



MEHA Bulletin



President

Mike Melius

Spring Issue 2020

Volume 48, No. 1

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President's Message

Submitted by Mike Melius

As I write this Spring President's Message, a novel coronavirus has made its presence in Minnesota. Two counties have patients that recently tested positive for the virus. State, local, and federal public health professionals have been working for weeks preparing for this emerging health threat. Among these public health professionals are Environmental Health Sanitarians / Specialists in both public and private sectors; successfully responding to this health risk will be a team effort! The virus has many names: coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, coronavirus disease 2019, and COVID-19. But regardless what you call it, environmental health professionals will be a key resource in the response, and MEHA will continue to be a resource for environmental health professionals.

The MEHA Board and Committees have been very active this past year with a variety of Board and Committee work; everything from presentations at national conferences and policy work, to promoting and representing our profession and association at events. Our association is also in the midst of transition. Eric Freihammer has been our Treasurer for several years and has now transitioned the Treasurer duties to Nate Kelly. Our long-time Registration Committee Chairs Frank Sedzielarz and Chris Forslund have transitioned the Committee to Patrick Kuisle and David Boberg. And for a future opportunity, the Publicity and Marketing Committee Chairs Jesse Harmon and Jeff Brown are seeking MEHA Members interested in transitioning into this Committee which organizes Association representation at career and job fairs, as well as volunteer events for members and their families. Please reach out to Jeff or Jesse if you have the *promotional* bug! A great many thanks to all our current and past Committee Chairs and Treasurers for their contributions to our association! And, finally we move into a new year with our annual election. Our First Past President, Caleb Johnson has worked his magic on an excellent lineup of candidates for our 2020 -2021 board members positions:

Vice President: Sophia Walsh, Patric Kuisle

First Year Director: Emily Schoblaski, Dave Boberg and Sarah Covelli

Member-at-Large: Nicole Skatrud, Jessica Jutz

Secretary: Alex Kim and Zamzam Abdirahman

It is great to see this number of members step up to run for a board position, and the competition represented by these candidates is a sign that our members are engaged and enthusiastic, and our association is healthy. Please re-

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view the biographies of these candidates later in this newsletter so your vote is an informed decision.

I have greatly appreciated the support MEHA has built into it for board and committee members as they move through the board positions or join a committee. However, I am very grateful to have followed Caleb Johnson in the line of presidential succession as his leadership continues to be an excellent example and serve the board and association well. I will also pour a heaping dose of gratitude on Ryan Lee as he moves into the role of President in May. While in the President-Elect role, Ryan continued to be very insightful as the Board considered complex issues and decisions. The guy is wired as an organizer ... so the Board will be in great hands.

Finally, **THANK YOU** to all the Board, Committee, and Association members for all your contributions. I have been very honored to serve as President, and proud to represent MEHA here and nationally.

Respectfully,

Mike Melius

The Minnesota Department of Health would like to invite you to a FREE

Healthy Swimming Workshop



Join us for information on waterborne illnesses and how to keep swimmers healthy. Topics include lessons learned from past outbreaks and practical interventions.

April 2, 2020

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Willmar Public Library
410 5th Street SW
Willmar, MN 56201

April 8, 2020

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Freeman Building
625 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55164

For more information, contact Trisha Robinson at 651-201-5414 or trisha.robinson@state.mn.us.

Register online on our [Healthy Swimming Workshop](#) page.



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Sophia Walsh

***Minnesota Department of
Health***

***Candidate for Vice-
President***



Hello! I'm Sophia Walsh. Thank you for being an active member of MEHA and considering me for MEHA Vice president.

I have worked at the Minnesota Department of Health as a planner in the Food, Pools, and Lodging section collaborating with our local partners and assisting with communications since 2018. Prior to that, I worked in Iowa at Cerro Gordo County Public Health as an Environmental Health Specialist from 2010 to 2018, where I conducted inspections for a variety of programs including: private & public wells, onsite wastewater, food, pools, tattoo, and tanning. My primary project was coordinating a CDC EHS-Net grant looking into arsenic in private wells. In 2014, I presented at the National Environmental Health Associations Annual Education Conference about successfully reducing the risk of arsenic contamination in private wells.

I have been a MEHA member since 2017. I currently serve on the MEHA Technology committee. On this committee, I ensure members are quickly assisted with technical issues; electronic communications from membership and the public are responded to promptly; and the MEHA website is kept up to date with current job postings, events, and other information relevant to our membership.

Before moving back to my home state (Minnesota), I was a member of the Iowa Environmental Health Association from 2010 to 2017 and served on the Communications and Membership Committee and as a Member at Large on the board. I attained additional board experience when I served as Secretary and Vice President for the Mason City Jaycees. I was proud to represent the membership in those roles and hope to use my leadership skills to represent you in Minnesota.

Because of my dedication to improving environmental health, I received the Technology Association of Iowa's Iowa Women of Innovation Award in 2014 and IEHA's Environmental Health Professional of the Year award in 2016.

When I'm not working to protect and promote environmental health, you'll find me in Rochester with my husband Marty, daughter Ardella, and dog Tilly, where I enjoy tapping maple trees, curling, and knitting.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be honored to serve as your Vice President and I would appreciate your vote!

Patrick Kuisle
Hennepin County
Candidate for
Vice-President



Hello,

My name is Patrick Kuisle and I am an Environmentalist with Hennepin County. I currently work in several program areas including plan review, public water supplies, septic systems inspections, and food, pools, and lodging inspections. As an active MEHA member since 2015, I've enjoyed many volunteer events and conferences, served on the awards committee, and I'm currently serving as Member-At-Large. In the past year, I have been a MEHA professional student mentor and stepped in to cochair the registration committee hosting monthly RS exam study sessions.

Prior to becoming a Registered Sanitarian, I worked in animal health for eight years. I live in south Minneapolis with my wife Emily and daughter Whitney, and plan to graduate from the U of MN in May of 2020 with a master's degree (MPH) in Environmental Health. I look for ways MEHA can facilitate the maximum public health value in our professions and I would appreciate this opportunity to continue serving MEHA members as Vice President.

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David Boberg

***Minnesota Department
of Agriculture***

***Candidate for First Year
Director***



Greetings colleagues!

I have been working as an Environmental Health Specialist in various aspects for about 15 yrs. I graduated from UW-Eau Claire with a BS in Environmental & Public Health. I furthered my education by obtaining a MS in Public Safety specializing in Emergency Management.

During my career, I have worked at City and County Environmental Health Programs and for the past 4 years at the MN Department of Agriculture. Working at different jurisdiction levels has provided me with a unique perspective of the great work we all do daily to protect our communities and has also helped in developing collaborative relationships to accomplish shared goals.

I have been involved in the MEHA mentorship program for the last 3 years, previously serving proudly as the MEHA Member At Large and current co-chair of the Registration Committee.

I look forward to your vote for First Year Director, so that I can continue to lead our organization through emerging issues and challenges, while identifying the many opportunities to advance the great work that MEHA does!

Thanks,

Dave

Emily Schoblaski

City of St. Cloud

Candidate for First Year

Director



Hello! My name is Emily Schoblaski and I am honored to be running for the First Year Director.

I graduated from Colorado State University with a BS in Food Science and Human Nutrition and a minor in Food Safety. I am currently working towards my MA in Integrated Resource Management focusing on business management and sustainable resources. I have been a MEHA member only since moving to Minnesota, but was an active Colorado Environmental Health Association member since 2012.

I currently work with the City of St Cloud as a Registered Environmental Health Specialist. However, I began my career at Denver Environmental Health as a Marijuana and Food Inspector at retail. I later worked with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment as a credentialed Manufactured Foods Program Inspector, State Prison Lodging and Food Inspector and finally as a Milk Program Inspector specializing in milk plant inspections. I finally made the move to Minnesota to work with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture as a Dairy Inspector in their Dairy Inspection Program. Through all this experience, I have gained a unique perspective at all jurisdiction levels and from multiple states.

In my spare time my fiancé and I enjoy hunting, fishing, working cattle on our cow/calf operation and keeping up with all our animals!

It would be such a special opportunity to work with the EH professionals in Minnesota improving partnerships, learning opportunities and the overall environmental health of our surrounding communities. I look forward to your vote and the opportunity to continue the great work that MEHA and the members do!

Sarah Covelli
Stearns County
Candidate for Director



Hello! My name is Sarah Covelli and I am running for the MEHA Director position. I have been involved in the field of Environmental Health since 2012. I started my career with an internship at the City of St. Cloud. I was mentored, encouraged and advanced to become an Environmental Health Specialist. I am currently working at Stearns County in the Environmental Health Division. My main job roles have been a plan reviewer, a licenser, an inspector, and a problem solver for the Food, Pool, and Lodging program. I am deeply grateful for this journey.

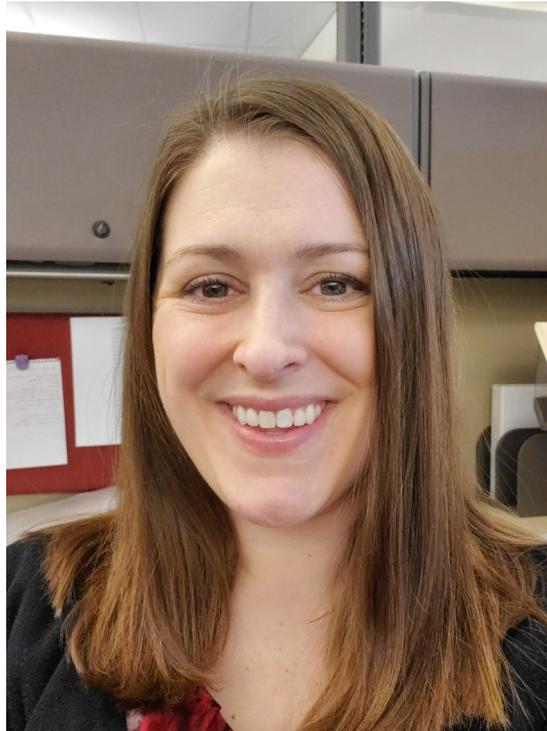
Three accomplishments that make me proud include gaining Registration as a Sanitarian, Standardization, and all my daily public health efforts.

I am skillful at identifying problems then deploying rational thought and resource allocation to solve the problem. I have love and respect for people which gives me the courage to stay comfortable even in uncomfortable situations. I value continuous learning. The availability of new experiences and opportunities offered through MEHA, helps keeps me informed and motivated.

Why do I do what I do? My north star is my faith and my four amazing children. My oldest daughter Kayla is 20. She is out of the house and working at Microbiologics. My twins Carter and CoraLee are 15 and learning how to drive, YIKES! My youngest, Kinley is 8 and she loves gymnastics. As for me, I describe myself as optimistic.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jessica Jutz
City of Bloomington
Candidate for
Member-At-Large



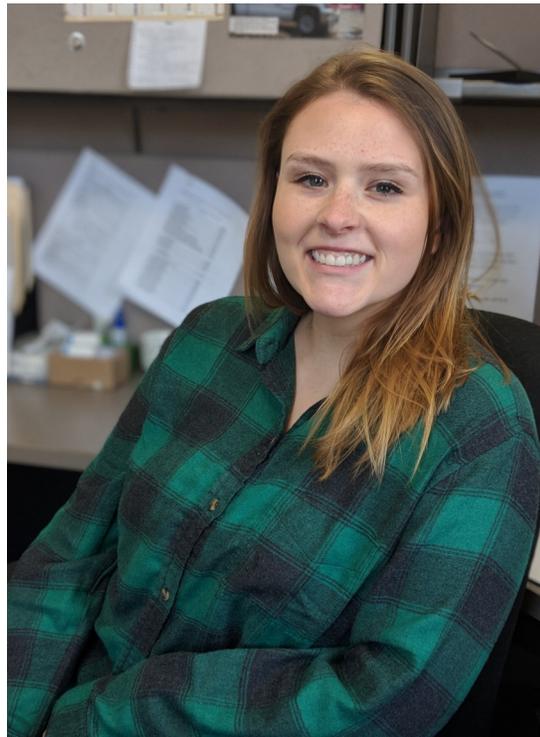
Hello! My name is Jessica Jutz and I am excited to be running for Member at Large of MEHA. I obtained my bachelor's degree from UW-Eau Claire's Environmental Public Health program and my master's degree in Public Health Administration and Policy from the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health. I began my career in environmental health working as a third party auditor for NSF International and then moved to the City of Bloomington where I have worked for 13 years. I have worked in many of our program areas and am currently the supervisor of the food, pools and lodging group.

I have been very involved with MEHA. From 2011 to 2018 I was on the conference planning committee for MEHA and helped orchestrate 2-3 conferences each year. In 2018 I was elected to serve as First Year Director of MEHA and have tried to be a good steward since then.

Outside of work and MEHA I live in St. Paul with my husband and our 2 year old twins. They keep us very busy and life interesting. I love to cook and enjoy being outside.

I look forward to being able to continue my contribution to our fantastic professional organization. Thank you for your consideration.

Nicole Skatrud
St. Paul-Ramsey County
Public Health
Candidate for
Member-At-Large



Hello! My name is Nicole Skatrud and I am running for the MEHA Member at Large position. I graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Public Health. I had my internship with Ramsey County Environmental Health the summer of 2016. During my internship, I conducted pool inspections and temporary food event inspections. After graduating in May 2017, I was hired full time to be an Environmental Health Specialist conducting food, pools, and lodging inspections.

I have been a MEHA member for the last 5 years. As a student, I received the NorthStar scholarship at the 2017 winter conference. I also participated in two MEHA mentorship programs and presented my research on the presence of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in intensive care unit sink water. As a professional, I have served as MEHA secretary for the past 2 years.

In my downtime I have been busy planning my wedding which will be in Ireland in September 2021! Aside from wedding planning, I also enjoy traveling, cooking/baking, puzzles, and eating at new restaurants around the twin cities!

Thank you for your consideration.

Alex Kim

City of Brooklyn Park

Candidate for

Secretary



Greetings MEHA Family! My name is Alex Kim and I'm enthusiastically running for MEHA Secretary.

I've been an active member of MEHA since 2014, first as a public health graduate student, and then as a professional member after graduation.

After receiving my MPH from the University of MN in 2016, I started as an intern in the FLP division of the Minneapolis Health Department, where I completed pool and food inspections and took the lead on Green to Go related complaints. I provided education and guidance to help businesses achieve compliance with the ordinance.

After a wonderful year with MHD, I was offered the role of Environmental Health Specialist with the City of Brooklyn Park. In this position, I have been given the opportunity to grow in the public health sphere and hone my skills as an inspector. I have also had the freedom to exercise my passion for sustainability by catalyzing the formation of and subsequently leading the employee Green Team.

Along the same front, for the past 4 years I have served on the Executive Committee of Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate, an interprofessional group that upholds public health by promoting environmental and planetary health.

Outside of my career and sustainability work, I enjoy spending time with friends and family, cooking/eating/ all things food-related, watching movies, reading, and being active outdoors.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to helping MEHA continue to grow and progress for the

Zamzam Abdirahman
Hennepin County
Candidate for
Secretary



Hello! My name is Zamzam Abdirahman and I'm honored to be considered for MEHA secretary position. I graduated from the University of Minnesota in May 2016 with a BA in Biology, Society and Environment. During May 2016 through September 2016, I interned at Hennepin County Environmental Health Department and conducted swimming pool inspections and collected samples from the local beaches. After the internship, I was hired on as a Community Health Worker for 4 more month before being hired as an Environmentalist. I currently conduct food, pool and lodging inspections, assist in food/waterborne illness outbreak investigations if needed and lead the Beach Sampling program.

During my time as a full time employee, I went back to the University of Minnesota to obtain a Masters in Public Health in Environmental Health Infectious Disease. I had the opportunity to work with Craig Hedberg on my Masters Project which evaluated the relationship between critical violations and risk of outbreak. I graduated Spring of 2019. I also recently passed the REHS exam this past Fall.

I have been a MEHA member for 3 and half years and assisted yearly at hosting the booth for the UMN Career Fair. I would love to work more closely with the organization as secretary if given the opportunity.

In my downtime, I enjoy travelling, reading, spending time with my niece and nephew, playing with my new cat and occasionally playing video games.

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MEHA Winter Conference-2020 University of Minnesota



(MEHA Sponsored) CODE BLUE For Patient Earth

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MCNAMARA ALUMNI CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Learn how climate change is impacting health, and how health professionals and health care institutions can take action to meet these challenges!

REGISTRATION WILL BE OPEN IN EARLY 2020 AT
<http://z.umn.edu/codeblue>

FEATURED KEYNOTE
"The Psychology of Climate Change"
Christina Manning, PhD, Macalester College

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World Congress on Environmental Health, KL, Malaysia

16th INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (IFEH) WORLD CONGRESS 2020

Date: 10th - 13th August 2020
Venue: Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Website: www.wceh2020malaysia.com

One \$3000 MEHA Member Stipend
Application due by 4:00 PM February 28, 2020!
Go to: mehaonline.org for application "stipend"

Organizers expect over 1000 environmental health practitioners, professionals and academics to attend this prestigious event.



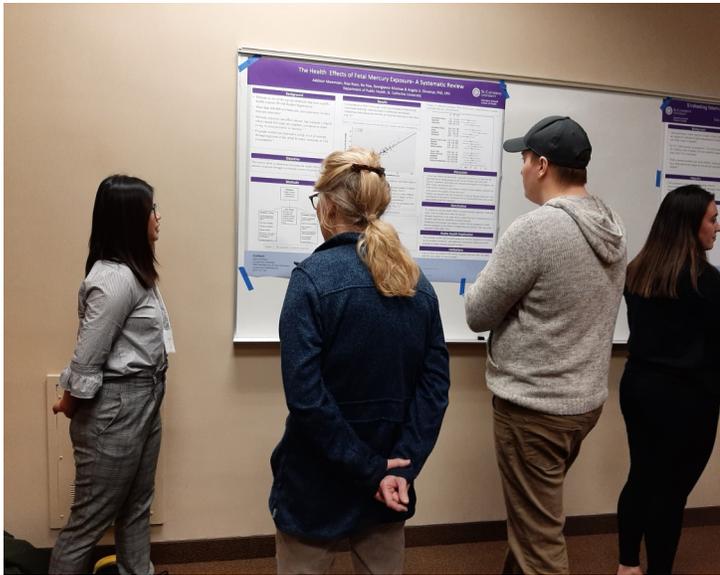
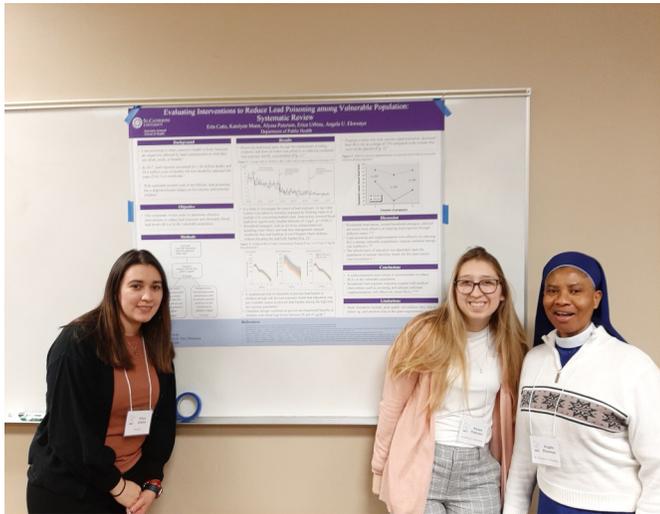
January 30, 2020
University of Minnesota Continuing Education and Conference Center
1800 Buford Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55108

Thursday, January 30th	
7:45 - 8:30 am	Registration and Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 8:50 am	Welcome, Announcements, & Committee Introductions Mike Melius MEHA President
8:50 - 9:40 am	Stress Tolerance in Foodborne Pathogens Byeonghwa Jeon, PhD University of Minnesota
9:40 - 10:30 am	Federally Regulated Health Facility Survey Lisa Hakanson Minnesota Department of Health
10:30 - 11:30 am	BREAK Poster session Room 455 Check out exciting environmental and public health research from students
11:30 - 12:00 pm	Recent Hepatitis A Outbreaks Jennifer Zippich Minnesota Department of Health
12:00 - 1:00 pm	LUNCHEON MEHA Mentor Program Participants Dine in the Club Room
1:00 - 1:30 pm	Presentation of Scholarships
1:30 - 2:00 pm	Legislative 2019 Panel Jim Abeler, Hudson Kingston, and Fatima Moore Moderated by Val Gamble, MDA
2:00 - 2:50 pm	Air Quality's Contribution to Violence Jesse Berman University of Minnesota
2:50 - 3:20 pm	BREAK
3:20 - 4:30 pm	Date Marking, Shelf Life, and Food Labels Theodore Labuzza, PhD University of Minnesota

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MEHA Winter Conference-2020 University of Minnesota



MEHA Student Poster Session

Winter Conference

University of Minnesota

Scholarship Recipients-2020 University of Minnesota



2020 Scholarship Recipients

- Mary Lauren Olson Scholarship
 - Yoon-Sung Nam - \$3000
- North Star Scholarship
 - Gitanjali Raman - \$1000
 - Orion Allgaier - \$1000



MEHA Spring Conference

May 14-15, 2020

Chase on the Lake

Walker, MN

NEHA AEC

Sheraton New York Times

Square Hotel

New York, New York

July 13-16, 2020

MEHA is on Facebook! Visit our page and join the group! Please "Like" us so we can share MEHA news and other interesting Environmental Health info with you in a timely manner.

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Kris Lee Retirement

Countryside Public Health

Submitted by Suzanne Paulson

Kristin Lee retired on February 14, 2020 after 37 years of working in Environmental Health. She started her career in 1983 working as a Sanitarian for the Crystal, Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park Public Health Agency. From there, Kris worked for Ramsey County and Kandiyohi County before joining Countryside Public Health. Kris worked for Countryside Public Health for 24 years during which time she became the Environmental Health Director.

Kris served on the MEHA scholarship committee and was an active member of MEHA. She also served as a member of the EHCIB and participated in other committees over the years. She helped mentor new sanitarians while at Countryside Public Health, and was always willing to share her knowledge to help new staff.

Kris is looking forward to traveling with her husband and spending time with family during her retirement. Kris is enjoying taking their dog Smokey for walks. She also plans to do some volunteer work with Meals on Wheels and other local groups now that she has retired.





STIPEND APPLICATION

**2020 NEHA Annual Educational Conference: July
13-16, 2020**

New York, New York

Background

The Minnesota Environmental Health Association (MEHA) will provide one winning recipient with full conference registration at the early registration price for the NEHA Annual Educational Conference: July 13-16, 2020 (\$630 value) in New York, New York plus select travel expenses. The recipient will be selected based on information provided in this application.

Application Criteria

The applicant must:

- Be a MEHA member in good standing for at least five (5) years.
- Be a current member of NEHA (or sign up if selected).
- Submit the application.
- Attach a letter from their supervisor or agency (if applicable) giving them permission to attend the Conference if selected.
- Write a short article, including photos, following the conference for the MEHA newsletter sharing their experience with other members.

Preference will be given to applicants who have:

- Participated on MEHA committees or been active in supporting the organization.
- Either never attended a NEHA Annual Educational Conference, or have not attended in the last 5 years.

The deadline for receipt is 4:00 PM Wednesday, April 1, 2020. Incomplete applications will be rejected.

Submit your application form and attachment(s) to Jessica Jutz, jjutz@BloomingtonMN.gov.

An e-mail will be sent to confirm receipt of the application form and any attachments. The individual selected to receive the stipend will be contacted by April 8th.

NOTE: Early bird registration for the NEHA conference ends April 24, 2020.

Expenses eligible for reimbursement are limited to:

Registration: Early registration discount, membership rate. The Delegates are required to be members of NEHA or to join when signing up for the conference. Delegates are personally responsible for paying their NEHA membership dues.

Transportation:

Air travel: Coach-class tickets purchased in a manner and timeframe that minimizes the expense to the Association.

Ground Travel: Shuttle-type transportation to the lodging site (if not otherwise provided).

Lodging: Single accommodation in standard room, preferably at or comparable to the Meeting's official hotel.

Food: For those meals not included in the Meeting registration fee, the Association will reimburse the Delegates up to the amount given in the U.S. General Services Administration CONUS schedule for the meeting location.

2020 NEHA Annual Educational Conference: STIPEND APPLICATION

Applicant Information

Name _____

Address _____

City: State & ZIP Code _____

Employer and/or educational institution _____

Email address _____

Phone# _____

1. Have you ever attended a NEHA Annual Educational Conference? If yes, when was the last year you attended?

NO _____ YB _____ YR _____

2. Compose and attach a brief statement describing your interest in the stipend. Please include the following information:

- why you would like to attend the NEHA Annual Educational Conference,
- how attending will benefit both you and MEHA,
- a description of your participation on MEHA committee(s), and/or
- contributions you have made to MEHA.

Limit of one page, please.

3. Attach a letter from your supervisor or agency (if applicable) giving permission to attend the conference if selected.

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Brown-Nicollet Reunion

Submitted by Kim Carlton

Former Brown -Nicollet staff Karen Swenson, Jeff Brown, Kim Carlton and Bonnie Holz recently gathered for a luncheon. All four alumni are also former Staffenson award recipients . Bonnie said "It must be something in the water."

Congratulations to you all!

Bonnie: 1983-2002

Karen: 1987-2018

Jeff: 2002-2005

Kim: 1998-1999

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Preparing for the RS Exam?

The MEHA Registration Committee welcomes you to attend afternoon study session on the third Wednesday of each month. _

Join the Skype meeting (patrick.kuise@hennepin.us) or come to Hennepin County's office at:

1011 1st St South, Suite 233, Hopkins, MN 55343

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MEMBER UPDATES

Congratulations to James Noyola, MDH, on the birth of his daughter.

Congratulations to Asbah Hadi, MDH, on the birth of her daughter.

Congratulations to Mike Melius, Olmsted County, on his promotion.

Congratulations to Cindy Weckwerth, City of Minneapolis, on her promotion

Congratulations to Jason Saloum, MDH, on his promotion.

Congratulations to Tessa & Jim Donovan, City of Minneapolis & Target, on the birth of their daughter.

Thank You to the following people who contributed to this edition: Angie Cyr, Suzanne Paulson, Caleb Johnson, Jim Topie, Amy Saupe, Patrick Kuisle and Kim Carlton.

Request From The Editor

An important part of the newsletter is the human element—what is going on with MEHA members. Please let the editor know about any comings and goings, births, weddings, honors...

Deadline for the next issue is

September 1, 2020

Send to:

Lori Green, R.S.

St. Paul-Ramsey County Public Health

2785 White Bear Avenue N., Suite 350

Maplewood, MN 55109-1320

Lori.Green@co.ramsey.mn.us or Angie.Cyr@state.mn.us

651-266-1172