

New Mexico Environmental Health Association
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NMEHA

What's New In New Mexico?

June 2021

UP AND COMING EVENTS:

Mark your calendar. NMEHA fall conference will be virtual and held November 2—3, 2021. More information to come.

INTERNSHIP/VOLUNTEERING

Contact Bernalillo County for availability at 505-314-0310

COMMITTEES

NMEHA currently has 5 committees which include:
Auditing—Chair Melise Taylor (mtaylor@cabq.gov)
Education—Chair Sam Frank (Samuel.frank@ihs.gov)
Membership and Public Relation—vacant
Professional Advancement—Chair Kellison Platero (kplatero@bernco.gov)
IT/Internet—Chair Kaitlin Greenberg (kgreenberg@cabq.gov)

If you are interested in joining a committee please contact respective committee chair.

CALLING ALL NMEHA MEMBERS

NMEHA is currently looking for members to participate in serving in a committee! Committee members help fulfill NMEHA's mission in providing education and training opportunities. For committee opportunities or to join a committee please contact the following:

Pres.: Samuel Frank (Samuel.frank@ihs.gov)
Vice Pres.: Kellison Platero (kplatero@bernco.gov)
Treasurer: Melise Taylor (mtaylor@cabq.gov)
Secretary: Kerianne Gardner (kgardner@bernco.gov)
Board Member: Kaitlin Greenberg (kgreenberg@cabq.gov)
Board Member: Francelli Lugo (flugol@cabq.gov)
Board Member: Jamie "Jay" Wyatt (Jamie.wyatt@ihs.gov)



President's Message:

Greetings NMEHA Members!

It is truly remarkable to reflect on all of the challenges of this past year. From near total lockdowns to the great toilet paper crisis of 2020, I think it's safe to say we're all ready for a return to some semblance of normalcy in our everyday lives. As with others, NMEHA has undergone some changes over the past year, including the departure of our valued most recent President, John Rhoderick. John's leadership will be greatly missed, and we wish him the best in his new endeavors. With John's departure, it will be my pleasure to serve you for the remainder of his term. Additionally, we would like to welcome two new members to the Executive Board, Kerianne Gardner with Bernalillo County, and Jaimie "Jay" Wyatt with the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service. We are excited to have them join our NMEHA family and will lean on their wealth of environmental health knowledge and expertise to continue carrying out the NMEHA mission.

A few updates and announcements to our members. First, we were happy to host the first ever NMEHA Lunch and Learn Virtual Webinar this past April, featuring Scott Overpeck with the National Weather Service in Albuquerque. Scott provided an informative presentation on Climate Trends in New Mexico and a recording of the presentation can be found on our website at the following link: <http://www.nmeha.org/event-4229317> Second, we are VERY excited to announce the return of the NMEHA Annual Conference being held November 2nd-3rd, 2021. This year's event will be held virtually and will offer a variety of both Vector Control and Environmental Health presentations. Please stay tuned as more details about this event, including: registration/cost, agenda and opportunities to earn CEUs, will be coming your way soon!

Finally, as we look forward to new beginnings, we want to put out another friendly reminder that NMEHA needs your help! We have several standing committees awaiting your participation. If interested, please reach out to any one of your NMEHA Board members and we will get you connected. Remember these committees are here to benefit you our valued member (s), so please don't hesitate to get involved and/or share your ideas with us. As always, on behalf of the entire Executive Board, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all of the environmental health professionals who continue working tirelessly to protect the public health of all New Mexicans and beyond.

Very Respectfully,

Sam Frank

New NMEHA Officer and Executive Board

Jamie Wyatt

Jamie Wyatt is a Registered Sanitarian with the Indian Health Service and is currently based out of Durango Colorado where he provides environmental health services to the Jicarilla Apache, Ute Mountain Ute, and Southern Ute indigenous communities. He received his B.S. in Environmental Health from Western Carolina University in 2010 and brings a combination of government and industry experience. In his spare time, Jamie enjoys volunteering with the Durango Adult Education Center and sight-seeing Colorado wildlife.

Kerianne Gardner

Bernalillo County Health Protections likes to welcome Kerianne Gardner to NMEHA. Kerianne has been with Health Protection for little over a year and has experience working with the EPA with water quality and range science. She currently is serving as the secretary for NMEHA.

COA Environmental Health Department Update

After a tumultuous 2020, things are starting to look up for our community. The City of Albuquerque Environmental Health Department (EHD) Consumer Health Protection Division (CHPD) would like to thank all of our community members for taking the necessary precautions for COVID-19, keeping up with changes to the Public Health Orders, and assisting our inspectors in protecting our community. As vaccinations continue to increase in our community, we look forward to seeing some of our favorite Albuquerque events start to come back this summer and fall. Our inspectors will be at large scale events to ensure that vendors are adhering to all food safety practices. In addition, our office resumed issuing noise permits for private gatherings and events. If you are needing a noise permit, please call our office at (505) 768-2738 to schedule an appointment. Finally, please join us in welcoming two new staff members to our division, Angela Zamora, Nathaniel Vigil. Each of them brings a wealth of knowledge to their positions and we are excited to have them join our team!

Unexpected Consequences: Pandemic Exacerbates Instances of Illegal Dumping

Through the course of the pandemic, Bernalillo County has seen an increase in illegal dumping. Construction debris, yard wastes, tires and other household items, such as old furniture, mattresses, clothing and general trash make up most illegally dumped items. Several possibilities account for the rise in illegal dumping, including limited hours of operation at transfer stations, extra time to do remodeling or re-organizing, and value-seeking individuals.

For a time during the pandemic, Bernalillo County Health Protection was not conducting in-person inspections at pools and food establishments because of the public health order. Due to the isolated and outdoors aspect, investigation of illegal dumping is a task readily accomplished in a socially distanced manner. Total number of illegal dumping complaints rose by 139% during the pandemic; from 28 complaints in 2019 to 67 in 2020. As of May 24, 2021, illegal dumping complaints year-to-date is 88, already surpassing total number for 2020.

Task forces continue to be developed, partnerships forged, improved administrative processing and investigative tactics. Efforts at a cultural shift are on-going and effective media tactics are being researched as means to prevent future illegal dumping. The culprits are not who you might suspect. In some instances, trash hauling businesses are doing the dumping. By hiring unlicensed contractors or haulers and not receiving a transfer station receipt for disposed of items, it is possible unsuspecting individuals may be contributing to illegal dumping. Working to clean up sites can be a rewarding, tangible way to improve the New Mexico landscape. —Kerianne

Become a NMEHA member

Not a member but would like to become one or know someone who would benefit? Join NMEHA! Becoming a NMEHA member is easy as 123. Visit nmeha.org and click on the “become a member” tab then enter information and pay membership fee. Membership fees are as follow:

1. Student: \$25.00
2. Professional: \$50.00
3. Corporate: \$100.00
4. Retired: Free

Officers and Executive Board

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