wireless carriers.

The new tool is meant to supplement broadcast and cable providers by reaching people on their personal devices. Since alerts can be geographically targeted, they will reach the right people at the right time with the right messages, Genachowski says. He adds that PLAN could make a tremendous difference during disasters like the recent tornado outbreaks where minutes, or even seconds, of extra warning could be the difference between life and death.

Ed Norris
Mega Fusion (continued)

(Continued from page 10)

Participating in Spring Conference allowed the girls to meet many industry and regulatory professionals who offered invaluable suggestions about their project. They have extended their appreciation to IEHA for being able to attend, and to those who talked with them.

The team has competed in regional and state tournaments placing in the top 25 percent. They also garnered a first place in team spirit and a second place in teamwork.

The girls are still working on their hypothesis until mid-August and are still open for more suggestions or discussions. Please contact Melissa Ackerman at dangerzone41-140@prodigy.net.

Melissa Ackerman, REHS, CP-FS

Env. Health Response Team formed

The first Indiana Environmental Health Response Team (IN-EHRT) held its first meeting on June 16th to introduce the twenty one new members. Team members consist of both state and local environmental health professionals with experience in nearly all aspects of environmental health. Establishing the team was a long process that will continue as the team works toward completing additional organizational documentation and training. The projected date to have an Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) recognized and fully deployable team is in 2012. ISDH will be the coordinating agency between IN-EHRT and IDHS for deployments. IN-EHRT will continue working with IEHA’s All Hazards Preparedness subcommittee to promote and encourage environmental health specialists wanting to participate to get the necessary training. Team information is expected to be posted on both the IEHA and ISDH web sites.

Dwayne Caldwell, Vanderburgh Co. Health Dept., and Jason LeMaster, Hamilton Co. Health Dept. were chosen as team leaders and have expressed their thanks to all who assisted in making the response team a reality and expect that the team will quickly prove its value when called to action.

Jason LeMaster, REHS
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 of Food Protection (IAFP).

IEHA is comprised of eight regional chapters. They are Central, East Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, 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 monthly. 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 are limited to voting members.