

# NC STATE BOARD OF SANITARIAN EXAMINERS

## October 2006

### Newsletter

#### General Update

Currently in North Carolina, there are 1073 Registered Sanitarians; of that number 123 are retired or unaffiliated and 165 are interns. The Board approved 98 interns since last year's Newsletter. The exam was administered 3 times to 100 interns, and 53 passed. Another exam was administered on October 6, 2006 in Raleigh to 31 applicants. The Board has held 8 regular meetings and 2 conference calls since last year's newsletter.

#### Board Membership Changes/Status

The membership of the Board changed with the retirement of Dicke Sloop of Wake County. Lynn Lathan of Mecklenburg County was appointed by Governor Easley to fill the Piedmont Environmental Health Specialist vacancy. Terry Pierce, DEH Director was reappointed as the representative for DENR. Sheila Nichols was reappointed as the DEH representative. Len Gilstrap was reappointed as the Eastern Environmental Health Specialist position. Dr. Burton Ogle of Western Carolina University was reappointed as the Educator representative on the Board.

In addition, the position held by Layton Long as the Local Health Director representative expires on December 15, 2006. Because Mr. Long was appointed to an unexpired term, he is eligible to be reappointed. The term held by Mack Dendy of Jackson County expires on December 15, 2006 in his position as the Western Environmental Health Specialist representative. He has held two full terms, so this position will be filled by someone new from Western North Carolina.

The current officers for the Board are: Chairman, Malcolm Blalock; Vice Chairman, Terry Pierce; Secretary/ Treasurer, Len Gilstrap. Dr. Ogle is the Education Committee Chairman and Len Gilstrap is the Legislative Committee Chairman. Due to large numbers of continuing education requests to be reviewed, the Education Committee has been expanded to 4 members.

#### Website

The Board's website, [www.rsboard.com](http://www.rsboard.com), has been well received and is used by many. It is currently averaging over 1,000 visitors a month. The Board welcomes your input for suggestions on ways to make the site more useful. Please send any comments or thoughts to any Board member or Ms. Jones. If you have not visited the website, please try it soon!

#### Examination Changes

The Board renewed the contract with NEHA that enables North Carolina to use the national exam for the credentialing of professionals in the state. NEHA has contracted with a new vendor, Environmental Health Testing (EHT), and there have been some changes made with the new vendor. The cost of the exam has increased to \$125. The new exam has been administered twice, but it is too early to determine whether the passing rate has changed from the old exam to the new one.

### *Disciplinary Actions*

The Board has received several complaints that have necessitated investigation teams being appointed pursuant to Rules of the Board. Two Board members are assigned to investigate complaints and to report back to the Board any recommendations for potential action. Below is a synopsis of disciplinary actions since last year:

The Board investigated a complaint regarding Cherokee County. The investigators found no grounds on which to recommend disciplinary action regarding the specifics of the complaint, so no action was taken.

The judicial review involving Gerald Strickland of Robeson County was conducted in Robeson County Superior Court. The Superior Court judge ruled that the Board acted appropriately in suspending Mr. Strickland's registration, but changed the length of suspension from 5 years to 1 year, and included "time served". The Board is appealing the reduction in the length of suspension to the NC Court of Appeals.

A complaint regarding Russell Williams of Catawba County was investigated by the Board. The investigators recommended that a hearing be held to determine what action, if any, should be taken by the Board. Mr. Williams voluntarily surrendered his registration. The Board accepted his surrender of registration and he is no longer a Registered Sanitarian.

A complaint involving the falsification of records in Wake County was investigated. The investigators recommended a hearing be held to determine what action, if any, should be taken by the Board. The hearing is currently pending.

### *Legislative Update*

The Legislative Committee is still working on proposed changes to the laws and rules for the Board. It is the intent of the Legislative Committee to have the law revisions introduced as a bill in the next legislative session. Concurrent with the proposed changes to the laws, the Board has worked on a number of proposed changes in our administrative rules. The proposed changes may be found on the Board's website. The Board needs your support when it moves forward with this important legislation.

### *Database Partnership*

The Board has partnered with DEH to develop a computer system that will combine the databases from the CIT system, the Authorization system, and the Board's system. The new system "**RS Credentialing and Training System**" has been under development, on paper, for approximately a year. DEH has agreed to incur most of the cost of the system development and will house the data and the server for the new system. The system will be web-based, and will allow access for the public, RSs and RSIs, the Board, and DEH. Individuals in the system will be allowed and encouraged to change their information such as new address, employer, and their contact information. The Board believes the new system, with many automated reports, will save work for DEH and the Board and will help RSs and RSIs get to the information they need more easily.

### *Environmental Health Practice Committee*

The Board is looking at the issue of environmental health technicians. A committee of stakeholders has convened and has been working together to try to define the line between work that requires registration and work that does not require registration. While this issue is controversial, the Board felt that a proactive approach in dealing with technician issues may help to prevent the introduction of legislation that may be harmful to the profession as we now know it. Len Gilstrap is currently the chair of the group and is hoping to have a final report and recommendations by the end of this calendar year.

### *Administrative Information*

The Board recently received notice from the Office of State Controller requiring all Boards and Commissions to do a Self-Assessment of Internal Controls for the Board. The Board has completed the self-assessment and has determined that it is lacking in most areas of written policy development. In going through the material, we believe the Board has been operating as well as possible, given the small size of staff (only one half-time person) and the fact that it is so decentralized. However, the Board wants to operate even better. Accordingly, the Board is undertaking a process to develop policies to assure that the Board's resources are properly administered and that there are policies to address those areas necessary. The Board believes that when the policies and processes are put into place that it will take more time for staff to do all of the work than is currently allocated. Hence, the Board may be increasing the time (and costs) of operating the Board for the purpose of assuring that it is operating correctly.

### *Budgetary Status and Outlook*

On a financial note, the Board continues to spend more than it is taking in. Dues (\$35 per year) have not increased since the law was enacted in 1982. Increases in spending include the following:

- Expenses incurred in the investigation of complaints and the legal actions following the complaints,
- Addition of website,
- Increased costs of Board meetings. Until about 5 years ago, counties and state agencies covered most travel costs for Board members to attend meetings. Now, all of that cost is paid by the Board,
- Postage has increased significantly over the last 24 years.

Current balances for the Board are as follows:

• Checking Account	\$6,044.41
• Money Market Account	\$8,816.16
• Share Account	\$32.78
• STIF (Short Term Investment Funds with State Treasurer)	\$40,862.00
• Total of accounts:	\$55,755.84

This compares with a total of \$58,675.84 from last year. (\$2,920.00)

The Board has been spending more than it has taken in for the past several years. The new requirements by the Controllars Office are likely to increase costs. If a change in revenues for the Board does not happen within a few years, it will be experiencing an emergency situation in which the Board will not be able to pay its bills. The Board will be seeking legislative changes, including a change in fees to allow the Board to be self-sufficient and to carry out its responsibilities properly.