

Hello CEHA members. Welcome to 2010! I hope you all had a great holiday season and are recharged for a new CEHA year!

The Annual Education Conference in Copper Mountain proved to be a great success. We really need to congratulate all the planning committee members and everyone else that worked countless hours to produce a well attended and exceptional education conference. There were 242 attendees, 11 exhibitors and 48 presenters. The silent auction brought in \$2427.00 and along with the \$1000.00 from the Fat Cat auction, will be going to the scholarship fund. Thank you to Eric Berquist with Infiltrator Systems for the reusable water bottles, Doug Jatcko with Front Range Precast for donating half of the total proceeds of the Fat Cat Auction, Roger Shafer with SCG Enterprises for the breakfast burrito brunch, Derrick Eggleston with Valley Precast for sponsoring Thursday's breakfast break and to Dr. Jim Dale for auctioning off another can of his highly coveted beer. The board would like to express their appreciation to all the exhibitors that provided a great atmosphere for all members to network. Our sustaining membership is an invaluable part of our organization and we are very grateful for all the input and support you provided in the past and would like to work harder to build this part of our membership this year.

At the last board meeting many topics for one day trainings were suggested and those trainings should be finalized in February. If any member has an idea for training or would like to serve on the committee, please contact Richard Stenson, Committee Chair at [rstenson@gunnisoncounty.org](mailto:rstenson@gunnisoncounty.org) or any other board member. We also are very excited to announce that our 2010 AEC will be in Colorado Springs, September 27-29 and will be in collaboration with the FDA Southwest Regional Conference. This is lining up to be an exceptional education experience and I encourage you to attend. The planning committee has just started meeting and is looking for additional members. Please contact Paul Rees, AEC Committee Chair at [rees@larimer.org](mailto:rees@larimer.org) for more information.

One of the goals I had for this year was to make it easier for CEHA members to attend one day trainings and our AEC, in this difficult economic climate. I believe we have found a way in our budget to create several mini scholarships available to CEHA members. We will be finalizing this at our next board meeting in February. Look for more information on this posted on our website soon.

Another goal that is not new by any means, but still as important as ever is to increase membership participation. An organization is only as strong as its membership and their involvement. We would like to involve more of our membership in the decisions the board makes throughout the year. Starting with our next meeting in February, the agendas and meeting minutes will now be posted to the website at least 2 weeks prior to each and every board meeting. Please let any board member know your input about agenda items and the general direction you would like for CEHA to go in for 2010 and beyond.

I also would like to ask everyone to start thinking now about the awards CEHA gives out and which CEHA professional is worthy of a nomination for one of these awards. Currently the awards we present every year are the Environmental Achievement, Environmental Achievement for Industry and the Milton M. Miller. Additionally we are looking at developing an award that will be awarded to a CEHA member working exclusively in the field. Stay tuned as we work on the details. As a prior recipient of the E.H Achievement award, I cannot put into words how honored, surprised, and

appreciative the award made me feel. Let's show our fellow colleagues how appreciative we are of their efforts and really honor their achievements in the field of Environmental Health. We should be celebrating our successes! It is easier than ever to nominate someone with the new online submission process. Last year, the entire CEHA website was remodeled and I encourage you to visit it and see the many new features and improvements, including nominating someone for an award!

When I started in the field of Environmental Health 18 years ago, I really did not see the bigger picture of public health and what a difference, especially Environmental Health could make. It is a big responsibility that generally gets little or no recognition. Most of our contributions are taken for granted, such as safe food, clean air and clean water because when we do our jobs, nothing happens. It is hard to measure prevention. I really did not start out to become a "health inspector." In fact I went to school to be a large animal veterinarian. I had almost completed all the course work for an undergraduate Biochemistry major, when I decided; I really didn't like school very much and certainly did not want to go for another 4-5 years. Without a solid career path mapped out, I did the most logical thing I could think of and that was to switch to a major that would still allow me to graduate on time!

I switched majors and was able to finish up the summer after my senior year with an internship in the QA Department at Excel Beef Plant and soon afterwards began working for the Northeast Colorado Health Department as a new, inexperienced, EH generalist, which can easily be abbreviated GRUNT! Being on the bottom rung of a tall ladder, I was assigned some interesting work that was not at all covered in the text books and I really had no idea what I was doing.

After awhile it started to become clear to me that I could make a difference and began to get more involved in workgroups and organizations such as CEHA. Somewhere along the way I became passionate about the work I was doing. You see, we all contribute differently to our profession, but we all make a difference. Some know this is the field and direction they want to go into right away; others, like me, find our way later.

But it is never too late to become passionate about what you do and the difference you make. If you haven't found that passion or maybe need to renew it, make this the year that you find renewed zest and achieve great things! Challenge yourself and become involved in YOUR organization!! There are many committees that make up CEHA that any member can participate on. Check out the board page on the website to find an area of interest for you. The board is made up of a really talented group of individuals and as a team we are up to the many challenges that will make CEHA a stronger organization.

I am really excited to be your President for the next year and look forward to a great CEHA year! As always, I invite you to share your thoughts and ideas by emailing me at [carmenv@nchd.org](mailto:carmenv@nchd.org).



Carmen Vandebark  
CEHA President