



NEHA 2023 AEC

Wrap-Up

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Raising the Voice of the Environmental Health Workforce

The National Environmental Health Association's (NEHA) 86th Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition continued our longstanding tradition of providing innovative content to meet the varying needs of attendees with in-person and virtual options. The theme for the 2023 AEC was, "Raising the Voice of the Environmental Health Workforce," with the goal of coming together as a profession. That is exactly what happened July 31–August 3 in vibrant New Orleans, Louisiana, and virtually. Over 1,300 environmental health professionals participated in the AEC, with nearly 1,200 gathering in New Orleans and 150 engaging virtually. Attendees gathered to share best practices, innovations, solutions, and research to amplify the voice of our often-unseen profession.

Dr. Maureen Lichtveld, dean of the School of Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh, opened up the conference on Monday, July 31, with an impactful presentation on the integral role of environmental health in multiple facets of public health and health systems. Dr. Lichtveld addressed some of the biggest concerns in public health today and the role environmental health professionals must play in raising awareness and increasing knowledge to create impactful solutions. She closed out her presentation with a call to action for environmental health professionals to work together with various partners to use data and research to create meaningful changes in our communities.

The second day of the conference on Tuesday, August 1, began with the first Grand Educational Session Kickoff—A Rodent Symposium: Effective Communications, Control Practices, and Utilizing Resources. The session was led by Dr. Claudia Riegel, director of the City of New Orleans Mosquito, Termite, and Rodent Control Board. Dr. Riegel



stressed the importance of breaking down silos between departments and organizations to improve cooperation and generate new ideas.

During the lunch hour, Dr. Umair Shah, secretary of health for the Washington State Board of Health, joined Dr. David Dyjack, our executive director, for the first Sound Check—An Honest Discussion on the Environmental Health Workforce and Leadership During Times of Change. The second day of the conference ended with Lt. General Russel L. Honoré, U.S. Army (Ret.), who delivered a powerful and engaging keynote address on leadership. He spoke candidly with attendees about effective leadership and communication, particularly during emergencies.

Day three of the conference on Wednesday, August 2, began with the second Grand Educational Session Kickoff—The Conundrum of Food Safety Culture: Breaking Through Barriers to Drive Improvement. Dr. Dyjack moderated the panel discussion on the food safety culture in the private sector with executive leadership from Chick-fil-A, McDonald's, and Topgolf. During the lunch hour, Dr. Darin Detwiler, a professor at Northeastern University, led an emotional conversation about his 30-year journey of educating and advocating for food safety after the devastating loss of his young son, Riley. This journey is featured in the Netflix documentary, *Poisoned: The Dirty Truth About Your Food*.

Finally, the 2023 AEC came to an end on Thursday, August 3, with an excit-

ing presentation from Frank Yiannas, founder of FY Smarter Solutions and prior deputy commissioner of Food Safety and Response at the Food and Drug Administration. The presentation focused on creating a safer, smarter, and more transparent food system.

Over 250 educational sessions, pre-conference workshops, and meetings were held at the 2023 AEC. Of these events, over 80 were available to the virtual audience. More than 350 speakers shared their expertise to full rooms and virtual attendees throughout the conference. The Exhibit Hall was filled with exhibitors from various industries or organizations who showcased their innovative products and services designed to improve the job functions and performance of environmental health professionals.

During a time when many organizations have moved away from offering virtual conference options, we made the decision to continue the hybrid conference format. This format enables attendees with budget, travel, or staffing limitations the option to participate virtually. In total, 150 attendees participated virtually from 35 different states. Each virtual attendee was able to view live streamed sessions and network in real time within the virtual platform.

The Raising Your Voice Networking Event proved to be a highlight for many in-person attendees with live music, local tarot card readings, Mardi Gras characters, and Cajun cuisine. The event brought together 800 attendees who reconnected with old friends and made new connections.

We thank our attendees, members, board, technical advisors, presenters, exhibitors, sponsors, and staff who participated and contributed to the success of the 2023 AEC. We hope to see you next year in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at the 2024 AEC. Check out the promotion for the 2024 AEC on page 71.

Photos courtesy of Blake Latolais, B1 Studio LLC, <https://b1studioinc.com>; Kate Beasley, Adrienne Gothard, & Michèle Samarya-Timm, NEHA.

Featured Speakers



Keynote speaker Dr. Maureen Lichtveld explored the importance of raising awareness about the environmental health profession.



The Grand Educational Session Kickoff panelists addressed the need for effective communication about rodent control to raise community awareness.



The first of our new Sound Check sessions kicked off with Dr. David Dyjack (left) and Dr. Umair Shah (right) engaging in an honest discussion on the challenges facing the environmental health profession.



Lt. General Russel L. Honoré, our second keynote speaker, delivered a candid and colorful presentation on leadership during a crisis.

Keynote Address—Communities and Climate Through the Lens of Environmental Health Practice

Maureen Lichtveld, MPH, MD, dean of the School of Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh, delivered the opening keynote address on Monday, July 31. Her presentation focused on communities, especially those facing intransigent inequities that rely on solutions from environmental health practitioners. She addressed the triple threats many communities face—pollution, disasters, and climate change—and proposed a roadmap for action. Dr. Lichtveld stated, “If you look broader, you see that we need a systems approach to combat climate change. It is not just individual health but health systems.” She continued by discussing the importance of raising awareness as well as fighting disinformation. While addressing the environmental health profession on all levels, from local to federal, she said, “These four things are what keep me up at night: infectious disease, extreme heat, food and water security, and poor air quality. I challenge anybody to tell me environmental health does not fit in here.”

Grand Educational Session Kickoff—A Rodent Symposium: Effective Communications, Control Practices, and Utilizing Resources

The first of two Grand Educational Session Kickoffs took place on Tuesday, August 1. The first included an expert panel that discussed three specific areas of breaking down silos for effective communications, rodent control practices and knowledge among residents and local government workers, and using resources to further educate employees and clients. Panelists included Claudia Riegel, PhD, director of the City of New Orleans Mosquito, Termite, and Rodent Control Board; Imelda Moise, MPH, PhD, associate professor at the University of Miami; and Janet Hurley, MPA, senior extension program specialist at the AgriLife Extension Services within Texas A&M.

Dr. Riegel began the session with a discussion on why breaking down silos is important. She stated, “It encourages collaboration, supports better decision-making processes, boosts productivity, and fosters innovation.” Dr. Moise continued the discussion with what she described as, “Our shared goal: To build partnership and data sharing to improve public and environmental health.” Hurley explored how we educate our profession and the people we serve. Further, she presented the Seven Areas of Responsibility: assess needs; plan; implement; evaluate; administer and manage; serve as a resource; and communicate, promote, and advocate for the profession.

Sound Check—An Honest Discussion on the Environmental Health Workforce and Leadership During Times of Change

New to the 2023 AEC were two lunchtime Sound Check sessions where invited guests were encouraged to tell their stories and discuss important emerging environmental health issues. The first session held on Tuesday, August 1, featured Umair A. Shah, MPH, MD, secretary of health for the Washington State Board of Health. Joining him as moderator was David Dyjack, DrPH, CIH, our executive director. Dr. Shah spoke on the challenges facing the environmental health workforce and the responsibilities of leadership. He said, “I think this is a tough time right now, you have different generations and perspectives. I think you need to build on top of what you already have and you have to have stability. You also have to push the envelope and have a leader who says what is important and articulates a vision.”

Keynote Address—Leadership: Getting the Difficult Job Done

Our keynote address speaker on Tuesday, August 1, Lt. General Russel L. Honoré, U.S. Army (Ret.), a native of Louisiana, delivered his famously no-nonsense decisive approach to leadership, vision, and resiliency during a crisis. Lt. General Honoré served as commander of Joint

Featured Speakers



CAPT Timothy Jiggins provided an introduction for Lt. General Honoré and set the stage for our second keynote address.



Dr. David Dyjack moderated a panel of food industry leaders as they discussed how their respective businesses strive to maintain a culture of food safety.



Dr. Darin Detwiler shared with attendees his journey of educating and advocating for food safety.



In our closing session, Frank Yiannas asked the audience if we are winning the battle against foodborne illness and explored how we can create better food safety cultures.

Task Force Katrina and was responsible for the evacuation efforts in New Orleans. Being candid and colorful, he shared firsthand stories of the evacuation of the city and how change and unpredictability are constants, as well as how individual resilience is mandatory. He stressed many points of leadership during a crisis, including 1) see first, understand first, act first; 2) collaboration is key; 3) in crisis, the first report is usually wrong; and 4) your people are number one. Lt. General. Honoré was introduced by CAPT Timothy Jiggins from the Office of Laboratory Safety within the Food and Drug Administration.

Grand Educational Session Kickoff—The Conundrum of Food Safety Culture: Breaking Through Barriers to Drive Improvement

Presented by the NEHA Business & Industry Affiliate, the second Grand Educational Session Kickoff on Wednesday, August 2, was a panel of food industry leaders who spoke on the competing priorities in business, how their organizations achieve and maintain a culture of food safety despite rising inflation, workforce shortages, extreme weather, pandemic recovery, and food defense. The panel consisted of Courtney LaVallee, director of food safety culture for Chick-fil-A; Bob Stewart, North America supply chain officer for McDonald's; and Cheli Breaux, senior national director of operations for Topgolf. The panel was moderated by Dr. Dyjack. They panelists spoke of building trust with employees and consumers. As leaders, they need to be approachable with not only the big decisions but also the small decisions that are made every day. Stewart, addressing employee turnover, stated, "One in eight Americans have worked at a McDonalds." He did state, however, that employee retention is improving. All panelists agreed that if they do not have a trusted brand, customers will "not come, no matter the price point."

Sound Check—Poisoned: The Dirty Truth About Your Food

Darin Detwiler, LPD, was our second Sound Check invited guest on Wednesday, August 2. A U.S. Navy nuclear submarine veteran turned well-respected food safety academic, advisor, advocate, and author, Dr. Detwiler shared his 30-year journey of educating and advocating for food safety after the devastating loss of his young son, Riley, in the 1993 *E. coli* Jack in the Box outbreak. He is featured in the now-streaming Netflix documentary, *Poison: The Dirty Truth About Your Food*. On the day of the documentary debut, Wednesday, August 2, he walked the conference attendees through losing his son and setting us on the course of raising awareness for food safety. He said the goal of his participation in the documentary was to help raise the expectations of food safety for the next 30 years and for the next generation of food safety professionals. The session was moderated by NEHA staff member Laura Wildey.

Closing Session—Creating a Safer, Smarter, and More Transparent Food System

The final presentation of the conference on Thursday, August 3, featured food safety expert Frank Yiannas, founder of FY Smarter Solutions and prior deputy commissioner of Food Policy and Response within the Food and Drug Administration. Yiannas began the presentation by asking attendees if they are winning the battle against foodborne disease. When the answer was no, he proceeded to show the incidence of foodborne illness in the U.S. over the past 100 years. He described how we are facing "challenging times in our nation and in the world as the global food system faces unprecedented headwinds." He stated, "The sheer scope and scale of the global food system is daunting. On top of that, coming out of the pandemic, we're facing a multitude of new pressures, whether it's emerging food safety risks, labor shortages, supply chain bottlenecks, effects of climate change, regional conflicts, or inflationary headwinds, just to name a few." Yiannas ended with examples of creating a food safety culture through traditional and behavior-based safety management, stating, "Food safety is a choice."

Education & Training

The 2023 AEC served as a dynamic platform where environmental health professionals, educators, researchers, policy-makers, and visionaries converged to explore the ever-evolving landscape of environmental health. This year's conference hosted 228 educational sessions with 359 speakers, 7 plenary sessions, and the viewing of 30 scientific posters. The more than 1,300 conference attendees—nearly 1,200 in-person attendees and 150 virtual attendees—had to make hard choices on which sessions to attend during the span of the conference.

Keynote speaker Lt. General Honoré spoke a second time and presented a deeper drive into crisis leadership within the Emergency Preparedness & Response track. This session was the highest attended breakout presentation of the conference. He was also available for the signing of his book, *Leadership in the New Normal, A Short Course*.

The Food Safety track was highly attended with sessions that packed the rooms, including:

- Evaluating and Improving Food Safety at Temporary Events
- Commercial Ice Machine Contamination: How to Properly Inspect and Clean
- A Food Safety Panel: Achieving Active Managerial Control Through Food Safety Consultation
- Have You Been Cleaning Wrong All Along? How Overlooking the Cleaning Step Hurts the Sanitation Goals of the *Food Code*

Additional session track presentations that were standing-room only and had a high virtual attendance were:

- Workforce & Leadership—Conflict De-escalation
- Climate & Health—Climate Change and Environmental Public Health: Research Strategies and Tools for Practitioners
- Infectious & Vectorborne Diseases—Climate Change Impact on Growing Threats of Vectorborne Disease

A new educational track added to the 2023 AEC was the NEHA-FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model (RFFM) Grant Program, which provided attendees with information on applying for grants, grant maintenance, and advancement, as well as guidance on mentorship, special proj-



ects, and training. The 2023 AEC also featured a track specific to the environmental health issues encountered in Louisiana.

Of the attendees who completed our survey after the conference, 87% indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that the conference sessions provided the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in their jobs. Furthermore, 88% of survey respondents stated they agreed or strongly agreed that the con-

ference session topics were relevant and applicable to their jobs. Overall, the quality of the educational sessions was rated as good or excellent by 93% of survey respondents.

The multitrack educational aim of the conference is to delve deep into the transformative power of knowledge, exchange ideas that challenge the status quo, and chart a course for the future of learning with enlightenment, collaboration, and change.

Feedback From Our Attendees

All 2023 AEC attendees were asked to complete an evaluation survey after the conference ended. Of the respondents, 88% rated the quality of the conference as either very good or excellent. Furthermore, 97% of respondents indicated that they would attend a future AEC. Some of the reasons for attending the 2023 AEC included the educational opportunities for personal and organizational growth, the ability to earn continuing education for credentials, and the chance to network with other environmental health professionals.

Below is a sample of the comments we received from attendees:

- "I learned a lot about various environmental health topics from individuals with different backgrounds, which allowed me to expand my viewpoint on a large number of issues."
- "I felt the organization of the conference organically led to productive and enthusiastic conversations."
- "It was great to network with people from all over the country as well as other parts of my state."

French Quarter Pest Tour

Members of the City of New Orleans Mosquito, Termite, and Rodent Control Board conducted evening walking tours of the famous French Quarter on Tuesday, August 1. City officials shared how they manage termites, rats, and historical vectorborne diseases, as well as performed a pest inspection of an open-air market. The walking tours travelled around the French Quarter and attendees learned about each topic from different experts. More than 150 conference attendees signed up for the two tours offered. As one attendee stated, "The pest control tour was awesome!"



2023 AEC Session Tracks & Subtopics

1. Climate & Health

- » Adaptation
- » Air Quality
- » Drought
- » Extreme Heat
- » Extreme Rainfall
- » Extreme Weather
- » Flooding
- » Hurricanes
- » Wildfires

2. Data & Technology

- » Environmental Health Tracking & Informatics
- » Technology & Environmental Health

3. Emergency Preparedness & Response

4. Focused Populations

- » Children's Environmental Health
- » Environmental Justice
- » Industry
- » Uniformed Services

5. Food Safety

- » Cannabis
- » Food Safety & Defense

6. General Environmental Health

- » Retail & Home Restaurants
- » Body Art
- » Emerging Environmental Health Issues
- » Fentanyl
- » Food Waste
- » General Environmental Health
- » Global Environmental Health
- » Hazardous & Toxic Materials
- » Solid Waste
- » Sustainability

7. Healthy Communities

- » Health Impact Assessments for Environmental Health
- » Healthy Homes & Communities
- » Land Use Planning & Design
- » Lead
- » PFAS
- » Risk Communication
- » Schools & Institutions

8. Infectious & Vectorborne Diseases

- » Pathogens & Outbreaks
- » Vector Control & Zoonotic Diseases

9. Louisiana Environmental Health

10. NEHA-FDA RFFM Grant Program

- » Administrative
- » Capacity Building Add-On Grant
- » Mentorship Add-On Grant
- » Special Projects Add-On Grant
- » Track 1 Development Base Grant
- » Track 2 Development Base Grant
- » Track 3 Maintenance and Advancement Base Grant
- » Training Add-On Grant

11. Water Quality

- » Onsite Wastewater
- » Premise Plumbing
- » Private Drinking Water
- » Recreational Water
- » Shorelines
- » Water Quality
- » Water Reuse

12. Workforce & Leadership

- » Leadership & Management
- » Student & Young Professional Career Development
- » Workforce Diversity

Preconference Courses & Workshops

Compared with the 2022 AEC, nearly twice as many attendees participated in the 12 preconference courses and workshops that we offered at the 2023 AEC on July 29–31. Overall, 450 attendees participated in these preconference events.

We continued the tradition of hosting a variety of beneficial preconference offerings. The REHS/RS Review Course prepared 23 attendees for the REHS/RS exam and the CP-FS Review Course prepared 11 individuals for the CP-FS exam. Approximately 40 leaders from our affiliates gathered at their annual preconference workshop to learn and collaborate on predominant environmental health concerns such as advocating for the profession, developing policy statements, supporting the workforce, and partnering on our environmental health outreach campaign.

We continued to offer several workshops in 2023 that provided specific training to targeted groups of attendees. More than one dozen attendees participated in hands-on equipment demonstrations and learned about the fundamentals of body art facility inspection in the Body Art Facility Inspector Training. The Environmental Health and Land Reuse Certificate Program Workshop explored the environmental and health risks and social disparities associated with contaminated land properties, key players in land reuse planning and policy, and redevelopment techniques to improve community health.

Our Private Water Network held the Building Capacity Through Partnership and Collaboration for Safer Private Wells Workshop, which explored resources and challenges associated with well-water testing. Also, the second cohort of our Environmental Health Leadership Academy met to share their leadership projects and to recognize their completion of the program.

As in previous years, we leveraged our partnerships to provide crucial training to preconference attendees. We once again partnered with ecoAmerica to hold the always popular one-half-day Climate for Health Ambassador Training. Approximately 50 participants were equipped with knowledge, hands-on experience, and resources to speak and act confidently on climate change and related solutions. Following the Ambassador Training, Climate for Health hosted a new Ambassa-



dor Debrief where nearly 50 participants reviewed opportunities for engagement on climate change and were able to network with peers committed to climate action.

We also partnered with the Food and Drug Administration to offer the National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards Self-Assessment and Verification Audit Workshop. The attendees of this workshop were given an overview of the criteria for the Program Standards and had hands-on opportunities to conduct a self-assessment or verification audit. New in 2023, we partnered with the Council for the Model Aquatic Health Code to provide the Certified Public Health Pool Inspector training to nine individuals who left the pilot training confident to inspect commercial pools.

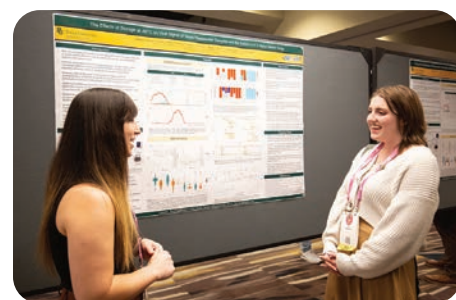
Our past presidents provided their insight in two new preconference workshops. More than 50 attendees of the Communication: Influencing Inspection Outcomes Workshop learned the value of effective communication to garner positive inspection outcomes. The Tools for Working Better, Smarter, Cheaper as You Utilize Data and Planning to Ensure Environmental Health Program Success: A Workshop for Current and Aspiring Environmental Health Leaders equipped over 50 participants with the tools, resources, and knowledge needed to effectively use data to achieve program goals.

Student Activities

Approximately 100 students attended the 2023 AEC, either in person or virtually. This attendance is encouraging as students continue to be an important part of our community. Based on feedback from previous student attendees and to recognize this key group of attendees, we partnered with the National Environmental Public Health Internship Program to hold a Student Welcome Reception on the evening of Tuesday, August 1. The event was held at Fulton Alley, a bowling alley adjacent to the conference center.

The students were welcomed by President Dr. D. Gary Brown. The lively networking event offered students the opportunity to connect with our leadership and get acquainted with the programs and services we offer for the next generation of environmental health professionals at the AEC and throughout the year. With bowling, music, and great conversation, students were able to set themselves up for success at the AEC and beyond.

We also showcased the research and work of our student attendees at the 2023 AEC. More than 20 student posters were displayed at the in-person Exhibit Hall and 8 posters were displayed in the virtual Poster Hall. Student poster presenters provided insight into the latest research on a variety of topics including rural private well testing, foodborne disease mitigation, and diversity in the workforce.



Social Events

Environmental Health Photo Exhibit & Lt. General Honoré Book Signing



The night of Tuesday, August 1, was filled with two new additions to our AEC program. First, we hosted a book signing with our keynote speaker, Lt. General Honoré. Attendees had the opportunity to connect one-on-one with the rousing keynote speaker and to purchase autographed copies of his book, *Leadership in the New Normal*.

The second event was the Environmental Health Photo Exhibit. Photography is a powerful storytelling medium. For the 2023 AEC, our members were invited to share photos in a variety of categories that represented the impact of environmental public health in our first-ever Environmental Public Health Photography Contest. The submitted photos were judged by Lloyd DeGrane, a Chicago-based photographer, and Gina Bare, one of our staff and an avid photographer. The selected photos were then showcased during a reception. The photos remained on display for the remainder of the conference.

We thank all who submitted for the photo contest. Congratulations to the submitters of the photographs that were selected for the exhibit. The winners of the photography contest were:

Climate Health and Emergency Preparedness Category

- 1st place: Harry Heafer, Lincoln–Lancaster County Health Department

- 2nd place: Chris Manley, Larimer County Department of Health and Environment
- 3rd place: Kathryn Haugen, Minnesota Department of Health

Healthy Communities and Special Populations

- 1st place: Samantha Russell, Skagit County Public Health
- 2nd place: Lisa Whitlock, Retired Food and Drug Administration Retail Food Specialist
- 3rd place: Hector Morfin, Sweetener Products Company

General Environmental Health

- 1st place: Chris Manley, Larimer County Department of Health and Environment
- 2nd place: Harry Heafer, Lincoln–Lancaster County Health Department
- 3rd place: Elizabeth Kavanah, City of Hartford

Food and Water Safety

- 1st place: James Scales, Orange County, Texas
- 2nd place: Karin Kasper, Franklin County Public Health
- 3rd place: Kimberly Burgess, Cheyenne–Laramie County Public Health

Infectious and Vector Diseases

- 1st place: Kathryn Haugen, Minnesota Department of Health
- 2nd place: Harry Heafer, Lincoln–Lancaster County Health Department



Breakfast & Town Hall Assembly



Our members packed the room early Wednesday morning, August 2, to get an update on the state of the association and to ask questions of our leadership. Our leadership opened the Town Hall by giving a brief review of the year. In the past year, we continued our goal of supporting the underlying foundation of the environmental health workforce by investing in local communities through direct funding, training, assessment, consultation, credentialing, and increasing the visibility of environmental health to policymakers. Closing the year in review, President Brown stated, “I know with your help, NEHA will take the environmental health profession to ‘Infinity and Beyond.’”

Next, President Brown recognized 34 individuals who made exemplary contributions to the association during his term of office with Presidential Citations. A listing of these citations can be found on page 63. President Brown went on to recognize the great work taking place within our affiliate organizations through this year’s Affiliate Certificates of Merit. Our affiliates represent a grassroots network of state-level and sector-specific environmental health organizations. We are connected through a shared mission of empowering and educating environmental health professionals. Affiliate associations are primarily run by dedicated volunteers who support the profession locally. Each year, we provide our affiliates with the opportunity to nominate outstanding individuals or teams who have contributed to the success of their



associations. A listing of the Certificates of Merit awarded can be found on page 62.

President Brown then invited James Balsamo, Jr., our Scholarship Committee chair, to come to the stage to present certificates to our scholarship recipients. Along with the American Academy of Sanitarians, we believe that structured education at the undergraduate and graduate levels is important to an individual's successful professional development in the field and that continuing education is a vital component in the continued career growth of environmental health professionals. As such, three scholarships are awarded annually—one to a graduate student and two to undergraduate students. A listing of the 2023 scholarship

winners can be found on page 62. More information about our scholarships can be found at www.neha.org/scholarships.

One of the traditions of the Town Hall is to welcome to the stage candidates for the upcoming position of 2nd vice-president to speak to the membership. Michele DiMaggio, a long-time member and current board member, took the opportunity to state her interest in running for the position and shared her platform.

To close the Town Hall, President Brown recognized and thanked our technical advisors and outgoing board members. He also introduced our incoming board members. The Town Hall was concluded after several minutes of questions and answers among our membership, leadership, and staff.

Raising Your Voice Networking Event

Approximately 800 attendees got immersed in the local New Orleans culture at the Raising Your Voice Networking Event, which was held at Generations Hall, a former 1820s sugar mill. Attendees spent the evening connecting, dancing to a live 5-piece jazz band, and having their tarot cards read, a New Orleans tradition. Along with dinner, beverages, and live music, attendees were able to snap a photo in the event photo booth to commemorate the evening. Thank you to Hedgerow Software for sponsoring the photo booth and for providing our attendees with a small memento of the good times had while reconnecting with old friends and new colleagues. It was great to see that many attendees continued to network after the official event ended. Thank you to our attendees for making this event a memorable success.



2023 AEC Sponsors, Partners, and Contributors

We appreciate the following sponsors, organizations, and individuals who helped make the 2023 AEC possible!

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Accela

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health

Chick-fil-A

Council for the Model Aquatic Health Code

ecoAmerica, Climate for Health

Food and Drug Administration

FY Smarter Solutions

McDonald's

National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council

NEHA Endowment Foundation

Donors (see page 32)

NEHA-FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model Grant Program

NEHA Technical Advisors

(see page 49)

New Orleans Health Department

Northeastern University

Topgolf

Uniformed Services Environmental Health Association

University of Pittsburgh, School of Public Health

Exhibition

The 2023 AEC Exhibit Hall was bustling with excitement on Monday, July 31, and Tuesday, August 1. As the conference was offered in person and virtually, attendees could connect with exhibitors in the Exhibit Hall or through the conference app. Attendees were also able to set up face-to-face meetings with the exhibitors during Exhibit Hall hours. Representatives from the exhibiting companies and organizations were available to answer attendee questions and display their products and services. Overall, there were 54 booths for attendees to visit and learn from. We were excited to have more exhibitors this year, which was a combination of everyone's favorites as well as many new exhibitors. And as in past years, the Poster Session was held in the Exhibit Hall for attendees to peruse the posters and engage with the presenters.

The Exhibition Grand Opening on Monday, July 31, was filled with attendees who made new connections and discovered new products, all while enjoying an assortment of food and beverages. The event also provided the opportunity to catch up with old friends. The first night of the exhibition always sets an energetic tone for the conference and creates a buzz of enthusiasm that lasts until the final day. The wide variety of exhibitors enabled attendees to explore the different industries and organizations that support their work and to connect with other professionals who have similar interests.

On the second day, Tuesday, August 1, the Exhibit Hall was the place to be. Demonstrations were offered in the Exhibit Hall



during the morning and afternoon breaks. The morning demonstration was sponsored and presented by HS GovTech. The afternoon demonstration was sponsored and presented by the Bloomberg American Health Initiative. So many people attended the demonstrations that chairs were pulled over from anywhere they could be found and hotel staff rushed to bring in additional seating. We appreciate the hard work of the hotel staff to accommodate this unexpected number of attendees.

For the third year in a row, HS GovTech was the Presenting Sponsor of the AEC. HS GovTech also sponsored the inaugural Environmental Health Photo Exhibit. NSF sponsored the conference Wi-Fi and Tyler Technologies sponsored the conference app. In addition, the photo booth at the Raising Your Voice Networking Event was sponsored by Hedgerow Software, which always leads to a lot of attendee creativity, memory-making, and fun. Rounding out our support was Accela through its spon-



sorship of the Data & Technology educational session track and awarding four scholarships to attend the 2023 AEC.

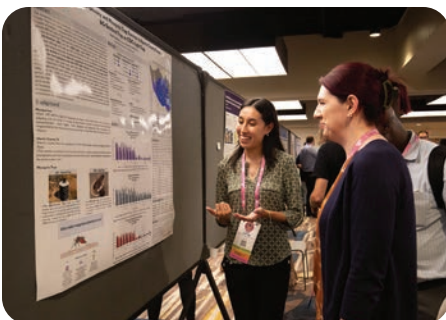
We thank all of the 2023 AEC exhibitors and sponsors. We could not put on a premier event of this magnitude without your participation and generosity. The knowledge, products, and services you shared are vital to the success of our attendees in their work to ensure healthier environments for all. You are appreciated!

EXHIBIT AT THE 2024 AEC



Join Us in Pittsburgh!

Registration is open for the 2024 AEC exhibition, which will be held on July 15 and 16, 2024. Early-bird pricing is available until February 29, 2024 (if space is available). Contact NEHA Sales Manager Soni Fink at sfink@neha.org or (303) 802-2139 for questions regarding exhibition or sponsorship opportunities. You can also learn more at www.neha.org/aec-exhibit-sponsors.



2023 AEC Exhibitors

Accela	National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)
American Academy of Sanitarians	National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC)
American Public Health Association (APHA)	National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP)
Association of Professional Piercers (APP)	National Network of Public Health Institutes
Bloomberg American Health Initiative	National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA)
CDC NCEH/ATSDR	National Restaurant Association Solutions
CDP, Inc.	NEHA-FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model Grant Program
Council for the Model Aquatic Health Code (CMAHC)	NSF
Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR)/Epi-Ready	Peace Corps Response
EcoSure—A Division of Ecolab	Pool & Hot Tub Alliance
EMSL Analytical, Inc.	Private Water Network (PWN)
Environmental Information Association (EIA)	PURELL
Food Safety Centers of Excellence	SanAir Technologies Laboratory, Inc.
Hazel Analytics	SciAps Inc
Hedgerow Software	StateFoodSafety
HS GovTech	Sweeps Software, Inc.
HUD/Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes	Tyler Technologies
hydrosense	UAB Deep South Center for Occupational Health & Safety
IAPMO R&T	U.S. EPA Office of Research and Development
IFEH Region of the Americas	U.S. Food and Drug Administration/Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
IFPTI	USDA-FNS, Food Safety Branch
Louisiana Environmental Health Association (LEHA)	
National Environmental Assessment Reporting System (NEARS)	

A Bit of Competition in the Exhibit Hall

To add to the engagement and fun of the Exhibit Hall, we offered a bingo game for attendees to play. Each square of the bingo card was filled with the name of an exhibitor and attendees had to completely fill their bingo cards with marks from those exhibitors when visiting each booth. The game added some competition and liveliness to the Exhibit Hall. After the Exhibit Hall closed, attendees dropped off their full bingo cards at the Information Desk and one lucky winner, Kimberly Burgess from Cheyenne–Laramie County Public Health, was selected to receive a complimentary registration for the 2024 AEC.





Awards & Scholarships

We were proud to bestow several national awards and scholarships that represent outstanding individuals, programs, and groups throughout the country in 2023. From leaders working on diversity efforts to some of the most recognized names in our professional community, this year's recipients illustrate the dedication and selflessness of the professionals in our field.

The recipients of these awards and scholarships were honored at the AEC during the Breakfast & Town Hall Assembly or the Awards Celebration on Wednesday, August 2. For more information about our awards, please visit www.neha.org/awards.

AEHAP Student Research Competition Winners

For over 20 years, the Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs (AEHAP) has sponsored the Student Research Competition. The competition is a volunteer-judged competition. Students from schools with environmental health programs that are AEHAP members enter research projects to compete for monetary and travel awards to attend and present at the AEC.

Undergraduate: 1st Place Winner

Lily Metsker

University of Georgia, Athens

Graduate: 1st Place Winner

Sarah Morgan

East Kentucky University

Davis Calvin Wagner Sanitarian Award

COL Wendell A. Moore, MS, EdD, DAAS, RS, REHS, U.S. Army (retired)

This award represents the highest honor the American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS) bestows on one of its diplomates.

Dr. Bailus Walker, Jr. Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Award

Oreta M. Samples, MPH, DHSc

This award is given annually to recognize an individual or group who has made significant achievements in developing or enhancing a more culturally diverse, inclusive, and competent environment in their organizations and communities.



Joe Beck Educational Contribution Award

Daniel B. Oerther, PhD, CEHS, DLAAS, FCIEH

This award is given annually to recognize an individual or team for an educational contribution designed for the advancement and professional development of environmental health professionals.

NEHA/AAS Scholarships

Both NEHA and AAS believe that structured education at the undergraduate and graduate levels is important to an individual's successful professional development in the environmental health field and that continuing education is a vital component in the continued career growth of environmental health professionals. As such, three scholarships are awarded annually—one to a graduate student and two to undergraduate students. More information on the NEHA/AAS scholarships can be found at www.neha.org/scholarships.

Dr. Sheila Davidson Pressley Undergraduate Scholarship

Mitchell Kutz

University of Findlay

Dr. Carolyn Hester Harvey Undergraduate Scholarship

Pilar Santos

Montana State University

Graduate Scholarship

Karin Kasper, REHS

Kent State University

NEHA Affiliate Certificates of Merit

Certificates of Merit are awarded to NEHA affiliate members and teams who made exemplary contributions to the profession. Each affiliate selects winners based on its

own criteria for recognition. The nominating affiliate is indicated in parentheses.

Individuals

Chirag Bhatt (TX)

Ivy Bremer (IA)

Debbie Dreves (MO)

Tammy Faulkner (VA)

Karl Hartman (UT)

Jennifer Heller (IN)

Carlene Hennie (Jamaica)

Scott Holmes (NE)

Joe Jurusik (MN)

Tom Kunesh (WA)

Crystal Lamb (National Capital Area)

Linda Launer (CA)

Adrea Lovejoy (OR)

Lynette Medeiros (NJ)

Mykel Murry (WY)

Melise Pederson (NM)

Josh Skeggs (CO)

Laura Temke (WI)

Melissa Vaccaro (Business & Industry)

Kathleen Waldron (MA)

Anna Yates (IL)

Teams

2022 Florida Environmental Health Association Annual Education Meeting Planning Committee (FL)

Arizona Environmental Health Association Board and Hybrid Conference Planning Committee (AZ)

Public Affairs Committee (OH)

Workforce Development Task Force Team (CT)

NEHA Past Presidents Award

Eric Bradley

Kristen Ruby-Cisneros

Dr. Wendell A. Moore

Each year, the NEHA Past Presidents Affiliate identifies and honors a hero or group of heroes from the environmental health profession.

NEHA Presidential Citations

Presidential citations are given to those individuals who made exemplary impacts on the association during the term of office of the NEHA president. President Brown recognized 34 such individuals who made

meaningful contributions to the organization during his presidential term. Below are the citations awarded by President Brown:

For exceptional service to the NEHA Government Affairs Program:

Doug Farquhar

For exceptional service to the NEHA History Project Task Force:

Dr. Hank Koren
Dr. Leon F. Vinci

For exceptional service to the NEHA-FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model Grant Program:

Rance Baker

For keeping me on the straight and narrow:

Katherine Sheppard

For marketing excellence:

Chana Goussetis

For superior organization and execution in support of the *Journal of Environmental Health* updating and open access research:

Kristen Ruby-Cisneros

For superior organization and execution in support of the NEHA office relocation:

Gina Bare
Christopher Walker

In recognition of outstanding leadership of the NEHA/AAS Scholarships:

James Balsamo, Jr.

In recognition of outstanding service and leadership on the NEHA Board of Directors during the last year:

CDR Anna Khan
Tom Butts

In recognition of outstanding service and support during my entire tenure on the NEHA Board of Directors:

Dr. Norbert Campbell	Jamie Hisel
Alicia Collins	Mel Knight
Brian Collins	Roy Kroeger
Bob Custard	Sandra Long
Ashlee Davis	Dr. Jason Marion
Dr. Amer El-Ahraf	Dr. Wendell Moore
Dr. David Gilkey	Dr. Priscilla Oliver
Vonia Grabeel	Mahesh Patel
	Vince Radke

Dr. Welford Roberts

Dr. Henroy Scarlett
CDR James Speckhart

Dr. Sylvanus Thompson

RADM Webb Young

Uniformed Services Awards

Awards from the Environmental Health Officers Professional Advisory Committee were recognized at the 2023 AEC. These awards honor environmental health professionals within the uniformed services for their outstanding accomplishments in the environmental health field.

2022 Responder of the Year Award

CDR Leslie Jackanicz

2023 John C. Eason Award

LCDR Sarah Hughes

2023 Edward "Ted" Moran Award

CDR Beth Wittry

2023 Thomas E. Crow Mentor Award

CDR Joseph P. Laco

2023 John G. Todd Award

CAPT Aimee Treffiletti

Walter F. Snyder Environmental Health Award

Edward V. Ohanian, PhD



The Snyder Award was created in 1971 in honor of Walter F. Snyder, cofounder and first executive director of NSF. Presented by NSF and NEHA, this award is given annually to individuals who continue Snyder's legacy through outstanding contributions to environmental and public health. NSF and NEHA are proud to announce that Edward V. Ohanian, PhD, is the 2023 recipient of the Walter F. Snyder Environmental Health Award. Dr. Ohanian serves as the associate director for science for the Office of Water within the Office of Science and Technology at the

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). He is also a senior science advisor to the deputy assistant administrator in the Office of Water.

In his current role with U.S. EPA, Dr. Ohanian provides leadership and expert oversight for the development of risk assessments required by the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act. Recently, he was nominated by U.S. EPA for the Presidential Meritorious Rank Award for his sustained scientific accomplishments.

"Dr. Ohanian's lifelong dedication to protecting environmental health through his numerous roles and accomplishments has helped to strengthen the quality and safety of drinking water across North America. Over the past four decades, Dr. Ohanian has improved the health and well-being of hundreds of millions of people," said Pedro Sancha, president and CEO of NSF. "Dr. Ohanian's leadership and mentorship within the toxicology industry is unparalleled; he truly embodies the spirit and letter of the Snyder Award. His life's work as an

educator, consensus builder, and subject matter expert is exemplary of a productive and impactful environmental public health career," said Dr. David Dyjack, executive director and CEO of NEHA.

Deeply committed to the environmental health community, Dr. Ohanian also serves as a professional lecturer for the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health within the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University. He led the development of and currently chairs NSF's Health Advisory Board, which is responsible for conducting peer reviews of the risk assessment basis for direct and indirect drinking water additives and promoting the application of state-of-the-art risk analysis methodologies. Additionally, for nearly 20 years, he has been a member of NSF's Public Health Council, which ratifies all NSF standards as being protective of public health.

A published author and editor, Dr. Ohanian has contributed articles and chapters on new and improved risk assess-

ment methodologies to scientific journals and books. He has served on the editorial boards of several risk assessment and toxicology publications. Presently, Dr. Ohanian is an associate editor of *Toxicological Sciences*. He is the past president of the Risk

Assessment and Regulatory and Safety Evaluation Specialty Sections of the Society of Toxicology, as well as the 2010 recipient of that society's prestigious Arnold J. Lehman Award for his contributions to risk assessment and the regulation of chemi-

cal agents. Currently, Dr. Ohanian serves as the vice president of The Toxicology Forum.

Read the full award press release at www.nsf.org/news/dr-edward-v-ohanian-receives-walter-f-snyder-environmental-health-award.

Walter S. Mangold Award

Brian Collins, MS, REHS, DLAAS



Walter S. Mangold dedicated his life to the practice of environmental health in an extraordinary and exemplary way. In doing so, he became a beacon of excellence and inspiration for all environmental health professionals who followed after him. Created in 1956 and first awarded to Mangold, the Walter S. Mangold Award recognizes individuals for outstanding contributions to the advancement of environmental health professionals. It is the highest distinction that NEHA can grant one of its members. We are pleased to honor Brian Collins with the 2023 Walter S. Mangold Award.

In keeping with the legacy of Walter S. Mangold, Collins's impressive career is an example of both professionalism and service. He was nominated for the Mangold Award by Dr. Priscilla Oliver, president of the NEHA Past Presidents Affiliate from 2022–2023. In her nomination letter, Dr. Oliver wrote, "Throughout his career in environmental health, Brian Collins has demonstrated leadership not only as director of the Plano Environmental Health Department but also as president of the Texas Environmental Health Association and a regional vice-president and president of NEHA. During NEHA's most stressful period of change, he provided leadership and guidance as the interim executive director of NEHA from 2014–2015. Brian has taken time to mentor stu-

dents of environmental health and support their education and training through internships. He has shared his experience and education through published articles in professional journals on food safety, HACCP principles, and a variety of environmental health topics."

Collins earned his bachelor of science degree in biology from the University of Texas, Arlington. Through his personal interactions and work in restaurants, he contemplated the linkage of interests in science, food, food safety, and public health. It was this interest that led him to a position as a quality control technician at a large food manufacturing and processing plant. After 1 year in that position, he studied and passed the Texas Professional Registered Sanitarian examination. He then started to search for career opportunities that better aligned with his interests in food service, food science, and food safety. In 1988, he was hired by the City of Plano as a health inspector. Thus began the start of a career path at Plano that would span 26 years with promotions from environmental health specialist supervisor in 1990, assistant director in 1991, and director in 1998. He earned his master of science in human relations from Amber-ton University in 2002. Collins retired from Plano in January 2014. Currently, he serves as principal of Hygieia Consulting, LLC.

Throughout his career, Collins published articles in peer-reviewed journals that presented novel approaches to food safety and experiences in the practice of environmental public health management and leadership. Training, coaching, and mentoring of others regarding personal development, lessons learned, and leadership were consistent areas of focus in his career efforts. Over his career, he has coached and mentored many staff to vertical career opportunities and professional credentials. He has also served as

an instructor and mentor for a variety of different leadership and fellowship programs. Furthermore, Collins was a valuable member of numerous task forces, committees, work groups, councils, and other associations at local, state, federal, and national levels.

Collins served on state and national boards to highlight local components of environmental public health and to effect change in the practice and profession of environmental public health. He was president of the Texas Environmental Health Association from 2000–2001, Region 5 vice-president of NEHA from 2002–2008, and a national officer of NEHA from 2009–2014, serving as president from 2012–2013. He is a diplomate laureate of the American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS) and served as chair from 2020–2022. He was awarded the AAS Davis Calvin Wagner Sanitarian Award in 2014. Throughout his career, he has been recognized for his achievements by numerous local, state, national, and federal organizations and agencies.

As one past Mangold Award recipient stated, "While there are many members of our association who deserve recognition, I can think of no one person who is more deserving of the Mangold Award for his lifetime of achievements that he has given to our profession and our association. I am honored to welcome him as a distinguished member of this elite group of past recipients. It is my hope that the Mangold Committee agrees and conveys this honor to Brian, a true friend and dedicated professional." The comment from Dr. Wendell A. Moore in his support letter succinctly summarizes the character of Collins throughout his career: "Brian represents the epitome of the environmental health/sanitarian profession and possesses the attributes that embody the Walter S. Mangold Award. He is a leader of leaders and a servant of servants."

Sharing the Conference Experience

Social media was a great way for attendees to share their conference experiences, insights, and thoughts with a wide network of environmental health professionals. Attendees shared comments and photos of the 2023 AEC via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Attendees were encouraged to post using #NEHAAEC.

Twitter (X)

Bryan Brooks @BryanWBrooks

Indeed. Environmental health is the backbone of public health. In the US, there are profound workforce needs that affect local communities of all States, Tribes and Territories. Thank you @nehaorg for the opportunity to share my perspectives.

Russel L. Honoré @ltgrusselhonore

In my Favorite City in the World @New Orleans #NOLA speaking @nehaorg Convention @HiltonRiverside. "Finding Solutions for Pollution." #NEHAAEC #EHMatters @KepplerSpeakers

HS GovTech @HSGovTech

We look forward to seeing y'all in Pittsburgh in 2024. #BeyondData Management #HSGovTech

IAPMO @IAPMO

What an incredible week @nehaorg #NEHAAEC! Thanks to all who dropped by our booth, where vibrant discussions about IAPMO's mission & services were buzzing nonstop. Shoutout to the dedicated health inspectors & public health scientists—your work makes our world safer & better.

Roy Kroeger @Roykehs

NEHA talking to McDonalds, Chick-fil-A and Top Golf about a culture of food safety. #oneneha #NEHAAEC

Judy Lynn @justjudylynn

@frankyiannas speaking at #NEHAAEC "Challenges give way to opportunities." This is true in food safety but also across all #EHMatters. We can use the new climate reality of extreme heat to innovate. Think creatively quickly.

#NEHAAEC #EHMatters When @ltgrusselhonore was asked what his first priority was when he arrived for Hurricane Katrina response, he answered without hesitation, "Save lives." Addressing the equity issue of prioritizing security of property over human lives. #leadershipwneeed

NACCHO @NACCHOalerts

We were at #NEHAAEC 2023 this year in New Orleans with our staff and members hosting various sessions, booths, and more! Here are staff reflections from the event: <https://naccho.org/blog/articles/2023-neha-annual-educational-conference-reflections>. Thanks to @nehaorg for a great conference!

Office of Dr. Umair A. Shah, WA Sec of Health @WaHealthSec

In the world of health—as we face emerging viruses & the ongoing impact of climate change—some of the most important research & work is shared at @nehaorg.



Facebook

Adam London

Well done, NEHA team! This AEC was one of the best yet. Thanks for all your great work!

Sandra M. Long

Great speakers, so much to choose from, great AEC! Excellent job NEHA Team!

Robert W. Powitz

I've been attending the AECs (missed a few) since '72. This was one of the best yet. Kudos to all the professionals who presented, and ENORMOUS shout out to Dave and his staff for all their efforts and incredible delivery. And before we forget, congratulations to Brian Collins for becoming a Mangold winner and Laureate Diplomat in the Academy. WOW!!!!!!

LinkedIn

Aimee R.

Kudos to the vector control team! What an outstanding group of dedicated and knowledgeable public health professionals. Thank you so much for this experience, very well put together!!

Vince Radke

It's wonderful to be here and see everyone. I get to see the whole person not just their head.

Denise Takehara, CP-FS

NEHA AEC NEVER disappoints! I had an amazing time this year especially catching up with old friends and made many new friends. LT General Honoré was nothing short of amazing! He kept everyone engaged. The sessions were very informative. I'm sorry I was not able to catch the various food safety presentations. Thank you to all those that presented. NEHA volunteers: Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to making this AEC a wonderful experience. Looking forward to next year!

