

Virginia Environmental Health Association

2013 Annual Report to the Membership

The Virginia Environmental Health Association (VEHA) board is pleased to present its annual report to the membership for calendar year 2013. This report documents the progress of VEHA over the past year and highlight milestones and accomplishments noted along the way. I invite you to review our report and seek out board members for additional information should you have any questions.

President—Chris Gordon

VEHA has made significant progress updating the association's administrative procedures to assure ongoing transparency and engage members. First among these was the overhaul and deployment of VEHA's new website found online at <http://www.virginiaeha.org>. This new website enables members to complete an online application and pay their membership dues, find the latest edition of the *Bulletin* and upcoming educational sessions, identify scholarship opportunities as well as directly contact board members using a dedicated e-mail system. The VEHA board also undertook efforts to update its operational by-laws and the new amendments, including a new conflicts of interest policy, took effect May 25, 2013. Along these same lines, VEHA is in the process of finalizing amendments to the Articles of Incorporation to align these documents with Internal Revenue Service tax-exempt status requirements. Also, VEHA filed its 2012 federal taxes on August 5, 2013 as required by law. The VEHA board carefully coordinated these complex efforts by holding conference calls routinely to update status of all active projects. A total of eight board meetings were held (January 28, February 25, March 22, April 19, June 10, July 29, August 28 and September 16) in 2013 as of this writing. Finally, two *Bulletins* were issued to the membership, one on March 27, 2013 and another on September 1, 2013, announcing the spring and fall educational sessions as well as the annual membership meeting.

Vice-President for Member Services—David Wachsmann

With the idea of transparency in mind we have been working to develop a process with the goal of improving how VEHA's finances are tracked. This process includes turnaround times for when monies received will be deposited as well as expenses paid. As required by VEHA bylaws, on August 26, 2013 VEHA completed the process of filing its annual report to remain in good standing with the Virginia State Corporation Commission. Collectively, Chris Gordon, Lauren Grimmer and I worked to complete the yearly Internal Revenue Service taxes for the previous year. The current financial status of VEHA is stable with a promising outlook.

Vice-President for Programs—Amy Pemberton

One of the primary missions of the VEHA board is to conduct training for members and other professionals to encourage and support professional development in the field of environmental health in Virginia. VEHA typically hosts two educational workshops each year, in a variety of locations around the Commonwealth; this expands the opportunity for members from all corners of our large state to participate, and takes advantage of location-specific field trip sites to exhibit the range of environmental health related activities ongoing in Virginia. In the past few years, VEHA also recognized a strong need for our members in the onsite field: to receive high-quality, reasonably-priced continuing education credits to maintain their Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) licensure. VEHA now hosts two onsite field trainings annually, in addition to our spring and fall educational

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workshops. We also continue to offer educational credit hours for our food safety trainings, as we have for years. In 2012 and 2013 so far, we have received nearly 400 registrations for our educational events. This speaks volumes for the enthusiasm our members have for our wide-ranging, professionally-relevant educational offerings.

Vice-President for Professional Advancement—Catherine Cummins

VEHA hosted a National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) Registered Environmental Health Specialist and Certified Professional-Food Safety (REHS/CP-FS) testing opportunity in April this year with two members sitting for the REHS and three sitting for the CP-FS. VEHA plans to host another within the next few months. Our student scholarship recipient this year was Megan Card, a graduate student in the environmental health program at Old Dominion University. VEHA is proud to present two NEHA Certificate of Merit winners, the first ever team award to the Virginia Tech Soil Scientists, and the individual winner Agnes Fleming, former environmental health manager of the Norfolk Health Department. VEHA also presented the Environmental Health Professional of the Year award to Scot Honaker, environmental health manager in Mount Rogers health district, during this session.

Secretary—David Fridley

Membership trends in VEHA show continuing signs of growth and diversification. In the early 1990's, VEHA maintained a regular membership between 200 and 250 individuals. For a variety of reasons, our membership declined in the late 1990's to about 175, and then dropped precipitously, to less than 30 individuals by 2002. This was a difficult time for VEHA. However, VEHA has made significant progress in the ten years following. By re-emphasizing the role of the VEHA in providing education and professional development in the environmental health field, and concentrating on continuing education, professional advancement through the REHS and CPFS credentials, and reaching out to student future environmental professionals, we have seen our membership rebound to approximately 135. Through vigorous renewal efforts, our membership roster can realistically return to the 250-plus numbers from which we had historically benefitted. The strength we have in numbers comes from our diversity. Our membership consists of state environmental employees and private sector professionals almost half and half; our members are also members of NEHA; they have the REHS and CPFS credentials; they are OSE's and CPSS's; they are ACHA, AIHA, CASA, NEHA, USPHS, VAPPS, VOWRA, and the rest of an alphabet soup of organizations and affiliations that reflect the broad spectrum of environmental health. The depth and breadth of experience and knowledge in our membership is a reflection of the value we represent to this field.

Delegate-at-Large—Reed Cranford

As a new member of the board I have been able to participate in monthly phone conferences and learn how the board conducts the business of VEHA. Participating on the board has offered opportunities to serve as a member of the by-laws rewrite committee, look into questions from the board concerning insurance and liabilities, and consult on the nominations for Environmental Health Specialist of the Year.

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Delegate-at-Large—Brock Malcolm

As a new member of the board, I've learned about how VEHA carries out its duty to promote public awareness of environmental factors, through educational means, that affect the general well-being of the populace. By participating on the by-law rewriting committee and participating on monthly conference calls, I've gained insight into the mechanics of operating a statewide environmental health association.

Blue Ridge Regional Delegate—Eric Myers

As the Blue Ridge delegate, I've participated in regular VEHA board meetings and support VEHA's mission for ongoing professional training. When working with others, I try to represent the need for continued high quality training that VEHA offers; encourage NEHA membership and interaction with this national organization. I also help VDH local management understand that professional training (CEUs) should be part of each environmental health specialist's developmental plan and I keep informed about upcoming changes to the onsite and food programs with VDH. I also maintain a strong interest in water quality by following issues such as impaired streams, hydrofracking, and uranium mining in Virginia.

Capitol Area Regional Delegate—Tammy Faulkner

Through a grant received from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, I can report that VDH has partnered with the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck Planning District Commissions, Va. Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and private designers, installers, and operators to encourage owners to connect to sewers or install nutrient and biological pollution -reducing onsite sewage systems in the Capitol area delegate region. The grant will provide financial incentives to encourage property owners to install alternative onsite sewage systems that will reduce nutrient and biological pollution to the Chesapeake Bay.

Northern Virginia Regional Delegate—Kevin Crisler

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated nine jurisdictions in Virginia as non-attainment areas for the 2008 8-hour Ozone standard. All nine of the jurisdictions designated are in the Northern Virginia area. The jurisdictions identified are Alexandria, Arlington County, Fairfax City, Fairfax County, City of Falls Church, Loudoun County, Prince William County, Manassas City and the City of Manassas Park. These jurisdictions are designated as non-attainment areas because Ozone levels have historically exceeded the EPA Ozone standard. The summer of 2013 was somewhat of an anomaly considering that none of these areas exceeded the standard during that time. For the first time since 2009, and only the second time in the last 16 years, Northern Virginia had zero code red days for unhealthy air quality during the summer of 2013. Is this a trend or an aberration? We may have to wait and see what the summers of 2014 and 2015 bring us before we can answer that question.

Southern Area Regional Delegate—Ed Dunn

Over the past year, I have been assisting Amy Pemberton in planning the Onsite Field day and Educational Workshop sessions. I have also been busy this past summer and now fall representing VEHA on the VDH SHIFT (Safety and Health in Facilitating a Transition) Stakeholder Committee which is charged with recommending ways to maximize private sector involvement in the VDH Onsite Sewage program. Please see the SHIFT website at: www.vdh.virginia.gov/EnvironmentalHealth/Onsite/SHIFT/.

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Three meetings remain: October 10, October 31, & November 21, 2013. Please contact me at ed.dunn@virginiaeha.org if you wish to comment or express an opinion. VEHA represents both private and public sector onsite soil evaluators and I will gladly bring your ideas and suggestions before the full committee.

Southwest Area Regional Delegate—Sandra Stoneman

In southwest Virginia (SWVA), we have an active rabies program. Investigations and confirmations of the skunk, raccoon, and bat variant are steady and seem to come in waves. Also, the temporary food event season has been challenging due to the number of events and vendor applications. The biggest success in this arena is environmental health staff encouraging active and informed event coordinators. Overall, the number of new septic and well applications has remained flat but environmental health staff has been busy with numerous repair applications due to the heavy rainfall over the spring and summer. By and large, SWVA is processing mainly conventional applications as compared to alternative. Private sector involvement is still relatively low in the area but has seen some increase in specific counties.

Tidewater Regional Delegate—Lauren Grimmer

Over the past year, I've volunteered both as the Tidewater regional delegate as well as the Treasurer of the VEHA. While the responsibilities of being Treasurer have been the focus of most of my time, the Tidewater region has had its share of environmental health concerns including the glancing blow by Hurricane Sandy last fall as well as rising water levels attributed to global warming that always seem to cause flooding in Hampton Roads every time it rains. So far this year, the hurricane season has spared the eastern region, but it's a good reminder to check preparedness plans.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Gordon

Chris Gordon, President
Virginia Environmental Health Association