

NEHA NEWS

Engage and Share Resources on NEHA's COVID-19 Response Online Community

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the environmental health workforce, including changes to how local and state regulatory agencies conduct training and engage in regulatory inspections. In the rapidly changing world of COVID-19 response, we recognize that many agencies and organizations have created excellent training resources and inspection forms that, should they be readily accessible, would help ease the burdens of other jurisdictions. While guidance from federal agencies is very important, putting this information to use within state and local areas requires countless resources to create the forms and tools to serve each specific jurisdiction. This process has been the case regarding restaurant reopenings and similarly is being repeated for swimming pools, body art, hotels, schools, correctional facilities, HVAC units, and wastewater, to name just a few.

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) recognizes the need for a credible resource repository that can help environmental health professionals gain access to best practices on COVID-19 response, recovery, and resilience building and as they relate to environmental health. Based on feedback we have received from many of you, we are pleased to announce the launch of the COVID-19 Response Online Community (ROC) for you to engage in peer-to-peer learning and resource sharing.

Through this platform, users can access a resource library where participating state, tribal, local, and territorial (STLT) public health agencies and environmental health programs are able to share their communication, training, inspection forms, and other such resources developed for COVID-19. We are working to collect and collate user submitted resources into different categories—restaurants, body art, swimming pools/recreational waters, etc.—allowing environmental health professionals and safety specialists to engage with their peers through an interactive discussion forum that facilitates resources sharing, information exchange, and making connections that create opportunities for technical assistance.

This virtual community of practice has multiple features that facilitate collaboration and professional development in emergency management. Membership to the virtual community is free and does not require NEHA membership to join and participate. Individuals who sign in through the MyNEHA portal can directly upload the materials they have created. The COVID-19 ROC is an extension of our COVID-19 website (www.neha.org/covid-19) where we provide access to NEHA's COVID-19 resources and resources we have curated from across our nationwide network of STLT agencies, organizations, industry partners, and academic institutions.

Features of the COVID-19 ROC include a discussion forum, resources library, events calendar, member directory, and community-wide search option. Members of the community can engage on the virtual platform by uploading or downloading relevant materi-

als, engaging in discussions, connecting with peers, and promoting relevant events. The discussion forum on the online community will serve as an interactive social storehouse to help local and state agencies share resources and templates on COVID-19 communication, training, and inspections. The discussion forum also allows users to comment on posts and cast positive votes on responses to recommend a response or highlight it as a “best answer.” The follow button allows a user to follow a discussion thread as it develops.

The COVID-19 ROC is monitored by NEHA to provide a safe, secure, and productive virtual environment that is conducive for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing. The membership of NEHA's COVID-19 ROC is diverse and is open to STLT governmental environmental and public health agencies and programs, other state agencies and departments, federal agencies, national organizations, industry personnel, and academic institutional partners.

To join the COVID-19 ROC, visit <https://emergency-neha.org/covid19/communities>.

NEHA Staff Profile

As part of tradition, NEHA features new staff members in the *Journal* around the time of their 1-year anniversary. These profiles give you an opportunity to get to know the NEHA staff better and to learn more about the great programs and activities going on in your association. This month we are pleased to introduce you to one NEHA staff member. Contact information for all NEHA staff can be found on page 56.



Madelyn Gustafson

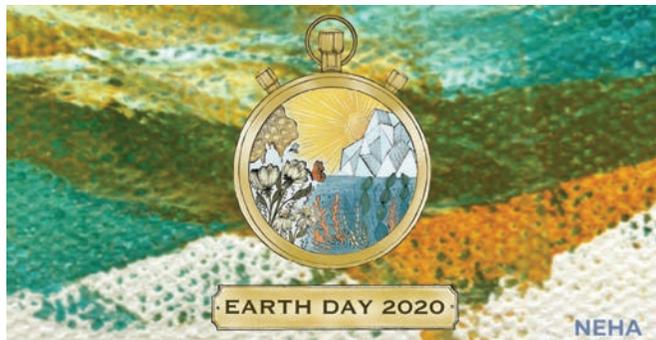
I officially joined NEHA in August 2019 as a project coordinator in Program and Partnership Development. Prior to this opportunity, I worked as a preceptee at NEHA and finished up my undergraduate degree. After a summer working with NEHA, I knew this organization was exactly where I wanted to start my environmental health career.

Born and raised in Wisconsin, my family and I loved spending every possible moment outdoors. These memories range from backyard cookouts to weekends “up north.” My love for these moments continued into college at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse as I decided to pursue a degree in public health—community health education with a focus on environmental studies. As a young public and environmental health professional, I am motivated to provide adequate needs and care to all people, grow our communities to become more sustainable, and help shape the next generations to be happier and healthier.

In my personal life, you can find me exploring the Colorado landscape, listening to music, golfing, planting and gardening, and cheering on the Milwaukee Brewers, Milwaukee Bucks, and the Green Bay Packers. Go Pack go!

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day

By the NEHA Earth Day Committee



The National Environmental Health Association's Earth Day artwork was created by staff members Lexi Nally and Seth Arends.

NEHA proudly celebrated Earth Day 2020 with the Earth Day Network on April 22, marking 50 years of Earth Day. Since the first Earth Day in 1970, the U.S. has made tremendous progress improving air quality, cleaning up contaminated lands, and protecting our water resources. The Earth Day 2020 theme was "Climate Action."

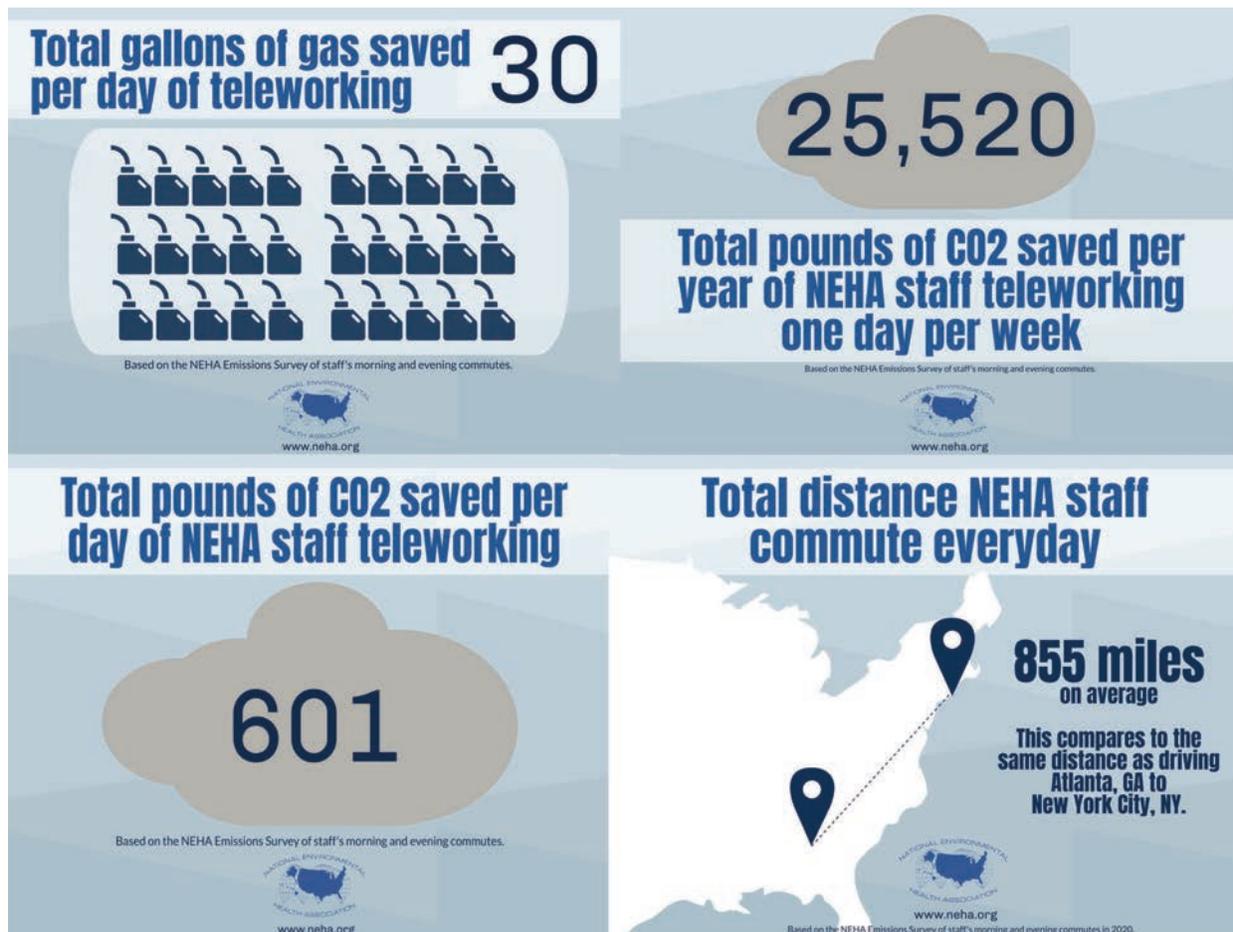
In honor of this historic celebration, NEHA organized several interactive activities.

NEHA Staff Emissions Survey

NEHA conducted an internal emissions survey with Denver and Washington, DC, staff regarding their morning and evening commutes to work. The results from this survey display the positive environmental impact of our teleworking and highlight potential areas where we can grow this impact. Figure 1 summarizes the results from the survey.

FIGURE 1

Teleworking Impact of National Environmental Health Association Staff



NEHA NEWS

Earth Day Twitter Chat (#EarthDayChat)

NEHA, the Environmental Law Institute, and Climate for Health hosted an Earth Day Twitter Chat on April 21. In total, 123 Twitter users from around the world gathered to discuss climate action and what steps they are taking to combat the challenges of climate change.

The #EarthDayChat resulted in the following:

- 188 posts,
- 103,544 unique users reached, and
- 233,778 impressions (i.e., the number of times posts were seen).

Thank you to everyone who participated in the chat and made the informative discussion a success. To read answers and responses from the chat, search for the hashtag #EarthDayChat on Twitter.

What Earth Day Means to Me

NEHA created the What Earth Day Means to Me campaign to hear from members, affiliates, staff, and all environmental health professionals and learn what Earth Day means to them. Responses from the campaign are posted on a blog at www.neha.org/membership-communities/get-involved/day-in-life/what-earth-day-means-me.

Earth Day 2020 Lunch & Learn

NEHA invited Jessica Lally, a program administrator at the City and County of Denver in the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, to speak about recycling during a staff presentation on Earth Day 2020. Lally educated staff on best practices for recycling in our personal lives, as well as in the office. As NEHA continues to improve our impact, we were grateful to collaborate with local partners to work toward bettering our sustainability measures. Visit www.neha.org/earth-day-recap for a full recap and to download the Lunch & Learn recycling presentation.

Thank you to all who participated in our Earth Day 2020 activities and made it a successful and memorable celebration. We look forward to Earth Day 2021!

**Just in Time From NEHA Video Series**

By Kim Koenig (kkoenig@neha.org)

NEHA has introduced a new training tool for environmental health professionals. The Just in

Time From NEHA Video Series serves up timely environmental health insight in digestible bites. NEHA is partnering with agencies and experts to develop informational videos that break down important topics, provide best practice tips, and even offer some perspective. With an eye towards educating and supporting environmental health professionals, each video comes with helpful links for deeper dives and printable resources to use and share.

Michele DiMaggio, NEHA Region 2 vice-president and retail health supervisor in Contra Costa County, California, brought her experience to the COVID-19: Farmers Market Safe Operations video. This Just in Time From NEHA video addresses issues and practical solutions for farmers markets, swap meets, and produce vehicle operations during the pandemic. DiMaggio clarified that farmers markets are considered essential businesses and offered a wealth of practical advice and reusable tools to help markets adjust their operations.

“Many environmental health professionals have the same questions and concerns. Hearing about our experiences and work might help other environmental health professionals in their daily decision making,” stated DiMaggio, highlighting the benefit of these easy-to-access training videos. “I received many positive responses after the farmers market video was posted.”

The first Just in Time From NEHA Video Series—COVID-19—will cover a range of pandemic-related public health concerns, policy highlights, and suggested practices. Subjects include Food and Drug Administration temporary guidance, preventing COVID-19 transmission in the workplace, and challenges faced by environmental health professionals as federal, state, and local responses to the pandemic evolve.

The complete Just in Time From NEHA library, including additional links and printable resources, can be found at www.neha.org/just-in-time. NEHA will continue to expand this educational collection and would like to hear from you and the environmental health community. Visit the Just in Time From NEHA web page, view a video or two, and submit ideas for educational topics and environmental health trends that deserve the spotlight. 🐛

Did You Know?

In continued support of environmental health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic, NEHA has posted an updated COVID-19 page at www.neha.org/covid-19. The page provides information on COVID-19 updates, resources for environmental health professionals, guidance resources, articles, and more. You can also find a list of NEHA resources that include the COVID-19 Response Online Community, Just-in-Time From NEHA Video Series, and COVID-19: Essential Functions of the Environmental Health Workforce Live Chat Series.