

# VEHA's 2017 Annual Report to Membership

The Virginia Environmental Health Association (VEHA) board is pleased to present its' annual report to the membership for calendar year 2017. This report documents the progress of VEHA over the past year from the perspective of the board members *in their own words*, and highlights 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 – David Fridley (2016-2018)

This summer, I had the distinct honor of representing this Association as state affiliate of the National Environmental Health Association at NEHA's annual educational conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I was joined by approximately one thousand fellow environmental professionals from all over the United States and a number of other nations for three days of reciprocal learning and exposure to the breadth of our profession. I was impressed by three main aspects of this conference:

**Diversity.** Our profession is wide and deep. There was learning to be had on an amazing variety of work areas of environmental health. We were able to get exposure to topics in food safety, environmental ties to food nutrition and foodborne outbreak investigation; water quality in terms of recreation, drinking, and wastewater treatment; vector-borne and zoonotic disease; industrial and workplace safety; radon and vapor issues; harmful algal blooms; risk communication and emergency response; environmental illness triggers, and more. Multiple sessions on body art and body piercing regulation and the safety of marijuana edibles illustrated how lifestyle and social changes let us adapt our work to the times.

**Social, Economic, and Environmental Ties.** More than ever before, “big picture” thinking is becoming part of environmental health. Trends in climate change are affecting whole populations. Green building trends speak to carbon footprint and also the health of a built environment (think indoor air quality). Health equity was a recurring element of the conference; I drove by the highway exits toward Detroit on my way to the event, and the “population health” story of that city's lead problem was reflected in the keynote address by Michigan US Representative Brenda Lawrence, among others.

**Professional Development.** There were several ways in which the continued development of the environmental health profession was high-lighted. First, the promotion of continuing education and credentialing included practice sessions and testing sessions for the national credentials of Certified Professional in Food Safety and Registered Environmental Health Specialist; also, students in environmental health academic programs had special sessions devoted to their needs and interests. Second, the interaction between researchers, regulators, and industry professionals was robust and lively. Please note that NEHA has a nationwide Business and Industry affiliate, about which you can find more here: <https://nehabia.org/>. And third, I took advantage of meetings between the presidents of all the NEHA state affiliates to brainstorm ways to improve our Association.

Regarding that last part, it is my hope that VEHA will continue to improve its ability to offer these same services on a local level: keeping in mind emphasis on offering a diverse program of education and training for the wide array of challenges environmental health poses; keeping the big picture in mind of how industry practices, the environment and the wellbeing of whole populations are intertwined; and championing continued professional development including student support, promoting national credentialing and providing educational support for required workplace licensure and continuing education.

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I was happy to see a number of fellow Virginians at the NEHA AEC in Grand Rapids. I recommend the experience to all of you—the 2018 AEC will be held in Anaheim, California from June 25-28. If you are looking for something to stoke your enthusiasm for this profession, this might just be the ticket!

## **VP of Member Services – Sandy Stoneman (2016-2018)**

As the first year of serving in the position of VP of Member Services winds down I can say that it has been a challenging yet exciting time. After much research, the VEHA board has decided to make the investment to revamp our website and also purchase software for the site to handle event registration and membership payments. This will take some time and effort to implement but we believe it will be worth it in the long run by making it easier and more convenient for members to manage their membership and for attendees to register for VEHA's continuing education events held multiple times each year. Starting with our spring 2018 event, there should be no more standing in long lines to pay registration fees! Be watching for website updates later this year.

VEHA membership has held steady for the past year. We currently have 146 members and expect to have quite a few renewals at the upcoming Fall Educational Conference held on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. See the conference agenda at the end of this report.

## **VP of Professional Advancement – Rachel Stradling (2016-2018)**

It was my pleasure to accept the role of Vice President for Professional Advancement earlier this year. My main responsibility in this position is to provide you, our members with information on credentialing opportunities, educational and study resources. I also hope to keep you informed on potential scholarship opportunities and financial incentives associated with obtaining certain credentials.

In 2017, we awarded two \$500 scholarships to enhance the education of two professionals working within Environmental Health. We hope that this money will support them as they gain further knowledge in their chosen study areas.

## **VP of Programs- Tammy Faulkner (2016-2018)**

The VP of Programs draws inspiration for conference topics from various sources. Brainstorming with other board members, listening to the news and public radio features, as well as being observant to what is going on in the industry all help give us ideas. Locating speakers for conference topics can be challenging once an idea is conceived, and keeping open a wide network of professional contacts is important. There are environmental stewardship organizations, professionals, and researchers who all desire to share their knowledge with others. Conference fees at this time are devoted to covering the expenses related to these hosting semi-annual events, along with the popular onsite field days which we hope to return this spring after taking a hiatus in 2017. The board has a strong sense of responsibility to wisely use conference fees for the purpose of hosting an educational event.

As a VEHA member, you are encouraged to send us your ideas for conference topics to your area representative. Also, if you come in contact with someone who would like to present on an

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interesting topic, pass on that information too. Remember, this is your organization for professional development!

**Delegate-at-Large- Lauren Grimmer (2016-2018)**  
**Treasurer- (At Will)**

This year, I've represented VEHA as the Treasurer and Delegate at Large. My main duties have been to maintain the budget and pay for operating costs. I also complete our annual tax submittal and ensure that we pay the state commission to maintain our non-profit status. As a delegate at large, I participate in monthly board meetings and continue to promote knowledge about environmental health topics and VEHA throughout the district I represent.

**Northern Area Delegate- Bryant Wooden (2016-2018)**

It has continued to be a great opportunity to serve as the Northern Area Regional Delegate for VEHA. I have been able to participate in the VEHA conference call meetings where business for the success of the organization is discussed and carried out. I have attended the yearly spring and fall VEHA Educational Conferences in which I have been able to aid with morning set-up, along with assisting with logistics during the afternoon food safety sessions.

I have also encouraged colleagues from the Northern Virginia Region to attend our VEHA Educational Conferences to network and gain continuing education credits for their professional credentials. This past spring at our VEHA conference, one of my co-workers from Arlington was also able to present a helpful and educational food safety presentation on the mobile food unit inspection process. As for the Northern Virginia region, the summer has been busy as usual with tourism, indoor and outdoor pool inspections, hotel inspections, the normal day to day food safety inspections, and ample temporary food events.

It is a great opportunity to work with the VEHA organization as we all continue to protect our communities through the education and understanding of public health.

**Blue Ridge Area Delegate- Ken Hearst (2015-2017)**

The Environmental Health Challenges facing VEHA's Blue Ridge region are likely shared by other Virginia regions, and probably much of the nation.

Food Safety challenges include:

- Increase in inspections at Temporary Food Events due to more events, increases in numbers of food vendors, and increased complexity of food preparation methods used. This requires both more staff time and other resources.
- More complex food preparation methods are also seen in "brick and mortar" food establishments, again requiring more staff time and resources.
- Continued increase in number of Food Trucks.

The VDH On-Site program is uncertainty of their regulator role in the near future, which also contributes to concerns about their job security.

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Other environmental challenges are:

- Monitoring and preparation for possible Zika transmission.
- Increasing cases of Lyme disease.
- Monitoring and assessment of emergence and/or arrival of new vector-borne diseases.

Regulatory agencies face these staffing challenges

- Many long-time Environmental Health Specialists are likely to retire in the next 5 years, making it difficult to maintain adequate staffing levels.
- VDH EH offices are having difficulty retaining skilled employees due to relatively lower wages as opposed to those in the private sector.
- The VDH EH Career Plan does not provide enough steps or challenges for millennials. Millennials and some other generations of employees don't find enough incentives or challenges to keep them actively engaged or willing to stay with the agency.

Successes include:

- Regional and state-wide preparation for monitoring of Zika.
- A generally good response to the ever increasing demands for inspecting Temporary Food Operations at Festivals.
- Safe drinking water provided throughout the area.
- The response to a case of human rabies in the region was another success. Charlottesville area agencies and health professionals coordinated a quick and effective response, including recruiting help from surrounding regions to assist in the effort. The response prevented other people who had potentially been exposed to the human case (before it was known she had rabies) from developing rabies.
- Enrollment in the FDA Retail Program Standards Program by several Health Districts, which demonstrates compliance with food safety standards as well as providing funding for equipment and training for staff development. Some Districts have even become mentors in the program.
- The Private Sector of the On-Site Programs shows some potential for continued growth.
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*(Thanks to Jack McClelland and Whitney Wright for input to identify challenges and successes.)*

## **Southwest Area Regional Delegate – Jessica Stewart (2015-2017)**

As the Southwest Area Delegate, I truly have been grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the bigger picture of Environmental Health within VEHA. I have participated in the conference calls with our board members and I've attended the Fall and Spring educational conferences where I've helped with set-up and general organization to make these conferences a success.

The Southwest Virginia Region has been busy with the ever-growing temporary event season, conducting the yearly inspections of the produce and tree farm migrant labor camps of our area, several lead safety inspections by certified staff, the day-to-day of food safety inspections, lodging facilities, campgrounds, pools, and seasonal summer camps. One district in our Region has recently enrolled in the FDA Retail Program Standards and is successfully demonstrating compliance with this program. The Rabies program surveillance and education has been active since the start of the year with multiple positive rabies exposures that have successfully been resolved/prevented. The Regional On-Site and Well program continues to be dominated by VDH evaluations of site and soil conditions versus private sector evaluations due to the limited

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availability of private sector contractors in our region. This inadequacy of a private sector to meet the demands for the On-Site program may be a fairly unique issue to the Southwest Virginia region of the state and presents a challenge to the new privatization changes of the state program.

## **Capitol Area Delegate – Amy Pemberton (2015-2017)**

I am the current Capitol Area Delegate for VEHA and have served on the Board of Directors of VEHA in several capacities for many years. My career with VDH spans 27 years, and am currently employed as an Environmental Health Supervisor for the Peninsula Health District. I have participated in the VEHA Board meetings and offered support to the organization primarily by participating in the planning and execution of our training events. On October 23, 2017, the Capitol area will be hosting the VEHA Fall 2017 Educational Workshop in Henrico County at the Henrico County Training Center. Coordinating these educational opportunities requires a lot of team work and hard work behind the scenes and I thoroughly enjoy working with such a dedicated group of individuals. As an area delegate, I will continue to reach out to the local health districts and private sector partners in my area with updates from VEHA and to receive feedback from them. I very much enjoy my time with VEHA and encourage all members to consider serving on the VEHA Board and to promote the professional advancement of the professions associated with the organization.

## **Southern Area Delegate- Brock Malcolm (2015-2017)**

It has been a pleasure to serve another year as the Southern Area Regional Delegate on the board of such an active organization like VEHA. The board meets monthly, usually by conference call, to plan and work on the promotion and support of environmental health issues within the state of Virginia. Over the past year I have made it a priority to represent Southern Virginia and be a part of these meetings. One of my "additional job duties" is to represent the Central Virginia Health District as a Certified Milk Specialist. I assisted the Vice President of Programs with the registration, collection of dues, and training setup for the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 Onsite Field Days. Our membership has been steadily increasing over a number of years and I look forward to seeing that trend continue. Thanks to all of you. My term as Southern Area Regional Delegate will end in October 2017. I have appreciated the opportunity to represent the Southern Area of Virginia and look forward to continuing to be an active member of VEHA.

## **Tidewater Area Delegate- Adam Feris (2015-2017)**

This has been another busy year in the General Assembly, which translates into another busy year in the Sewage Handling and Disposal Advisory Committee. The GA passed several EH-related bills which VEHA was invited to provide comment. Fortunately, for both the districts and private sector alike, a few of them weren't quite as controversial as they were when first submitted. One in particular that made the Board a little uneasy was House Bill 2300. The original form of this bill would have greatly limited the VDH's ability to protect public health by greatly limiting the inspection frequency of many types of establishments. Through discussions with stakeholders, including input from VEHA, the GA passed a much softer version of the bill which doesn't really change the status quo for inspections. Another bill that is currently being handled by VDH and SHADAC is the follow up to HB 558, the requirement for privatization in the onsite and well programs. HB 2477 requires VDH to look at the non-legislative parts of HB 558 in more detail and

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provide a plan back to the GA by November 1. Needless to say, things are changing dramatically in the world of onsite.

Respectfully submitted,

David Fridley, President  
Virginia Environmental Health Association

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## 2017 Fall EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

Monday, October 23, 2017  
 Henrico Training Center  
 7701 E. Parham Road, Henrico VA (Rooms 2030, 2031, 2032)

- 8:15 am -- 8:55 am    Registration
- 9:00 am -- 9:15 am    Opening Remarks and Association Business Meeting, David Fridley, VEHA President
- 9:15 am – 9:35 am    National Environmental Health Association Update, James Speckhart, Region 8 Vice President
- 9:35 am – 9:50 am    Break
- 9:50 am – 10:45 am    Recycle What?, Virginia Recycling Association, Tad Phillips, General Manager, TFC Recycling
- 10:45 am – 11:45 am    Sustainable Water Initiative for Tomorrow – The SWIFT Story, Charles B. Bott, PhD, PE, BCEE, Director of Water Technology and Research and Jamie Heisig-Mitchell, Chief of Technical Services Division, Hampton Road Sanitation District
- 11:45 pm – 12:30 pm    Lunch (boxed lunch included with conference registration)

Food Safety/Protection Track		Onsite Sewage and Water Track	
12:30 – 1:30 pm	Protecting the Shellfish Food Supply, Danielle Schools, Division of Shellfish Sanitation	12:30 – 1:30 pm	Coastal Resource Management, Julie Herman, Ph.D. Center for Coastal Resources Management, Virginia Institute of Marine Science
1:30 - 2:15 pm	Oyster Shell Recycling Program, Gregory Garman, Virginia Commonwealth University	1:30 - 1:50 pm 1:50 – 2:00 pm	<b>TBA</b>  <b>Break</b>
2:15 – 2:30 pm 2:30 – 2:55 pm	<b>Break</b>  <b>TBA</b>	2:00 – 2:30 pm	Legislative and Policy Update, Lance Gregory, Program Administration Manager, Office of Environmental Services, VDH
2:55 – 4:30 pm	Sushi Food Safety, Mark Bedzik, Culinary Arts Faculty, Culinary Institute of Virginia	2:30 – 4:30 pm	Convenience Store Onsite Systems, Bryan Genzler, VP of Operations, Meckley Services Inc., and John Ritter, PE

**To attend: RSVP by October 16, 2017 with track preference (Food or Onsite) and any dietary concerns for the boxed lunch to: [tammy.faulkner@virginiaeha.org](mailto:tammy.faulkner@virginiaeha.org)**

- Workshop Fee:**
- Member Conference Registration Fee and boxed lunch: \$30
  - Non-Member Conference Registration (includes 1 year membership) and boxed lunch: \$50
  - Membership Fee payment/renewal can be made online via the [VEHA website](#), however, the conference fee is not set up to be paid on line.
  - Cash or Check payment for conference registration is due at sign-in. Make checks payable to "VEHA".

**6.5 Hours CEU for DPOR OSE/A licensure awarded for attendance. Continuing Education Hours are available for NEHA's REHS credential. Go to NEHA's [Continuing Education page](#) on their website to submit your request.**