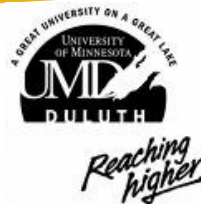


ISSUE  
**01**  
DECEMBER  
2009

UNIVERSITY OF  
MINNESOTA  
DULUTH

# MASTER of ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH and SAFETY

## NEWSLETTER



### Editors' corner

We are happy to present this first issue of the MEHS newsletter from the class of 2010. Established in 1974, the Master of Environmental Health and Safety program at UMD is celebrating **35 years** of educating safety professionals. Over 750 safety professionals have graduated from this program, making a tremendous impact on the health and safety of workers across the globe.

The 2009-2010 academic year represents another step in the program's evolution as it strives to produce future safety professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary to practice in today's workplaces. As the result of internal curriculum audits, discussions with alumni and prospective students, changes in the Graduate School structure at the University of Minnesota and economic challenges both internal and external to the University, the MEHS program has expanded its degree completion options. Although students can still complete the intensive two-semester program on-campus, others can take 3 to 4 semesters while pursuing part-time work or research opportunities. For students who may need to continue working full time, an 8-semester evening option is also available. Funding is also more readily available for longer term students; for example, the program hired its first graduate research assistant this year.

## MEHS Class of 2009 & 2010



### ASSE Northwest Chapter UMD Student Section Officers



President: Andy Kamm  
Vice President: Mike Nilsen Jr.  
Secretary: Colleen Pearson  
Treasurer: Mike Villa  
Social Chair: Paul McDonald  
Editors: Myriam Trepanier & Nick Vomastek  
Promotion: Max Motley  
Website Administrator: Brad Hickey  
Alumni coordinator: Tyler Neis

The 2009-2010 class includes 10 motivated and passionate students from various backgrounds. This newsletter intends to inform and stay in touch with previous graduating classes. We hope you enjoy the content! Please feel free to contact us or the faculty/staff with any comments, concerns or questions. Additional information on the program and the current class is available on the MEHS website: <http://mehs.d.umn.edu/>

Sincerely,  
**Myriam Trepanier** – [trep0024@d.umn.edu](mailto:trep0024@d.umn.edu)  
**Nick Vomastek** – [voma0007@d.umn.edu](mailto:voma0007@d.umn.edu)  
*Editors*

## Words from ASSE's Student Section President

With the start of the first semester well underway for this year's MEHS class, I have to say that it has been an interesting and exciting ride. So far this fall we have attended the Northern Area Safety and Health Network Day at Spirit Mountain, hosted the University of Wisconsin Stout for the 2009 SSHA Lecture Series, and toured U.S. Steel's Minntac facility in Mt. Iron, MN. We have also had wonderful opportunities to listen to and talk with various industry experts who have given presentations to the class. We would like to thank the following presenters:

- Paul Beck, RJF Agencies
- Crystal Nicolai, MN Dept. of Labor and Industry
- Dave Ferkul, MN dept. of labor and Industry
- John Primozich, The Builders Group
- Katie Schofield, The Builders group
- Jay Rodstein, Honeywell
- Jon Liesmaki, Honeywell
- Luke Sammon, SFM
- Becky Klingler, SFM
- Wende Morrell, Morrell Associates, Inc.
- Terry Villa, Minntac
- Chad Buus, Minntac
- Mike Nilsen, Health & Safety Specialists

Some students from the program attended the ASSE Future Safety Leaders Conference held in Indianapolis. We are also eager to participate in a couple other site tours scheduled for later this month. Harvey Burski has set up a class tour of the New Page paper mill in Duluth and classmate Colleen Pearson has scheduled a tour of the construction site of the new Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center Arena (DECC). Information and pictures on those activities and tours will be included in upcoming newsletters.

**Andy Kamm – kamm0034@d.umn.edu**  
**ASSE UMD Student Section President**

## Faculty and Staff

Robert Feyen :	Program Director
Pat Wollack:	Executive Office and Administrative Specialist
Darrell Anderson:	Senior Lab Coordinator
Todd Loushine:	Assistant Professor
Seraphin Abou:	Assistant Professor
Harvey Burski :	Adjunct Associate Professor
Mike Marturano:	Instructor
Wade Roseth:	Instructor
Jim Stauber:	Instructor

### Scholarship Award Recipients

#### *Gordon O. Voss Scholarship*

Myriam Trepanier & Mike Nilsen Jr.

#### *James Scott Soleim Memorial Scholarship*

Andy Kamm



***Congratulations!***

### 2009-2010 Events

November 10<sup>th</sup>

New Page Paper Mill Factory tour

November 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>

Future Safety Leaders Conference, Indianapolis, IN

November 23<sup>rd</sup>

DECC Arena Construction Site tour

December 8<sup>th</sup>

Murphy Oil Factory tour

February 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup>

20th Annual Construction Safety Conference and  
Exposition,  
Chicago, IL

## Spirit Mountain Safety Day

On September 29, 2009 the MEHS class attended the Minnesota Safety Council Northern Area Safety and Health Network Day at Spirit Mountain in Duluth, MN. The conference included several exhibitors showcasing the latest in Safety and Health products as well as informational topics within the Safety Profession.

Throughout the day, several topics were presented including: Minnesota OSHA Overview, Assessing the Other Hazards, Pandemic Influenza, Combustible Dust Standard, Wind Energy, Scaffolding Fundamentals and Best Practices, as well as an innovative presentation by Professor Todd Loushine entitled Safety 101- Tips for Success.

Following the Conference, the Students and Other ASSE Northern Chapter members headed to Blackwoods in Proctor to discuss the possibility of beginning a Duluth Chapter of ASSE. The meeting provided the students with wonderful networking opportunities as they were introduced to program alumni as well as leading professionals in safety. A large number of safety professionals were interested in participating and creating a Duluth chapter for members from Northern Minnesota.

Overall, the Safety Conference was a success. It gave students many networking opportunities and allowed them to connect with knowledgeable safety professionals.

**Colleen Pearson – pears458@d.umn.edu**

**Tyler Neis – neisx018@d.umn.edu**

## Mine Tour

On October 24, 2009 we took a tour of U.S. Steel's Minntac mine and plants, the largest taconite operation in North America. Terry Villa, area manager of mine development, conducted the tour of the open pit mine. We watched a hydraulic shovel load a 240-ton production truck. We also had an opportunity to board a rotary drill and a hydraulic shovel that was down for maintenance.

After the mine tour we met Chad Buus, shift manager, at the agglomerate and took a tour. The agglomerate is where the finished product, a pellet, is made and loaded onto trains. Lastly, we went to the crusher and watched the production trucks dump their load into the primary crusher, where the large rocks of taconite are broke down to less than six inches in diameter.

**Mike Villa – vill0153@d.umn.edu**



From left to right: Nick Vomastek, Colleen Pearson, Dr. Todd Loushine, and Tyler Neis at the Spirit Mountain Safety day events.



Minntac, a U.S. Steel facility, is located in Mountain Iron, MN. Its main operations are raw material mining and processing

## SESHA Lecture

This year, UMD had the privilege to host the annual SESH A conference presented by Jay Rodstein and Jon Liesmaki. Both UMD and UW-Stout students were given a crash course on the semiconductor process and how it applies to Honeywell. We were all shown what “A Day in the Life of an EHS Professional” is like in the SESH A industry, which we discovered to be greatly influenced by industrial hygiene practices. Both Jay and Jon provided insight on what to expect upon graduation and what direction environmental health and safety is headed.

In addition to the “boot camp” on the semiconductor industry, Jay and Jon covered the SESH A scholarship program. So far a few students have shown interest in submitting abstracts for these scholarships, which could result in monetary awards and an internship opportunity in the SESH A industry. UMD MEHS students have done well in the past with these scholarships, so look for updates on these scholarship recipients.

The day ended with a webcast from Caitlin Anderson, a former UMD MEHS graduate, who covered resume writing and interviewing techniques. We came away from the conference with industry specific knowledge on SESH A, further networking with UW-Stout students, and skills that will help us obtain the right job.

**Nick Vomastek – voma0007@d.umn.edu**

## New Page Paper Mill Tour



On November 10<sup>th</sup>, the class attended a tour of the New Page Paper Mill. The tour was guided by our very own Harvey Burski, who still knew many of the current employees and up-to-date processes. We also heard from Matt Rossing, safety manager, and Gabe Dodson, STAR facilitator, on New Page’s safety programs and proactive approach to behavior-based safety. After watching a video on the paper manufacturing process and obtaining the proper PPEs, we began our tour.

Because the New Page Paper Mill houses so many different manufacturing processes, we were able to see first-hand many different scenarios and the associated, inherent hazards. The elaborate process of creating huge rolls of paper from grinding down dry wood into mixtures of pulp and clay that is dried over carefully engineered roller was explained by Harvey and supplemented by the explanation of administrative controls. With all of the massive pieces of equipment and large number of employees, we were impressed by New Page’s safety philosophy that empowered its employees to make safe decisions.

Visiting New Page Paper Mill was a great experience that everyone enjoyed. We all came away from the tour with a new found respect for the paper manufacturing process. Also, the safety practices used by New Page were unique and insightful. A special thanks to Harvey for being our “tour guide”!

**Nick Vomastek – voma0007@d.umn.edu**



## Alumni Spotlight

Name: Anne Vomastek  
Graduation Class: 2005  
Employer: 3M  
Job Title: EHS Engineer  
Industry: Manufacturing  
Contact Info: aevomastek@mmm.com



### 1. Where is most of your time spent on a typical day of work?

On a typical day, I walk into the plant around 7:30 a.m. and respond to emails for about an hour. After that, I go to the floor and attend meetings in the production area. I go to departments and talk with employees and supervisors. At these meetings, I go over expectations that involve: safety, health, ventilation, toxicology, etc. I look at tracking systems: global safety health system, global environmental management system, and industrial hygiene system. What's great about these systems is it allows me to compare my plants performance to other plants' performance at 3M through an intranet. This allows me to assess goals for the quarter, where I need to be, and how to get there. Lately I've been spending a lot of time talking to workers to hear first-hand their concerns and issues. I like this because you can better understand how the job is done and how hazards and injuries can occur. I've realized that you must respect the worker to better understand their individual safety issues. Travel is also a big part of my job.

### 2. What was the hardest transition you had to make from the classroom to the industry?

After graduation, you know about all these safety concepts and techniques, but I really can't link it to any experience. For instance, when the first employee comes into your office with a safety issue, you better know the answer. The good thing is that you have a great network already established through your contacts from school and networking events. Not being able to answer questions was the most intimidating part. Know where the resources are and it doesn't hurt to ask!

### 3. What is the most rewarding about your job?

The biggest reward is to have had a positive impact on my boss and plant manager. They are now completely on board with EHS. Seeing this as a plant priority is rewarding and critical to successful safety programs. In addition, I recently received two CEO Safety Awards this past year, which were achieved by reducing IRs from 13.4 to almost 0. Even if you don't feel you are doing a great job at times, it is great to sense recognition when connecting with employees and showing how important safety is to them and to their employer. I've also had 4 OSHA inspections since my employment at 3M and handled them professionally, and resulted in only a few citations that were successfully contested.

#### 4. What are the challenges you face daily?

The language barrier is very challenging at some facilities. Furthermore, all the plants that were acquired by 3M have employees that aren't familiar with 3M culture and practices. Many aren't even familiar with EHS professionals, so it becomes difficult to establish my title and role. The number one issue: lack of safety culture at these plants and trying to change this to be more aligned with 3M's culture.

#### 5. What advice do you have for future safety professionals?

Make as many contacts as you can. Get as many email addresses and numbers from conferences and speakers, and maintain these contacts. MEHS is a great degree, so don't stress too much about attaining a job. You are needed as an EHS professional, so don't sell yourself short by settling for a company that won't foster your degree/education.

## Future Safety Leaders Conference

Andrew Kamm, Mike Nilsen, and Nick Vomastek attended the Future Safety Leaders Conference this November in Indianapolis, IN. Our own Dr. Todd Loushine was a keynote speaker at the conference on *Networking for Success*. These student members of ASSE's UMD Student Section attending the conference had the opportunity to show what they have learned over the course of the year while representing UMD.

This conference was a great networking opportunity for all attendants and provided round table discussions on various industries in the health and safety field. The two-day conference wrapped up with resume writing and interviewing tips. Look to future newsletter issues for photos of this conference and what our graduate students experienced and learned.

**Nick Vomastek – voma0007@d.umn.edu**



*Issue no.2 coming soon!*  
*MEHS website: <http://mehs.d.umn.edu/>*