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# The Role of the State Lab Association in the Environmental Testing Industry

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# The New York Association of Approved Environmental Laboratories

- NYAAEL was formed in 1979 for the purpose of promoting excellence in environmental analysis.
- NYAAEL's vision was to provide labs educational opportunities that would:
  - Keep commercial, industrial, and municipal labs informed of changes in New York State Dept. of Health's policies and regulations
  - Conduct work shops and training sessions for laboratory personnel
- We currently have 70 laboratory members



# NYAAEL's Founding Issues

- In 1979, the New York State Health Department did not have a program in place to assist laboratories
- The Health Department had proposed the construction of four regional labs to be built across the state
- Once operational, work performed by private labs would be absorbed by the state
- A NYAAEL member generously provided the services of their attorney, and through his efforts, the regional lab proposal was dropped by the state



# The Pennsylvania Association of Accredited Environmental Laboratories

- PaAAEL was formed in 1986 for the purpose of promoting excellence in environmental analysis.
- PaAAEL's vision was to provide labs educational opportunities that would:
  - Keep commercial and municipal labs informed of changes in PA DEP's policies and regulations
  - Conduct work shops and training sessions for laboratory personnel
- We currently have 80 laboratory members



# PaAAEL's Founding Issues

- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's certification program was in place but the flow of information was slow to reach the laboratories
- PA DEP's certification program was only available for drinking water labs and information was not readily available to other types of laboratories
- It was determined that there was a need for analyst training across the state



# NYAAEL & PaAAEL's Organizational Structure

- Both NYAAEL and PaAAEL are Non-Profit 501(c)6 trade associations
- Each association has a seven member Board of Directors that includes the Chair/President, Vice Chair/Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, and four directors, one of which is the Immediate Past Chair/Pres.
- The Executive Director serves on the Board as a non-voting member.
- Member labs have one vote per laboratory
- Corporate Sponsors are non-voting members



# Cost of Membership

- Membership in NYAAEL is:
  - \$395 for Commercial & Industrial labs
  - \$300 for Municipal labs
  - \$300 for Corporate Sponsors
  - Two free meeting tickets are included in laboratory membership dues
- Membership in PaAAEL is:
  - \$325 for all laboratories
  - \$300 for Corporate Sponsors
  - Two free meeting tickets are included in laboratory membership dues



# Benefits of Membership

- Three Newsletters per Year
- Three Seminars per Year
- Three Meetings per Year
- Annual Convention and Trade Show
- Online Data Integrity/Ethics Training
- Two Free Meeting Tickets per Lab Membership
- Full Time Staff Available During Normal Business Hours



# How Can Lab Associations Better Serve the Industry

- Be a Conduit of Information between your State Accrediting Body and Your Membership. This can include:
  - A state representative providing an update at your meetings
  - A state representative providing seminars on issues that are troubling to the members
  - Establish a column in your newsletter where member's questions are answered by the state.
  - Provide a website with comprehensive and up-to-date information.



# Provide Quality Training

- Provide Quality Training at a reasonable cost to members
  - This is an excellent way to reach out to non-members as well. Once they see the value of the training, they are more willing to become members
- Provide Online Training
  - Because many small labs and municipal labs are unable to travel, online training gives them the opportunity to receive required training for a nominal fee.



# Networking Opportunities

- Although many people feel that virtual communities have negated the need for face-to-face networking, our associations have found that once people attend, they find it to be a valuable asset.
- Providing valuable networking opportunities can be difficult, but is definitely a value added service to members

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# Advice on Starting an Association

- Form a consensus group that is ready to commit to developing a new association
  - Find people within your consensus group willing to serve in a leadership capacity
  - Hold an introductory meeting in a central location and invite all accredited labs
    - Don't adjourn without solid plans and a date for a follow-up meeting
- Keep the leadership actively developing the groundwork for your new association. Keep the lines of communication open to all interested parties.



# Advice on Starting an Association, con't

- Decide on your membership structure early i.e. all lab types, commercial labs only, etc.
- Make sure that the Board of Directors represents the membership, and not just the larger labs.
- There are many associations that are trying to draw the interest of potential members. You must establish a niche that is unique to your group.
- Prepare volunteers for the amount of time that will be required. It will take more than you think.
- Be relevant. You must identify what labs need and provide it in a professional manner.
- Be professional and be available.
- Reach out. Don't try to reinvent the wheel.



# Questions

- I am available to answer questions any time. You may contact me at:
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