

AIHce 2014: Perry Gottesfeld Recognized for World Leadership in EHS

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The Social Responsibility Award recognizes EHS professionals who advance EHS in communities in need around the world.

The American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) awarded its annual Social Responsibility Award to Perry Gottesfeld, executive director of Occupational Knowledge International (OK International). The award, cosponsored by Bureau Veritas, recognizes leadership among environmental health professionals who have made significant contributions to advance environmental health and safety in communities most at need around the world.

OK International is working to improve health and safety conditions in many of the world's most hazardous industries including lead battery recycling, lead battery manufacturing and smallscale mining.

"OK International is honored to be recognized by our peers in the American Industrial Hygiene Association for this award," said Gottesfeld. "Funds from the award will be used for our projects in developing countries."

OK International focuses on using science-based solutions to address some of the most challenging threats to occupational and environmental health around the world, including exposures to lead, silica and other contaminants. The nonprofit's mission is to eliminate or reduce occupational illness and environmental contamination in developing countries.

"We are a unique nonprofit organization that brings science-based solutions to complex problems to improve health in vulnerable communities," Gottesfeld added.

"This involves improving environmental practices in hazardous industries; eliminating lead in paint and other consumer products; and providing innovative solutions for small businesses to affordably reduce harmful occupational exposures," he said.

The organization's work has improved millions of lives in many countries including Peru, Mozambique, India, China, Vietnam, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kosovo, Cameroon and Mexico, by building the capacity to respond to environmental health threats and by producing concrete results in partnership with governments, industry, nongovernmental organizations, and others.

Gottesfeld and OK International have achieved many significant accomplishments, including:

- Launched an investigation into the export and recycling of used lead batteries in Mexico that convinced NAFTA's Commission on Environmental Cooperation to call on governments to adopt uniform standards to protect the environment and public health throughout North America.
- Established agreements with major U.S. and international paint companies to voluntarily stop adding lead to paints sold in countries without applicable regulations.

- Guided the lead battery industry to establish a consensus standard for reduction of lead emissions in the manufacture and recycling of batteries.
- Won a joint award from the United Nations Environment Program and the United Nations Development Program in November 2004 for their work under the SEEDs Initiative (Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development) of the UN.
- Provided over \$300,000 in grant funding to project partners in developing countries.
- Introduced the use of dust-control technologies to control silica dust in India's stone-crushing industry to combat to an epidemic of silicosis and the spread of tuberculosis. These inexpensive water-misting systems reduced airborne silica levels by 80 percent.

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