

OEHA News

Volume
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February 2004

2004 AEC

**Set For
May 3-5 in
Hood River**

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Say So Long to “Sanitarian”

A century old term that for a time practically defined Public Health will quietly disappear on March 30. There will be no grand proclamation, no impassioned debate, only a technical rewrite of Oregon Statute taking effect, and the term “Sanitarian” is no more.

Housekeeping revisions to ORS 700 passed by the 2003 Legislature simply replaced “Sanitarian” with “Environmental Health Specialist”. The change was made to bring state law language into line with the national standard, and try to more precisely describe the scope of the profession.

The discussion about this name change began many years ago on a national level, and in the late 90’s the Registration Board put together a group to discuss options. Some people felt that adding “Public Health” to Sanitarian was a way to keep the old term and update it at the

same time, but the EHS was clearly the only logical option.

While those who proudly referred to themselves as Sanitarians through decades of public service, were not exactly excited about the name change, few could disagree that the term had become dated and more than a little confusing. Environmental Health Specialist may not be any more descriptive of the profession, at least to the general public, but the broad and often general nature of our profession will never lend itself to a short and catchy title.

So now we get to add two new letters after our names, and get used to taking a couple seconds longer to identify ourselves, and maybe grumble about changes. But before long we’ll be able to look back and say “I remember when were called — Sanitarians”.

President Mack Reluctantly Resigns

The time has come for me to now focus on those things in my life that are most important – my family. Because of deepening family issues, I am resigning my position as President, Oregon Environmental Health Association effective January 8, 2004.

I’ve agonized over this decision for a considerable time and have discussed it with my family and relatives and close friends and have come to conclude that in spite of my deep regard for the work OEHA have accomplished and the potential for greater work in the future I must stand aside.

In accordance with OEHA By-Laws, Article V, Succession of Office, Section 1, "In the event of a vacancy in the Office of President, the President-Elect shall assume that office"

I greatly appreciate the support I've received from the Board of Directors during my tenure. My hope is that you will continue to move OEHA toward a position of prominence as a strong voice for all environmental health professionals in the State of Oregon.

Sincerely;
James C. Mack, REHS, BSEH, MPA

HB 3156, Changes in Store?

“County EH programs were faced with losing the restaurant program, but being left everything else.”

It started as the latest, and most straightforward attempt by the Oregon Restaurant Association (ORA) to take the restaurant inspection program from county Health Departments. It turned into a bill that, if all parties involved follow through, could actually strengthen not only the county EH programs but the statewide public health system as well.

No one should be surprised with anything that emerges from the Oregon Legislature these days, but HB3156 was so completely reshaped over the course of the 2003 session that it still seems a little strange.

The fact that the bill was introduced should not have been a surprise, since ORA Executive Mike McCallum spoke at the 2002 AEC and said he was planning to introduce such a bill, but when 3156 hit the House floor the people who would be affected by it were a bit stunned. Realizing the devastation the bill would have caused, state and county officials began intense negotiations with the ORA. Leading the negotiations to preserve county EH programs were Dr. Grant Higginson, the state Health Officer, and Linda Fleming, the Executive Director of the Conference of Local Health Offi-

cial. When it became clear that the ORA was serious about pushing the bill, and early negotiations did not produce much movement, the Conference of Local Health Officials (CLHO) decided to make a stand. Taking the restaurant inspections away from the counties was not acceptable, and negotiations got serious.

The ORA’s top concern has always been consistency, not only for inspections but for fees as well. If the counties were to continue doing the inspections, the ORA demanded stronger state oversight. McCallum claimed that part of the reason 3156 had been introduced was that during the 2001 session he had been promised stronger state oversight of the county programs in exchange for ORA support of higher license fees in the Direct Service counties.

When the ORA felt that the promises made in 2001 were not honored, HB 3156 was introduced, and few doubted they could move the bill through to passage. What the negotiators need to do was convince McCallum that things would actually

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Scholarship Auction Items Needed

One of the highlights of the Annual Education Conference is the Scholarship Auction. In addition to supporting future Environmental Health professionals by helping with tuition costs, the auction is a fun finale to the evening.

There are two required ingredients if the auction is to be a special event, people and auction items. The more of each that we have, the more fun we will have. Staples of the auction traditionally

have been; bottles of wine, fishing gear and golf related items. It is also fun to have items representing special areas of the state., and any unique item that you can think of.

Last year the auction raised just over \$1,000 for the scholarship fund., which is specifically dedicated to paying tuition for college students while they serve one-term internships with a county Environmental Health program.

OEHA Award Nominations Sought

Each year OEHA members have the opportunity to honor those among us who demonstrate outstanding effort or achievement in their professional life. Now is the time to consider nominations for the four awards annually conferred at the Annual Education Conference Awards Dinner (scheduled for Tuesday, May 4).

Nominees for Sanitarian of the Year and Meritorious Service Award must be OEHA members in good standing, while the Legislative and Editorial Awards are open to anyone who has supported the fields of Environmental or Public Health.

Send the name of the nominee and a specific description of the reasons for the nomination, to one of the award committee members listed below, or to the OEHA webmaster via the website.

Sanitarian of the Year

Awarded to the Sanitarian or Environmental Health Specialist who consistently exemplifies the principles and ideals of the Environmental Health profession

Vern Reiersen

Meritorious Service Award

Awarded in recognition of a career of serving and promoting the Oregon Environmental Health Association and the field of Environmental Health

Ci Sherman Legislative Award

Awarded in recognition of efforts in the legislative process to promote the principles of Environmental Health

Ray Ruff Editorial Award

Awarded in recognition of accomplishments producing educational or informational materials relating to the field of Environmental Health

2003 OEHA Award Winners

Joe Fowler
Sanitarian of The Year

Ken Kauffman
Meritorious Service

Linda Fleming
Legislative Award

Michael McLuckie
Editorial Award

2004 Annual Education Conference Set for May 3-5

Environmental Public Health & Bioterrorism Issues

Monday, May 3, 10:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, May 4, 8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, May 5, 8:00 a.m.—12:00 noon

At the
Hood River Inn
1108 East Marina Way
Hood River, Oregon 97031

Contact: David Bussen (541) 440-3570

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Counties Move to Intergovernmental Agreements

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change, that the state would take steps to hold the counties accountable. Promises were not going to be enough.

The solution almost seemed too simple. Local Public Health Authorities (LPHA's) already enter into annual agreements with the state to operate many programs. One of the exceptions has been Environmental Health. Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) outline responsibilities of both parties, and can be modified annually to reflect changes in funding or program needs, and can be used to outline corrective action if deficiencies are identified.

The IGA model can help make sure a LPHA adequately funds and staffs its EH program, and it can also ensure an EH program is properly training and standardizing

staff. But it will only work well if the state is clear about various program requirements, and diligent about holding LPHAs to them.

If the IGA model does not work, due to failure of either party to follow through, the ORA will probably be back in the legislature in '05 or '07 with a bill to radically alter the statewide food program.

Perhaps the biggest change resulting from HB 3156 is the elimination of the state's Direct Service program. By 2006, all LPHAs will be required to take responsibility for EH programs. This not only restores a core Public Health function to all LPHAs, but it takes a legislative bargaining chip away from the ORA. The state will no longer have to bargain with the ORA just to adequately fund EH programs.

