

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



NEHA President Sandra Long Recognized for COVID-19 Leadership

National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) President Sandra Long was recently named Employee of the Year by the Town of Addison, Texas. President Long was honored with this award for her leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in keeping restaurants

safe through the development and implementation of virtual inspections. While geographically small (just 4.2 square miles), Addison is home to approximately 280 food establishments and food safety is extremely important. “People come to Addison for the restaurants, which is why food safety must be my top priority,” stated Long.

Long is the environmental health manager for the Town of Addison and has been in that position for over two years. She oversees the Environmental Health Division and her responsibilities include food and pool inspections and plan review, vector control, maintenance and evaluation of environmental health data, complaint investigations, and apartment/multitenant licensing. She also supervises the environmental health and code enforcement staff.

On March 13, 2020, a local public health emergency was declared in Dallas County and within one week, all restaurants in Addison were limited to takeout and delivery, and many other retail establishments were closed. As everyone struggled to understand the affect of the pandemic on local businesses, residents, and the community, many looked to Long for guidance and she helped her town navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

To ensure food safety, virtual food inspections were adopted to provide routine food inspections during the pandemic. These virtual inspections enabled Long and her staff to assure proper food handling and preparation processes were being carried out while keeping staff and food service employees safe from exposure to the virus. In addition, Long and her staff were a resource to food establishments, often going door-to-door to make sure they were aware of regulation changes that were happening almost daily. Restaurants and businesses contacted her on nights and weekends to ask questions and get help figuring out solutions to keep their businesses open. She was always positive and upbeat even though the conversations were difficult ones.

Long has emerged as a leader in the implementation of virtual inspections. She has shared the protocols her division developed for virtual inspections with others regionally and nationally through training videos, webinars, and virtual presentations. As

stated in her nomination for this award, “Sandra’s leadership of the Environmental Health Division exemplifies innovation, flexibility, and a dedication to employees, customer service, and public health that is deserving of recognition.”

In addition to her food safety work, Long assisted in the drafting of COVID-19 emergency response plans for employee health and safety, illness prevention, office processes, cleaning and disinfecting, and temporary housing and quarantine. She coordinated with the town’s marketing department for information and messaging to food establishments and the public. She played a key role in the implementation and enforcement of county and state orders for food establishments and the public, and made herself available to the public to help them understand protocols and safety measures. Long also helped draft reopening plans and protocols for food establishments, recreational centers, bars, gyms, schools, and courts, as well as provided guidance on how to implement these plans and protocols.

“I am overwhelmed by this honor and am excited to have the work of environment health recognized,” stated Long. NEHA congratulates President Long on this award and commends her for the leadership she has demonstrated on local and national levels during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Dr. Leon Vinci Honored by the Virginia Environmental Health Association

The 2020 A. Clark Slaymaker Honor, given annually by the Virginia Environmental Health Association (VEHA), was presented to Dr. Leon F. Vinci, RS, at the VEHA Fall Educational Conference. VEHA President Sandy Stoneman presented the award to Dr. Vinci for

outstanding contributions to the environmental health profession and programs across the state of Virginia. She commented, “Leon’s contributions and expertise have greatly benefited the profession. He has made a difference through his service on the VEHA board and to the field of environmental and public health.”

“It is indeed a great honor and privilege to receive this award,” stated Dr. Vinci. During the fall conference, Dr. Vinci was elected as a vice president of VEHA and has served on the VEHA board for 4 years. As an internationally renowned leader in public health and epidemiology, he is also an ecoAmerica Climate and Health Leader and a Climate Ambassador with NEHA.

To learn more about the award, visit <http://virginiaeha.org>. 🌐

People on the Move is designed to keep NEHA members informed about what their peers in environmental health are up to. If you or someone you know has received a promotion, changed careers, or earned a special recognition in the profession, please notify Kristen Ruby-Cisneros at kruby@neha.org. It is NEHA’s pleasure to announce our reader’s achievements and new directions of fellow members. This feature will run only when we have material to print—so be sure to send in your announcements!