

Nebraska Association of Emergency Management Conference April 14-16

Nic Kemnitz of Wayne County
accepts presidential gavel from
Brandon Myers of Region 51





*A Message from
NEMA Assistant Director*
Bryan Tuma

We envision safer, less vulnerable communities in Nebraska made possible through effective collaborative partnerships committed to saving lives and reducing the impact of disasters.

Our mission is to coordinate, support and serve Nebraska through an effective and relevant emergency management agency.

This year's Nebraska Association of Emergency Management Conference in Grand Island was held April 14-16 and offered a great opportunity to meet with colleagues from across the state and discuss the issues that are so important to all of us. As outgoing NAEM president **Brandon Myers**, Region 51 director, wrote in his welcome letter to all attendees: "Spring conference is our time to come together and pass along things we have learned over the last year in all areas of life and work. It is our time to get together and support each other and remind each other that we are not alone, especially when we are dealing with a disaster."

The conference offers us a chance to share ideas and brainstorm problems. It is our time to come together as a group, renew friendships and meet new members.

I, for one, look at it as a great opportunity to meet face-to-face with all of the local emergency managers who are the backbone of the emergency management system in Nebraska. Without you, the system wouldn't work. Disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation all start at the local level. We at the state are here to support the local communities in Nebraska. I used the time that you so generously gave me to speak at the conference to discuss legislative issues, NEMA updates, business issues, grant activities, the coronavirus pandemic funding, our ongoing public assistance response to DR-4420 and the hazard mitigation status report. We work best when we are all on the same page.

All of us at NEMA look forward to our future work with NAEM and all emergency managers across the state. We wish the new board, led by President **Nic Kemnitz** of Wayne County Emergency Management, well as they develop future plans for NAEM.

Sincerely,

Bryan Tuma

More NAEM conference articles and photos are included on pages 3-5 and an album of pictures is up on the [FEMA Facebook page](#).



NAEM President **Brandon Myers** kicks off the 2021 NAEM conference in Grand Island.



Grand Island Mayor **Roger Steel** welcomes NAEM members to the Boarders Inn in Grand Island.



Lt. Gov. **Mike Foley** was the keynote speaker on day one of the conference.



Bryan Tuma, NEMA assistant director, updated attendees on agency activities.

Nebraska Association of Emergency Management Holds Annual Conference in Grand Island

The 2021 NAEM Conference theme was *Setting a new Vision in 2021* and was held at the Boarders Inn in Grand Island April 14-16.

The conference featured speakers, displays, exhibits, elections and awards. It provided an opportunity for emergency managers to network with their peers from across the state of Nebraska.

The conference committee for this year was: **Kirt Smith, Jon Rosenlund, Mark Rempe, Nick Elledge, Jill Harvey** and **Dawna Whitcomb**.



NAEM President Brandon Myers kicks off the 2021 NAEM Conference at the Boarders Inn in Grand Island.



Mary Baker, left, of JEO and **Dave Whalen**, above, of Niagra University were two of the day one speakers at the NAEM Conference.



Members of the newly elected NAEM board for 2021 are, from left: Secretary **Jill Harvey** of Phelps County; Northeast Region Area Director **Laura Hintz** of Knox County; Central Region Area Director **Nick Elledge** of Nucklolls County; Vice President **Dawna Whitcomb** of Adams County; Treasurer **Doug Fox** of Region 24; President **Nic Kennitz** of Wayne County; West Central Region Area Director **Brandon Myers** of Region 51; Panhandle Region Area Director **Evie Flessner** of Region 21; and Southeast Region Area Director **Amanda Burki** of Johnson and Pawnee counties.



Lt. Brent Bockstadter of the Nebraska State Patrol discussed human trafficking during one session at the conference.



Jan Zurcher, president of the Platte County Emergency Management Volunteer Group, gave an overview of Nebraska VOAD.



Brandon Myers presented **Jeff England** with the Lifetime member Award. England recently retired as Kearney County Emergency Management Director.



Terry Miller of Saunders County was recognized as Emergency Management Professional of the Year for 2020 by former president **Jon Rosenlund**.



Jon Rosenlund, former NAEM president, recognized **Nan Gould** of Region 23 for 20 years of membership with the association.



President's awards were presented for 2020 to **Laura Hintz**, left, and **Dawna Whitcomb** for their work for the association by 2020 president **Jon Rosenlund**.



At left: President **Brandon Myers** recognized **Brian Woldt** of Dawson County and **Jeff England** of Kearney County for 20 years of membership in the association.



President **Brandon Myers** recognized **Jill Harvey** of Phelps County with a President's award for her work with the association. In addition, Myers was recognized with the 2021 award for Emergency Management Professional of the Year after being nominated by the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors.

At right: master of ceremony for the conference was **Leroy Janssen**, former Wayne County Sheriff and Wayne County Emergency Management Deputy.





Michael Brown, former FEMA administrator and now owner/member partner with The Blue Cell, gave the kickoff presentation on day two of the conference.



Andrew Hills of the Central District Public Health Department gave an overview on COVID-19 Response and Communication.



Gregory Bosko of FEMA Region 7 discussed public assistance.



From left: FirstNet's **Nancy Norsby**, regional operations manager, and **Jackie Duncan**, sales executive, visit with NEMA's Statewide Interoperability Coordinator **Sue Krogman** at the NAEM conference.



NEMA's Radio Communications Systems Coordinator Troy Harris discussed the Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS).



Nebraska Weather Service Warning Coordination Meteorologist Mike Moritz led a discussion of meteorologists at the conference.



Corey Clay of Custer County was unable to attend the NAEM Conference and was recognized by NAEM President **Brandon Myers** at the Custer County Board of Commissioners Meeting April 27 as Deputy or Administrative Professional of the Year Award.

Photo courtesy of Custer County Chief



Clarissa Shank of Scottsbluff County was recognized by NAEM President **Brandon Myers** with the Emergency Support Personnel award.



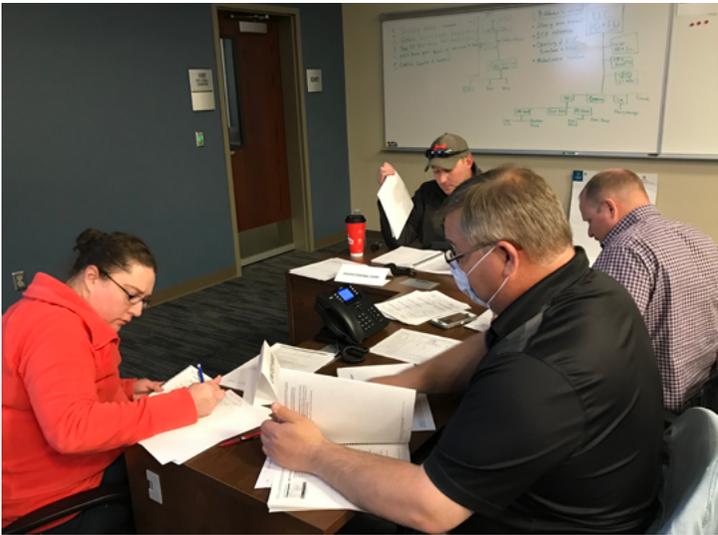
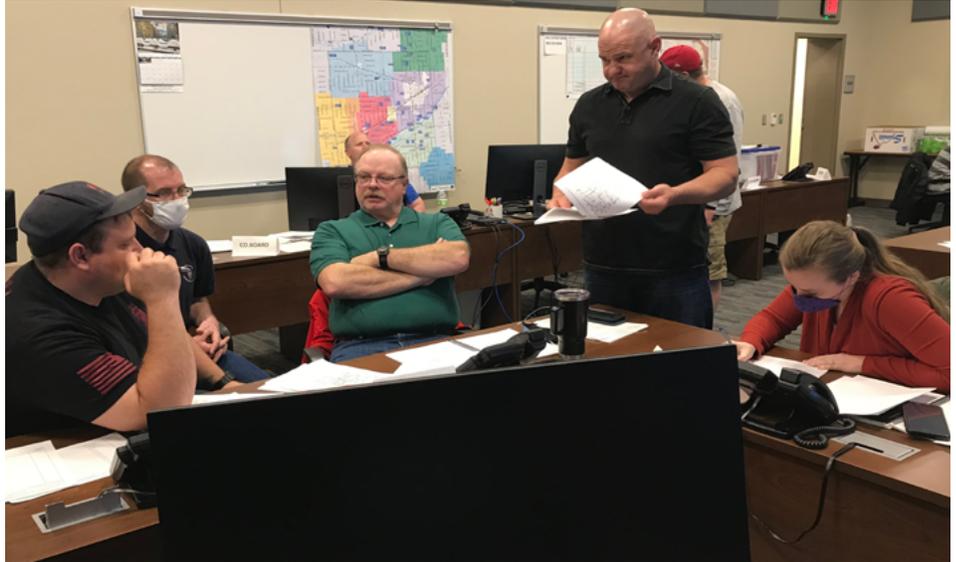
Salamander Exercise

Day three of the NAEM Conference featured an accountability and resource tracking exercise that gave participants an opportunity to set up accountability software.



ICS 300 Intermediate Incident Command System Offered in Grand Island

Hall County Emergency Management Director **Jon Rosenlund** and NEMA Training and Exercise Officer **Larry Fichtner** taught the course April 21-24. The course provides an in-depth focus on NIMS ICS which includes the tools, practices and prodecures available to effectively manage anemergen-
cy incident or planned local event at a local Type 3 level





President Joseph R. Biden's goal to administer 200 million COVID-19 shots in one hundred days was achieved on April 21.

Gov. Pete Ricketts issued a statement April 26 following news that Nebraska has experienced a decade of solid growth. Over the last 10 years, Nebraska's population grew 7.4%, which is the second best decade of growth in the last hundred years. "Nebraska's great decade of growth happened for one reason: our people," said Gov. Ricketts. "Thanks to their efforts, we have been able to work together to promote fiscal responsibility and keep government out of the way. This has allowed Nebraskans to grow their farms, create jobs, and invest in their communities. The last 10 years has created great momentum that we will continue to build on as we emerge from the pandemic."

Center for Disease Control and U.S. Food and Drug Administration – The CDC and FDA recommended April 25 that use of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine resume in the United States, after a temporary pause. The CDC and FDA reviewed data involving six U.S. cases of a rare type of blood clot in women younger than 50 years old after receiving the J&J vaccine. In these cases, a type of blood clot called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) was seen in combination with low levels of blood platelets (thrombocytopenia). A review of all available data shows that the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine's known and potential benefits outweigh its known and potential risks. However, women younger than 50 years old should be aware of the rare but increased risk of this adverse event and that there are other COVID-19 vaccine options available for which this risk has not been seen. CDC and FDA will continue to monitor the safety of all COVID-19 vaccines. Seek medical care right away after receiving the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine if any of the following symptoms develop:

- Severe or persistent headaches or blurred vision
- Shortness of breath
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Chest pain
- Easy bruising or tiny blood spots under the skin beyond the injection site.
- Leg swelling

The CDC also announced that **fully vaccinated people generally do not need to wear masks when they are outside unless the space is crowded**. Those recommendations reflect the very low odds of outdoor spread. "Less than 10 percent of documented transmission in many studies have occurred outdoors," CDC director **Rochelle Walensky** said at a White House briefing April 25. And if you're unvaccinated, it's generally okay to ditch the mask when biking, jogging or walking, as long as you're alone or only with members of your household, the agency said.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Secretary of Homeland Security **Alejandro N. Mayorkas** spoke at the Leaders Summit on Climate April 22 (Earth Day) where he reaffirmed the department's commitment to adapt and respond to the climate emergency, including announcing several steps DHS is taking to address this crisis.

"The impacts of the climate emergency on both our national and collective global security are vast," said Mayorkas. "At the department, we must – and we will – do more to address the climate crisis. DHS will implement a new approach to climate change adaptation and resilience, and we will do so with the sense of urgency this problem demands." Mayorkas also announced the launch of the DHS Climate Change Action Group, a coordinating body comprised of the department's senior leadership that will drive urgent action to address the climate crisis and will report directly to the secretary. The Climate Change Action Group will unite, refocus, and elevate the Department's cross-functional efforts to tackle the climate crisis.

DHS also recently published a public request for Information on how the Department's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) can ensure that its programs advance equity and increase resilience for all – especially among those who are disproportionately at risk from the impacts of climate change. This request will enable FEMA to perform its time-honored mission of "helping people before, during, and after disasters" under modern conditions. In direct response to the reality of the climate emergency, this request will also serve as the basis to reorient FEMA's efforts in furtherance of its longstanding goal of "building a culture of preparedness" in the context of novel risks, above all those produced by climate change.

FEMA posted in the [Federal Register a Request for information \(RFI\)](#) that contains a [list of questions](#). The answers will assist FEMA in identifying specific programs, regulations and/or policies that may benefit from modification, streamlining, expansion or repeal to better address climate change and the needs of underserved communities and populations. To help the public and stakeholders understand how to submit feedback, FEMA will be hosting a series of webinars to explain the executive orders and the RFI process. These webinars will also explain the type of information needed to respond appropriately and will be announced in the coming days. Feedback on the executive orders will be open through June 21. Comments may be submitted through the [Federal eRulemaking Portal](#), Docket ID: FEMA-2021-0011. Participants should follow the instructions for submitting comments.

Partner Updates Continued on Next Page



Federal Emergency Management Agency –

- On April 22, the Senate confirmed **Deanne Criswell** as the next FEMA administrator. She was sworn in April 25 as the first female administrator of FEMA.
- On April 12, FEMA began processing applications for **funeral assistance** and will provide financial assistance for COVID-19-related funeral expenses incurred after Jan. 20, 2020 under the **Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021** and the **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021**. Applicants may apply by

calling 844-684-6333 (TTY: 800-462-7585) from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. Please note: phone calls from FEMA may come from an unidentified number. Multilingual services are available. The assistance line has helped applicants in nearly 40 languages. It is important that FEMA is able to contact applicants, so callers should ensure their contact information is correct. Callers who use a relay service, videophone or captioned telephones should provide their specific number assigned to that service. As of April 25, FEMA has received more than 130,000 funeral assistance applications and has awarded more than \$320,000.

- FEMA released the updated version of the Second Edition of the **NIMS Implementation Objectives for Federal Departments and Agencies**. The updates reflect the feedback provided by the whole community stakeholders in 2020. The updates ensure the objectives are consistent with the Third Edition of the National Incident Management System, published in October 2017. The Third Edition of NIMS retains the concepts and principles from the 2008 and 2004 versions of NIMS, while reflecting changes to laws, policies, and best practices. Additionally, the Third Edition of NIMS provides additional information on the roles of off-scene incident personnel such as senior leaders and emergency operations center personnel.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5), Management of Domestic Incidents, requires all federal departments and agencies to formally adopt and maintain NIMS and use it in their individual domestic incident management activities, supporting full and robust preparedness across the nation.



FEMA



A volunteer prepares a vaccine at a recent clinic in Lancaster County.

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) – As of April 25, more than 601,946 Nebraskans completed vaccination, which represents 40.6% of residents aged 16 years of age and older. These numbers include all vaccinations that took place in Nebraska last week, including through federal entities, such as the Indian Health Service, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, and the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program. The Federal Retail Pharmacy Program is coordinated and managed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and participating pharmacies in the state have signed up and been approved by the federal government. For more on the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program, visit the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/retail-pharmacy-program/participating-pharmacies.html>.

The state is currently vaccinating all Nebraskans between the ages 16-49. Thus

far, the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine has been approved for those aged 16 years and older, and the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen Pharmaceuticals vaccines have been approved for those aged 18 years and older. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two shots; Johnson & Johnson's vaccine requires just one shot.

Finish Strong Nebraska is the state's official COVID-19 vaccination campaign designed to keep the public motivated and informed on the vaccine. For more information and to register on the vaccine portal, visit [FinishStrong.Ne.Gov](https://www.finishstrongne.gov). Once registered on the portal, Nebraska residents will be notified when COVID-19 vaccination begins in their area. A Spanish translation of the website is now available. To access, users should select Español from the language drop-down menu at the top-right side of the page.

Partner Updates Continued on Next Page



Nebraska Public Power District – NPPD has contracted with Osmose Utilities Service to inspect wood poles used in its distribution, sub transmission and transmission operations throughout the District’s service territory. Crews from the contractors are beginning inspections this month and will be completing the work by July 1.

This process involves ground line excavation, inspection and rehabilitation treatment. Crews will be dressed in high visibility vests, hard hats and will be traveling in Osmose marked pickup trucks with beacon lights.

The inspection program is a proactive approach to finding poles with decay before it’s too late and the poles fail. NPPD will have nearly 11,000 poles inspected this year. The work will include determining what poles may need to be replaced.

Anyone who has questions relating to this activity, please call 1-877-ASK-NPPD (1-877-275-6773). A customer service representative will then contact the necessary NPPD personnel to address any issues.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency

announced on April 5, the availability of \$2 million to establish partnerships with organizations to provide outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. The funding was made possible by USDA’s new Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative, an effort to distribute resources more broadly and to put greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers impacted by the pandemic. It also marked the reopening of FSA’s Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) signup as part of the Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Farmers and ranchers will have at least 60 days to apply or make modifications to existing CFAP 2 applications.



Did you miss out on applying for USDA COVID-19 assistance? @USDA has reopened the sign up period for DFAP Contact your local USDAFSA office to apply [Farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).

The full news release is available online at: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/index>. More information is also available at: www.usda.gov.

The Nebraska USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide an overview of assistance available through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) during a webinar scheduled for Thursday, May 6. The webinar is part of the University of Nebraska Lincoln’s Farm and Ranch Management series. It will begin at 12 p.m. CT, and those interested in listening can register at farm.unl.edu/webinars.

U.S. Corps of Army Engineers held two spring public webinars in April on runoff and reservoir operations. If you missed the webinars the USCAE website is regularly updated with useful information at <https://www.nwd.usace.army.mil/MRWM/>

Nebraska Department of Economic Development – reminds Nebraskans that applications for Nebraska’s Developing Youth Talent Initiative (DYTI) grant program are due on May 16. **Gov. Pete Ricketts** launched DYTI in 2015 to unite the public and private sectors around inspiring young Nebraskans to explore careers in manufacturing, information technology and other industries where talent is needed and opportunity is high. The program is administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED).

“DYTI grants have already introduced around 22,500 seventh and eighth graders in 59 school districts to rewarding careers waiting for them in Nebraska,” said Gov. Ricketts in a March press release. “By educating students about the possibilities in manufacturing, healthcare, information technology and other high-demand disciplines, we can prepare them for a bright future as part of the Nebraska workforce.”

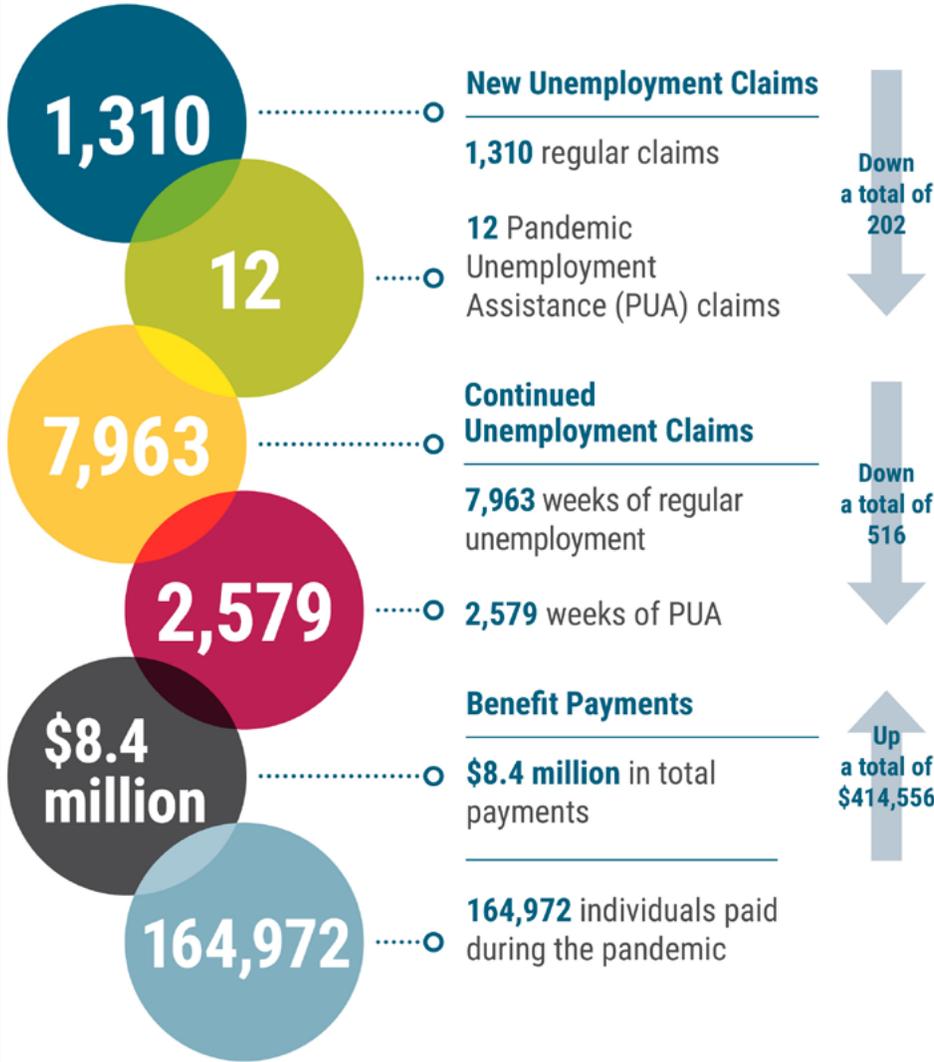
Under the DYTI program, grants totaling \$250,000 are distributed each year between Nebraska employers (typically three); these partner with area schools to implement interactive learning experiences among middle schoolers, designed to teach relevant career concepts and skills. In all, over a dozen companies and more than 60 schools have participated in the DYTI program since 2015, with projects coming in all shapes and sizes. Last year’s recipients alone will reach an estimated 11,500 students in 17 districts. Applications for this year’s DYTI grants are due via Amplifund by May 16. For instructions, grant guidelines or more information, visit <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/program/nebraska-developing-youth-talent-initiative/>.

Partner Updates Continued on Next Page

Nebraska Department of Revenue

Unemployment by the Numbers

Week of April 18 – April 24



Benefits paid since March 29, 2020:

- Regular Unemployment Insurance **\$386,193,838**
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (gig workers/self-employed): **\$80,625,400**
- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (\$600/\$300 weekly UI benefits to eligible claimants): **\$792,740,824**
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (extends unemployment benefits by up to 13 weeks): **\$50,506,607**
- Lost Wages Assistance Program (\$300/weekly retroactive payments): **\$53,570,950**
- Total: \$1,364,611,759**



Nebraska Emergency Management Chooses BOLDplanning for Statewide Planning Initiatives

The State of Nebraska will soon launch a statewide Emergency Operations (EOP) and Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning initiative led by BOLDplanning.

Last week, as a part of the state’s virtual NACO 2020 Emergency Manager’s meeting, company representatives **Karla O’Grady**, PCP, **James Woulfe**, CBCP, CHEP, CHPCP and **Lorin Bristow**, MBA, shared with participants the details of how the project will roll out.

On behalf of the entire BOLDplanning team, O’Grady offered a big “thank you” to Nebraska for choosing BOLDplanning as its preparedness partner. “We appreciated the opportunity to participate in last year’s meeting, and look forward to working closely with you in 2021.”



Flood Resiliency for Verdigrée



NEMA Hazard Mitigation Unit Supervisor **John Gassmann**, with microphone, discusses the states hazard mitigation assistance program during a panel discussion at Verdigrée on Sunday, April 25. The program focused on Flood Resiliency for Verdigrée. Also, pictured from left are **Alex Hollmann**, emcee, and other speakers **Brittany Foster**, Nebraska Strong Recover project team leader; **Chuck Chase**, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources outreach coordinator, **Terry Julesgaard**, Lower Niobrara Natural Resources District General Manager and **Leroy Hollman**, mayor of Verdigrée. Foster discussed managing stress after disaster. Chase discussed how Verdigrée's floodplain management program and insurance can mitigate community losses and make a more robust recovery from disaster. Julesgaard addressed preparing for the next big event and the NRD's mission to protect lives, property and the future and Hollman talked about lessons learned on the village level.



Brendon Collins started with Nebraska Emergency Management Agency on April 12 as a planning specialist in the public assistance unit.



Collins

Collins earned an associate's degree in computer science from Valencia College and a bachelor of science in Emergency Management and Homeland Security from the University of Central Florida.

Collins most recent job was as a cast member at Walt Disney World where he worked for nine years in around 10 different roles. His last role was working at Disney's Animal Kingdom on the Guest Relations/Guest Experience Team. He also drove the Monorails at one point.

Collins was born in Longwood, Fla, and raised in Wellington and, Tampa, Fla. He lived in Georgia as well.

He and his wife, Caroline, recently adopted a cat who they named Oswald.

Collins enjoys cooking and exploring and will play games on the computer when he can find the time.

Daniel Barnes began work at Nebraska Emergency Management Agency on April 26 as a Planning Specialist in the public assistance unit.



Barnes

Barnes earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice with a minor in communications studies from the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. He is more than half way done with his master's degree in emergency and crisis management, also from UNLV.

Previously, Barnes worked as a heavy equipment operator in the U.S. Air Force as part of the 820th Red Horse at Nellis AFB in Nevada and at UNLV as a equipment mechanic.

Originally, from Omaha, Barnes graduated from Millard North. He is engaged to Katy Lally, a doctor of occupational therapy. Barnes enjoys camping, hiking and exploring national parks in his free time.



Hazard Mitigation Unit Supervisor **John Gassmann** presents intern **Kathryn Erickson** with a certificate of thanks on her last day with NEMA, April 23.



Good Life. Great Strength.

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Governor Pete Ricketts

State Homeland Security Director, Lt. Gov. Mike Foley

NEMA Director, Major General Daryl Bohac

Assistant Director Bryan Tuma

NEMA is charged by Nebraska statute to reduce the vulnerabilities of the people and communities of Nebraska in terms of injury, loss of life and property damage resulting from natural, technological or man-made disasters and emergencies.

NEMA is responsible for coordinating the state response in any major emergency or disaster including the support of local governments as needed or requested, and coordinating assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other federal partners.

The Beacon includes emergency management news and activities from across the state. Please forward story ideas or photos for inclusion in the newsletter to: Public Information Officer **Jodie Fawl**, 402-471-7428 or jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov.

