

Boone County Kids Learn About Emergency Preparedness

~See Page 3

DAILY SCHEDULE	
7:40: Opening Staff Arrival	12:30-1:00: Clean up, then recess when finished
7:45-8:45: Check in/free time	1:00-1:30: Rest & quiet read
8:45-9:15: Clean up classroom/plans for the day	1:30-3:30: Afternoon Activities: Library/Pool/Park
9:15-11:30/noon: STEAM programming time	3:00-3:30: Afternoon snack & recess (if needed)
10:00-10:30: Morning snack & recess	3:30-3:45: Clean-up/travel back (if necessary)
11:30/11:45-12:00: Clean up from STEAM programming time	4:00-5:15: Free time
12:00-12:30: Lunch	4:45-5:15: Staff clean up

THE CARDINAL WAY

Beckett
Ayden S.
Nate
Nolan
Ty
Eliza

VOICE LEVELS

0 Talking
1 Whisper Voice
2 Speaking Voice
3 Loud Voice
4 Outdoor Voice

UNEXPECTED

- No running inside!
- No rough play!
- No gum!



A Message from NEMA Assistant Director

Erv Portis



Recent severe weather events across the state are serving as a reminder that we need to be prepared to move quickly in the aftermath of storms that cause damage both to private and public property. In order to best support the recovery of our communities following a significant event, NEMA's Recovery Section needs reports on public infrastructure damage information as quickly as possible after damage is incurred. Once immediate life- and property-protecting measures have been taken and all incident status reports have been submitted, the recovery process can begin.

We are required by federal law to make a federal disaster request to FEMA within 30 days of an incident. In order to make a federal disaster request, the governor must issue an emergency proclamation; joint federal/state preliminary damage assessments (PDAs) must be completed, a PDA report processed; information must be gathered and an impact statement written; a request letter must be developed; associated FEMA forms must be completed; and then a request from the governor to FEMA Region 7 can be submitted for processing before it's sent to the president.

It's an extremely tight timeline with a lot of moving pieces, and if we are going to meet the regulatory deadlines for making a request for a federal declaration, we need the prompt support and assistance of many of our stakeholder organizations. Here are some tips from our State Public Assistance Officer **Patrick Conway**:

- **Public power districts and rural electric providers** should send damage estimates, broken down by county, as quickly as possible to the local emergency manager in the counties impacted. While NEMA understands the desire to report actual costs and not rough estimates, the timeline does not always allow for the processing of actual costs. Good faith estimates can get us started.
- **Tribes, counties, cities, villages, townships and departments** should gather damage information to the best of their ability and provide it to the local emergency manager. Communicating damage information with the emergency manager is of vital importance.
- **Local emergency managers**, should also gather damage information from the various entities in the communities they serve and pass that information on to NEMA's Recovery Section as quickly and as accurately as possible. Please send reports even if the damage reported may not be enough to reach the county indicator for a federal disaster declaration.

Damage Report Information Needed

- Description of the damaged facility
- Location of the damaged facility
- GPS Coordinates in degree-decimal format or physical address
- Estimated cost to repair the damaged facility
- **Best estimate** of cost is all that's needed
- If repairs will require upgrades due to codes and standards or mitigation, include that information
- Current status of the damaged facility
- Has it been repaired, yet?

Serving as a conduit for collection of damage information can add to an already overflowing workload; however, it is only through local reports that the state can collect the information needed to make an federal disaster request.

If the damage and needs are overwhelming local capabilities, or if it looks like they will, work with the principal executive officer of the jurisdiction to sign and submit a local disaster declaration. Submitting a declaration does not guarantee financial support from either the state or federal level, nor does it commit you to any specific course of action. Failing to submit a declaration and damage information in a timely manner may lead to a delay in, or a denial of assistance.

Following an incident, NEMA Recovery staff will do its best to reach out to local emergency managers in the impacted counties based on reports received by the State Watch Center. Despite our best efforts, we may not be able to reach everyone impacted. We recommend that any jurisdiction or entity with damage to report should send their information to nema.publicassistance@nebraska.gov or place a phone call to your established point of contact in the Public Assistance Unit.

Sincerely,

Ervin L. Portis

Assistant Director



Chris Schroeder, Community Outreach supervisor at NEMA, talks to Boone County Cardinal Kids Club participants about emergency preparedness.



Students practice what to do in a tornado during Cardinal Kids Club.

Kids Learn About Emergency Preparedness

NEMA's Community Outreach Unit Supervisor **Chris Schroeder** spent time in early June with the Cardinal Kids Club in Boone County. The summer camp program serves kindergarten through fifth grade students.

"The kids learned about the types of severe weather that tend to happen in their community,"

Schroeder said. "They practiced fire and tornado drills, learned about family communication and started building emergency backpacks to keep at home."

Schroeder worked with **Emily Schick**, the Cardinal Kids Club program director, her staff, as well as FEMA Region 7 Integration Branch Chief **Linda Davis** and Prepared-

ness Liaison **Jennifer Tarwater**, and taught from the S.T.E.P. (Student Tools for Emergency Planning) Program.

Students learned where weather comes from and how storms are created from **Katie Nickolaou**, who serves as the KMEG morning meteorologist for CBS Siouxland News at Sunrise.

Region 7 ESF-6 RISC Meets at NEMA

Federal, tribal, state, local government and community organizations from across Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri and Iowa met in a virtual and in-person meeting, at the Nebraska State Emergency Operations Center, on June 28, to discuss strategies, tactics and best practices for carrying out mission of Emergency Support Function 6 (ESF-6) which is mass care, emergency assistance, housing and human services during disaster events.

Most importantly, mitigating and responding to the growing threat of wildfires was discussed.

As FEMA Region 7 Administrator **Andrea Spillers** made clear, wildfire incidents have been increasing in number and intensity. The projected number of wildfires this year is more than the number in each of the last five years. In April 2022 alone, Nebraska lost roughly 150,000 acres of land to wildfires.

As a subject matter expert in his field, **Dan Dallas** shared his knowledge and experience with region 7 ESF-6 partners on combating wildfires. Having worked many years with the National Forest Service, Dallas has faced some of the toughest wildfires this country has

ever seen. Dallas recommends that local communities have a comprehensive and working evacuation plan for when wildfires may strike.

NeighborWorks America, multi-agency resource centers, and mass care in rural communities was covered.

Together, federal, tribal, state, local and community organizations can increase capability and capacity through interactive cross-state partner awareness and engagement, relationship building, information sharing and skills development to be better prepared for disaster events.

How to Lose Public Assistance Funding in Seven Easy Missteps

by Patrick Conway, NEMA State Public Assistance Officer

FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program is a reimbursement program with specific requirements that must be met in order to receive reimbursement for work done to restore or replace eligible facilities.

NEMA's PA Unit wants to ensure that all of Nebraska's PA subrecipients receive the most funding to which they are entitled in order to provide the communities of Nebraska impacted by disaster with the best opportunity to recover as fully as possible. To do that, PA subrecipients must meet all of the eligibility requirements from FEMA and from NEMA.

Over the past several months, the NEMA Public Assistance Unit has encountered many instances where an applicant organization failed to meet one or more of the **eligibility requirements** and subsequently lost funding they otherwise could have received.

The following information should not be seen as an exhaustive list of the ways PA funding may be lost, but rather as an introductory discussion about potential eligibility issues. Funding can be lost for the following seven reasons:

1. Improper procurement

If contracted services for disaster recovery are not properly **procured**, you will not be reimbursed by FEMA for those expenses. This includes, but is not limited to, grant management, engineering, architecture, construction, equipment rental and materials supply services

Improper procurement includes:

- Citing emergency/exigent circumstances procurement when there is no emergency/exigency

- Failing to completely follow the procurement policy for your organization that was in place prior to the incident
- Failing to fully and contemporaneously document the procurement procedures followed for each contract including bid solicitation, bid selection process, signed contracts with a detailed scope of work, and contract monitoring processes.
- Failing to ensure the procurement procedures followed are in harmony with all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, and ordinances.

Failure to follow proper procurement procedures will likely result in a loss of funding, no matter the circumstances.

2. Incomplete work

If work is not completed according to the FEMA-approved and obligated Scope of Work (SOW), there can be no reimbursement.

After applicants notify NEMA that the work is complete, NEMA will make a site visit to inspect the work. Projects will not be completely closed before inspection, and any incomplete work will result in a deobligation of funds and will require that the applicant organization return those funds to NEMA.

3. Incomplete documentation

Documentation to support the costs claimed for reimbursement is required.

If costs claimed for reimbursement cannot be supported with timesheets that include employee full name, job title, full-time or part-time status, accurate fringe benefits for each year, equipment logs



with FEMA equipment codes (with operator matching), force account logs, maintenance logs, proofs of payment, invoices, contracts, etc., those costs will not be reimbursable.

Since the program is a reimbursement program, while the program policies allow for some donated resources and volunteer labor to be used to offset non-federal portions of certain projects, those policies only apply to some instances, not all. If you have volunteer work or donated resources to claim, if they do not appear in the project at obligation, there will not be an opportunity to make claims for those efforts.

Proper documentation also includes on-time submission of an updated quarterly progress report as requested by NEMA. Without that information, NEMA cannot provide the support needed to ensure your projects are moving in the right direction.

4. Unapproved work

The only costs eligible for reimbursement are the costs that are reasonable for completion of the

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Public Assistance Funding

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approved, obligated SOW. While additional work may make sense in order to make the facility more resilient, that additional work was not pre-approved by FEMA and therefore FEMA will not reimburse the associated costs.

This includes using different materials than those indicated in the SOW, adding unapproved mitigation measures, or relocating a facility.

This also includes work done to repair damages that may have occurred in the same incident but were not properly added to a project before obligation.

5. Ignoring environmental and historic preservation rules

All environmental and historic preservation (EHP) rules, regulations, and laws must be followed.

Any work done in or near water, any work that includes ground disturbance, any work that occurs in an area that may be home to or in the migration path of an endangered species, or any work that may occur in an environmentally or culturally sensitive area must be approved by FEMA's EHP group.

This may require consultation with other federal, state or tribal agencies.

This may also require environmental assessments (EAs), hydraulics and hydrology (H&H) studies, and notices for public comment

Failure to get full EHP approval before work begins may result in a loss of funding, as will failure to follow all of the EHP conditions attached to the project, either implicitly or explicitly.

6. Missing the Work Completion Deadline

Every project includes a work completion deadline based on federal regulations. If you miss the deadline, your project will not be eligible for reimbursement.

If you have a project that will not be completed before that deadline, please reach out to the NEMA Public Assistance team as soon as possible so we can help you with a time extension request. Time extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis after a NEMA review of supporting documentation.

7. Other funding

Work that is paid for with funding from other sources may not be eligible for reimbursement under the Public Assistance program.

- Eligible costs will be reduced by insurance proceeds, either actual or anticipated.
- Eligible costs will be reduced by amounts of funds received

through earmarked cash donations.

- Facilities that are under the purview of other federal agencies (OFAs) will not be eligible for Public Assistance funding.
- Eligible funding may be reduced for duplication of benefits before obligation, at project or applicant closeout or at post-closeout audit.

The 7 points outlined above represent the most common funding eligibility issues we have encountered in the past several months while working on closeout for Disaster 4420, the flooding and winter storm of 2019.

Some of FEMA's requirements may seem burdensome, especially for many of the smaller, rural communities throughout Nebraska. Unfortunately, NEMA does not have the authority to remove these burdens from the communities and organizations that are seeking assistance through FEMA programs.

Please know that while our team is ready and willing to help applicant organizations work through the process, we can only be effective in our help if we know about potential issues ahead of time and are asked to help.

For information contact: nema.publicassistance@nebraska.gov.



Damage occurred across the state as a result of storms like the tornado warned storm near Mindon, above, and the super cell, at right, near Elm Creek on June 6



Incident Management Team Meets in Kearney

Members of the Nebraska All-Hazards Incident Management Team (AHIMT) participated in training sessions and meetings in Kearney in June to discuss how best to serve local communities and families during prolonged emergency events.

The team includes representatives from NEMA, the State Fire Marshal Agency, Nebraska Forest Service, as well as local emergency management agencies, and local fire departments from across the state. When needed for incidents like wildfires, floods, and more, the AHIMT is able to provide support and assistance to municipalities that face challenges beyond their capabilities and those of their local first responders.



Additional meetings, trainings, and discussions are held throughout the year, with other partners, communities, and stakeholders, so

that the team can continue doing all it can to meet the needs of Nebraskans before, during, and after disasters.



As a part of a visit to Nebraska, members of a delegation from the Czech Republic visited NEMA in June and discussed emergency management response. The Nebraska National Guard hosted the delegation, June 9-10 to discuss ongoing relationships between the Nebraska National Guard and the Czech Republic, and the future of the State Partnership Program. During the visit, the delegation participated in discussions on the future of the State Partnership Program – where Nebraska and the Czech Republic have been matched for nearly three decades. While in Nebraska, the delegation met with Governor Pete Ricketts, toured the State Capitol and received honorary state citizenship.

FEMA Seeks Feedback on National Continuous Improvement Guidance

FEMA seeks feedback for the “[National Continuous Improvement Guidance](#)” draft, including edits and suggestions for additional resources and real-world examples. The national engagement period begins on June 28 until midnight (Eastern) on July 31.

The guidance provides a consistent and rigorous framework to conduct continuous improvement initiatives before, during and after real-world incidents for the whole

community, including state, local, tribal and territorial partners, nongovernmental organizations, private sector and emergency management organizations.

To review the draft guidance and provide feedback, visit [FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov). To submit feedback, email FE-MA-CITAP@fema.dhs.gov.

FEMA will also host a series of 60-minute webinar sessions to provide an overview of the draft guidance and to gather feedback

from whole community partners. At least one webinar session will be offered every week in July. To register for a webinar, visit <https://preptoolkit.fema.gov/web/cip-ci-tap/events>. Webinars are scheduled as follows:

- July 6, noon to 1 p.m. EDT
- July 15, 10 to 11 a.m. EDT
- July 20, 5 to 6 p.m. EDT
- July 25, 11 a.m. to noon EDT . (Spanish speaking session).
- July 27, 3 to 4 p.m. EEDT .

Nebraska City Promotes Knowledge of ICS

When Lou Leone became city administrator for Nebraska City 19 months ago, he formulated a plan to get city staff well versed in the Incident Management System.

“I had a great mentor who believed one aspect of being a good city administrator was providing good support for first responders and emergency managers,” Leone said.

Following a disaster, ICS helps keep responders and community members safe, helps meet response objectives and helps with the efficient use of resources.

Leone said it’s important for jurisdictions and their employees to understand requirements for a disaster response before it happens in their city.

“If we had a disaster here, it would be all hands on deck,” Leone said. “City employees would be called upon to complete tasks they don’t usually do in their every day job.”



Lou Leone

In one city where he worked, Leone said, staff didn’t understand they needed to keep track of debris management costs following a disaster so the city could get reimbursed for expenses.”

“I didn’t want that situation to happen here,” he said.

With the blessing of the community’s first responders and county emergency management, Leone began the program with CPR, Stop the Bleed and First Aid classes. Now, Leone said there are more than 14 online and in-person classes assigned to city employees.

The Nebraska City City Council made it a requirement for employees to complete the courses.

“It’s not just city employees who are taking the courses,” Leone said. “Our elected officials are included in our five-year training plan.”

Leone worked with Otoe County Emergency Management Director **Greg Goebel** and deputy **Steve Cody** to develop the list of classes for city staff.

“Our paid and volunteer staff have training hours they need and these classes count toward those requirements,” Leone said.

Interest in the classes has



picked up as employees have taken a few. Leone said they saw the relevance and have become interested in completing the courses.

“We have three people who have nearly completed their 14 classes already,” he said. Eventually Nebraska City will add another 11 classes to the requirements.

NEMA Exercise Training Officer **Roger Conrad** said he appreciates Leone’s support of ICS and the training schedule that he has put in place.

“Lou is a real drum-beater and great advocate for ICS,” Conrad said.



New Program Specialist Joins NEMA

Josh Yox joined NEMA in June as the long-term recovery program specialist in the Community Outreach Unit.



Josh Yox

Yox earned his Bachelor of History and Political Science degree from Concordia University of Chicago. He then attended George H.W. Bush School of Public Service and Administration at Texas A&M and earned a Master of Public Service and Administration with concentration in Homeland Security.

Yox completed internships at the City of Round Rock Texas Homeland Security and Emergency Management and with Texas Congressman John R. Carter.

He enjoys culinary arts, with specialties in pizza, pasta and pastries, as well as camping and outdoor adventures.

Training Opportunities

July 25-29 -- **Communications Technician (COMT) Course**, Law Enforcement Center, 701 W. 29th St., South Sioux City. To register, visit: <https://nema.nebraska.gov/event/communications-technician-comt-course-so-sioux-city-july-2022>

July 19-21 -- **L0105 Public Information Basics**, Buffalo County Emergency Operations Center, 1512 Central Ave., Kearney. To register, visit: <https://nema.nebraska.gov/event/l0105-public-information-basics-july>

Aug. 10-12 -- **L0105 Public Information Basics**, Dakota City Fire Hall, 208 S. 21st St., Dakota City. To register, visit: <https://nema.nebraska.gov/event/l0105-public-information-basics-dakota-city-aug-2022>

The entire **NEMA Training Schedule** is available online at <https://nema.nebraska.gov/operations/training-schedules>



John Cannon, executive director of the Nebraska Association of County Officials and **Lynn Rex**, executive director of the League of Nebraska Municipalities present an overview of their organizations and the differences between county and municipal governments to NEMA staff.

NEBRASKA
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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 **Erv Portis**

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.

