

Dedicated to the promotion of high standards in environmental health for the general welfare of the public



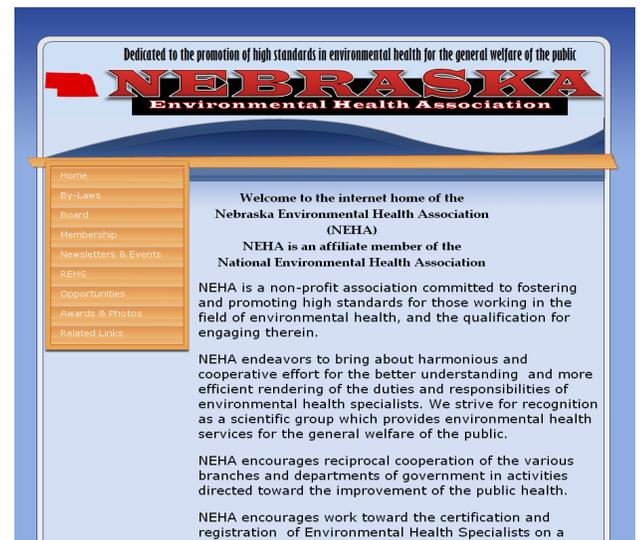
Fall 2013

www.nebraskaneha.com

Nebraska Environmental Health Association Newsletter

NEHA Launches New Website

In August, the updated NEHA website was launched. In addition to the new look, it includes a refreshed logo, links to local, state and federal agencies, and notification of upcoming conferences and trainings. A big “thank you” goes out to Sarah Pistillo for all her hard work getting the updated website on-line! Check it out at www.nebraskaneha.com.



Inside This Issue:

Member News	2
Electronic Inspections	3
Well & Sewage Inspections	4
NE School Chemical Cleanout	4
School Health Policies Study	5
Environmental Health Budget	6
Conferences & Education	7

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Member News

2014 NEHA Memberships

The Nebraska Environmental Health Association currently has 97 members, an increase over recent years. All 2013 memberships will expire on December 31. Benefits of membership include advanced notice of the Annual Education Conference, e-mail news updates, and a bi-annual newsletter.

If you have not already renewed your membership for 2014, applications can be found under "Membership" at www.nebraskaneha.com. An annual membership is only \$10. If you plan on attending the 2013 Annual Education Conference at the SAC Museum, your 2014 NEHA membership dues will be included as part of the conference fees. Membership questions can be directed to Nate Hartman, NEHA Treasurer, at nhartman@lincoln.ne.gov.

NEHA Member Comings and Goings

Congratulations to **Terri Wyzgoski** on her retirement from the Douglas County Health Department on May 31, 2013. Terri worked for DCHD for 24 years. She hopes to stay active with consulting work.

Calvin Kunze, Food Sanitarian with the Department of Agriculture, retired June 30, 2013, after 33 years with the Department. Calvin began his career with the Department on July 1, 1980. He worked in the Kearney area before transferring to work six counties in the York-Seward area. Prior to joining the Department of Agriculture, he worked as a surveyor for Nebraska Health & Human Services.

Melanie Kunc and **Becky Falconer** were hired as Food Sanitarians with the Department of Agriculture. **Mark Graf** and **Mandy Kearney** were hired in the Office of Drinking Water and Environmental Health for DHHS.

DID YOU KNOW...

...you can submit an environmental health article for the next edition of this newsletter? Tell everyone what is going on in your organization, department or program. Share a success story or let everyone know of your research findings.

HOW?

Just submit your article to a NEHA Board member. Visit the NEHA website listed on the front of this newsletter for contact information.

Food Safety Focus Area to Use Tablet Inspections

The Food Sanitarians have begun using electronic inspections in their food establishments. The program was developed by the Office of Chief Inspection Office (OCOI). Implementation will be in phases with the first being conducting of inspections in the field and downloading to the Department data base, and in a future phase, having the inspections available on-line for viewing by the general public.

The majority of the funds for this project come from the Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards grant received last year.



Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards

Nebraska received a substantial grant from FDA to provide assistance in securing hardware and to provide training for state and local food sanitarians in the inspection of manufactured food companies. Both the Food Safety area and the Ag Laboratory received MFRPS grants to support the programs.

The grant is for five years. Funds may be used to purchase computer hardware and develop programs for electronic inspections in the field but mainly provide sanitarians with training classes that are often provided out of the state.

2014 “Nebraska: Don’t Waste It” Calendar

The artwork of 13 Nebraska students will be featured in the 2014 “Nebraska: Don’t Waste It!” environmental calendar. The statewide contest was sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and focuses on the importance of waste reduction, recycling and litter cleanup. Each month, the calendar features one of the 12 winning environmental posters. A 13th winner’s artwork provides the cover for the calendar.

Copies of the calendar are available by contacting NDEQ at P.O. Box 98922, Lincoln, NE 68509, or by sending an e-mail request to NDEQ.moreinfo@nebraska.gov.

New Form Required for Well and Sewage Inspections

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health (Department) conducts evaluations of domestic water supplies and onsite wastewater treatment systems at the request of homeowners, purchasers, or mortgage lending institutions. Many lenders require an inspection of the water well and onsite wastewater treatment systems for compliance with applicable State of Nebraska regulations prior to granting a loan. The evaluation includes a visual inspection of the water well and the onsite wastewater treatment systems and water samples are collected from the water well and analyzed for total coliform and nitrates. The cost of the inspection is \$100.

The Department recently updated the Application for Evaluation of Individual Water Supply and Sewage Treatment System. The application is available at http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/wnh_wellandseptic.aspx. The Department will not accept previous versions of the form after October 1, 2013.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact the inspector for the appropriate county (page 5 of the application).

Please note: This application is not for use in Douglas, Hall, Hamilton, Lancaster, Merrick and Scotts Bluff counties. Contact number for the local health departments are as follows: Douglas (402) 444-7485; Hall, Hamilton, Merrick (308) 385-5175; Lancaster (402) 441-8031; Scotts Bluff (308) 436-6636.

The Nebraska School Chemical Cleanout Campaign

Since 2006, the Nebraska School Chemical Cleanout Campaign (NE SC3) program has aimed to protect students and staff by raising awareness of the risk that improperly stored, hazardous, and outdated chemicals pose in schools, and by providing resource tools to use to conduct chemical cleanouts and implement prevention practices. The goals of NE SC3 include:

1. Get outdated and unsafe chemicals out of all K-12 schools.
2. Assist schools with developing and implementing an on-going Chemical Management and Safety Program.
3. Develop professional development for in-service teachers.
4. Develop chemical management and safety instruction for pre-service K-12 science educators through teacher colleges in Nebraska.

The NE SC3 website provides resources, training opportunities, and information about how a school can participate in the program. For more information, visit their website at www.nebraskasc3.org/ or contact Keep Nebraska Beautiful at 402-486-4562 or email info@knb.org.

CDC Releases 2012 School Health Policies and Practices Study Results

Last month, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released their findings from their 2012 School Health Policies and Practices Study (SHPPS), the nation’s largest and most comprehensive survey to assess school health policies. The study reveals that school districts nationwide are showing improvements in measures related to nutritional policies, physical education and tobacco policies.

“Schools play a critical role in the health and well-being of our youth,” said CDC Director Tom Frieden, in the news release. “Good news for students and parents — more students have access to healthy food, better physical fitness activities through initiatives such as ‘Let’s Move,’ and campuses that are completely tobacco free.”

Key findings from the study include:

Nutrition:

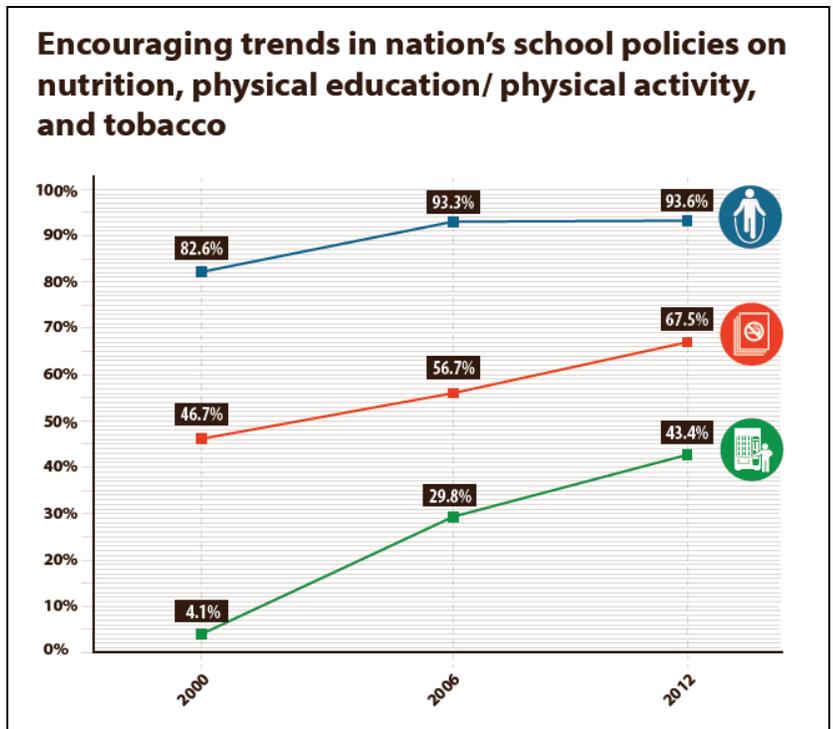
- ◇ Between 2006 and 2012, the percentage of districts that required schools to prohibit offering junk food in vending machines increased from 29.8 percent to 43.4 percent.

Physical Education:

- ◇ The percentage of school districts that required elementary schools to teach physical education increased from 82.6 percent in 2000 to 93.6 percent in 2012.

Tobacco:

- ◇ The percentage of districts with policies that prohibited all tobacco use during any school-related activity increased from 46.7 percent in 2000 to 67.5 percent in 2012.



The CDC study is a periodic, national survey that examines key components of school health at the state, district, school, and classroom level, including health education; physical education and activity; health services; mental health and social services; nutrition services; healthy and safe school environment; faculty and staff health promotion; and family and community involvement.

More information about the study can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/shpps/index.htm>

NEHA's Support of the National Center for Environmental Health Budget

In a "sign-on" letter dated April 4, 2013, the National Environmental Health Association, along with 21 other national organizations, including the American Lung Association, American Public Health Association, and National Center for Healthy Housing, drafted a position in support of the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) budget for FY2014. The letter went to the chair and ranking member of the appropriations committee in both houses, as well as the staff lead for each Senator and Representative of the Appropriations Committees of Senate and House respectively.

In the letter, partners urge Congress to direct \$146,151,000 to NCEH for fiscal year 2014 to continue critical work conducted by the NECH, as well as to "begin to restore the critical funding that has been removed over the past several years" (NEHA, 2013).

Local and state health departments have been struggling with ongoing budget cuts at the local, state and federal level. According to the letter, "Since 2008, health departments have lost over 45,000 jobs and, according to a 2012 survey, one-third of local health departments cut or eliminated environmental health services" (NEHA, 2013). Budget cuts have caused local and state health departments to reduce the number of offered environmental health services, such as case management of elevated blood lead levels in children, asthma prevention programs, health homes services, and environmental health laboratory services.



The letter continues: "Controlling our long-term federal deficit and health care spending will require serious investments in public health and other infrastructure to put the focus on prevention that will keep Americans healthy, happy, and working. Environmental public health activities will be critical to our nation's long term fiscal and physical health" (NEHA, 2013).

National Environmental Health Association, 2013. *Sign-Ons*. Retrieved September 3, 2013, from <http://www.neha.org/pdf/action/SignOnNCEH-FY14.pdf>. Online.

Litter Hotline

Keep Nebraska Beautiful currently partners with the Douglas, Lancaster, Gage, Colfax, and Dodge County Sheriffs' Offices to offer a Litter Hotline to report persons observed littering in those counties. Persons who spot a littering violation along any street, road or highway within the five counties are asked to call 877-NO LITTR (877-665-4887) or complete the anonymous form at <http://www.knb.org/litterhotline.html>. Interested in bringing this program to other counties? Contact Keep Nebraska Beautiful at 402-486-4562 to inquire.

Conferences & Education

NEHA Annual Education Conference

The Nebraska Environmental Health Association's Annual Education Conference will be held on Thursday, October 24, 2013, at the SAC Museum. Registration will begin at 7:45, and the opening remarks will begin at 8:30. The day will be full of fun and educational speakers and activities. The conference has the opportunity for up to 6 CEU's for the REHS/RS. There are some exciting prizes in this year's raffle, so bring your money! The conference fee this year is \$50, which also includes your 2014 NEHA membership fee.



Conference agenda and registration forms can be found on the NEHA website at www.nebraskaneha.com/. Hurry! The cost of the conference raises to \$60 after October 10.

Eighth Annual Region 7 EPA/State Radon Stakeholders' Meeting

The Eighth Annual Region 7 EPA/State Radon Stakeholders' Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 4, 2014, in West Des Moines, Iowa. This meeting is being held at no cost for all those that have a stake in protecting the public from unnecessary exposure to radon in their homes, schools and businesses. This meeting will qualify for continuing education credit in NRPP, NRSB, Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska.

78th Annual National Environmental Health Association Annual Educational Conference and Exhibition

The 78th Annual National Environmental Health Association Annual Educational Conference and Exhibition will be held from July 7-10, 2014, in Las Vegas, Nevada. More information about this event will be posted at www.neha.org.

Changes: Climate, Water and Life on the Great Plains

The University of Nebraska—Lincoln, Nebraska Water Center, is holding a symposium titled "Changes: Climate, Water and Life on the Great Plains" on Tuesday, October 15, 2013, at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. This symposium will focus on the latest research, practice, programming and policy in Nebraska and the Great Plains. Registration fees are \$155 if paid before October 1. Visit the Nebraska Water Center's website at <http://watercenter.unl.edu/index.asp> to register.