

December 2001

Except where identified, Alan Dellapenna presented agenda items on this call. Attendees and Area Announcements listed after minutes.

Institutional EH Topics

Safety Audit of IHS, PHX Visit this week

The DHHS Safety Management Program is auditing the IHS Safety Program this year. Merritt Lake and Julie Sobelman, DHHS Safety Manager are visiting sites in Phoenix Area this week as the first step in the audit. David McMahon did a tremendous job preparing for the visit and reviewing/revising the audit questionnaire. **Thank you David.** At this point, Julie would like to visit sites in Oklahoma City and Aberdeen Areas. David gave a brief overview of the visit on the call.

WebCIDENT Development Workgroup Meeting

WebCIDENT is a new incident data system that a workgroup of IEH officers are developing. It is an electronic version of the HHS 516 form with many expanded features. Darren Buchanan is making great progress in doing the programming for WebCIDENT. In January, Richard Turner and Darren will make a presentation on WebCIDENT to a DHHS interagency safety management group. The Department is looking to develop a new standard data system and is very interested in WebCIDENT.

IEH Meeting

The annual Institutional Workshop will be held in San Diego February 18-22, 2002. Merritt is still working on the agenda. Please send agenda topics to Merritt.

Injury Prevention Topics

Fellowship Selection, Dec 21

The Fellowship selection deadline has passed. A board will review applications and make selections on December 21. Applicants still have time to send in additional information to their application.

IP Level I, Intro to IP, next week in new format

The Injury Prevention training courses have gone under a systematic revision over the past year. The first revised course will be presented in Albuquerque next week.

General Environmental Health Topics

Orientation Course/EHSC Update – Topic covered by Bobby Villines

The January Orientation Course agenda was distributed last week. There are 15-16 DEHS participants in the course.

Bobby has time on the DEHS Dir. Meeting Agenda in January. During his time he would like feed back on the current course offerings and ideas for DEHS training needs.

Agency Promotion Recommendation

The IHS-EHO Agency Promotion Recommendation Board met this week. The board is preparing a briefing document with recommendations for changes to improve the process. This was a quality assurance exercise to improve the process, close some of the loopholes, and clear-up the ambiguity for candidates and reviewers. Their recommendations will be shared with DEHS Dir.'s at the Jan meeting and changes will be made to the IHS policy after the meeting.

The board was asked to come up with consistent standards to review candidates so credit was given equally for candidates. They reported that in their review of the 30 candidates, the board changed 26 of the scores, some had points removed, some added. A summary of the point changes will be presented at the DEHS Dir.'s meeting in January, and the DEHS Directors will be briefed individually on the specific point changes made for their officers.

Annual Report

Most of the Area's have submitted their reports, Thank you. A combined report will be prepared next week, forwarded for inclusion in the OEHE report, and posted on www.dehs.ihs.gov. Comments and changes to the format are welcome.

EHS of the Year

The deadline for Area nominations to HQE is December 14. We will try to distribute documents back to DEHS Directors so we can have a selection at the January meeting.

Tucson Area Consult Visit

Thank you to Mark Pike and his staff for a good visit last week. A somewhat new format was used for this visit, it is a work in progress, it seemed to have worked well. An outline for the approach used will be presented at the January meeting.

RRM & Comparison Table

The latest RRM totals generated were recently distributed. The numbers were generated in WebEHRS for the first time this year. The totals reflect: an increase in the DEHS work load nationally; workload increase in all Areas; and a significant workload increase in some Areas. Nationally, the DEHS workload has increased annually for the past several years. This year's workload increase is somewhat larger than last year's. The likely the result of the workload increases are: implementation in the IEH RRM in the RRM calculations this year; a comprehensive re-accounting of the DEHS workload throughout IHS with the implementation of WebEHRS this year; and the continuing growth of the DEHS work load.

We expect to see workload increases to continue in the next few years because:

1. Nationally, DEHS has done a poor job of accurately assessing workload for several years. WebEHRS is changing that. We should expect to see RRM increases from better accounting of workload as WebEHRS is implemented to tribal programs; staff and managers become more familiar and skilled with the system; and the coding definitions are revised and understood by field staff and managers that have not used them for years.
2. The traditional FDS workload for many tribes is increasing as the result of increased prosperity among many tribes, economic development on many reservations, and population growths. The old perception that the DEHS workload is fixed is changing as tribes change; the DEHS workload is going to reflect these changes.

This month we are preparing a database to help understand the trends and changes in DEHS workload. The database will contain the annual DEHS RRM summary table for each Area from 1993 to present year. For each year by area, the number of facilities and the workload factors for the facilities will be available. The database will allow us to see where our workload has changed over the past 10 years and help us understand where it is going in the future.

DEHS Dir. Meeting Agenda Review/Feedback

The agenda for the January meeting was distributed last week. We reviewed the agenda. We are going to try to make decisions, actually take some action, on several items at the meeting. References for agenda topics will be distributed prior to the meeting.

Through a verbal vote of the silent majority on the call, we agreed to meet all day Wednesday rather than the proposed scheduled ½ day. A revised agenda will be distributed. Please send in any suggestions for the agenda.

Note: the reservation deadline is next Friday, December 14.

Area EIS Coordinator's Meeting

The EIS training agenda was distributed to identified Area attendees with the DEHS Dir. meeting agenda. EIS coordinators are welcome to attend the DEHS Dir. meeting.

Vacancy Table Info

Remember to update your vacancies on www.dehs.ihs.gov

The HQE DEHS Director position closes Dec 14, the announcement is on www.dehs.ihs.gov

Tom Crow

Tom was attending the EHOPAC meeting today. He looks great and is doing much better following his heart attack last month. Tom extends his appreciation for the words, thoughts and prayers.

Next call, February 7, 2002. We'll be together in Oklahoma City for the January call.

Participants and Area Announcements

Aberdeen: Dave Compton

Asked if Area EIS Coordinators were welcome to stay for DEHS Dir. meeting in OK City. Yes.

Albuquerque: Jerry Lee

Mr. Bates starts this month as Supervisory SU Sani in Albuquerque.

Anchorage: Tom Coolidge, Mark Kelty, Keith Cook

Mike Halko is starting this month in Dillingham.

Bemidji: Bruce Etchison

Stewart Watson has accepted a position with FDA in Florida. The responsibilities of the position may change before it is announced and filled after Stewart leaves.

Billings: John Sery

No announcements.

California: Geoff Langer

The IEH meeting is in San Diego Feb 18-22. The hotel is hosting a happy hour the night of the 17th for early arrivals.

Nashville: Not on the call. Craig was hosting the EHOPAC meeting at the same time as the call.

Navajo: Ralph Fulgham

Navajo Area vacancy information is updated on www.dehs.ihs.gov. Navajo Area has a late IP Fellowship applicant. Bobby Villines asked Ralph to send him the application; it would be added to the applicant file.

Oklahoma: Not on the call. Kevin called in after the call and was briefed.

Phoenix: Mike Welch, David McMahon

Steve Tome starts as Reno District Sani this week. The District IP Coordinator positions in Pinetop and Parker close this week.

Portland: Bob Bialas

Lorna Morgan was selected for the Spokane District position. EPA has a position in Seattle, it is listed on www.dehs.ihs.gov.

Tucson: Mark Pike, Quanah Nail

No announcements

Environmental Health Support Center: Bobby Villines

No additional announcements

Rockville: Alan Dellapenna, Jeff Smith