

# NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Strength.

# The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



*Spc. Kellan Garber, a Nebraska Army National Guard combat medic, collects nasopharyngeal samples from local citizens, May 27 at a mobile testing site at the Seward County Fairgrounds in Seward. The Nebraska National Guard has multiple teams supporting the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services with COVID-19 mobile testing across the state.*  
**Nebraska National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock**



*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.*

As part of the relaxation of directed health care measures in the state, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency teammates working remotely will report to their assigned work locations on June 1. Some staff -- those with child care issues, health issues or those who provide care for or live with individuals with compromised health systems -- may still work from home. It is our goal to resume our capacity to address all the mission requirements assigned to the agency within the context of safety and continued protection of our workforce.

Nationally, one of the steps needed to reopen America was increased testing. All states are currently testing at least 2 percent of their populations. In Nebraska, we continue to test for coronavirus so that we can isolate those who are infected, quarantine their close contacts and slow the spread of the virus. In May, we have more than doubled the total number of tests performed in March and April combined. More than 150,000 people have signed up at [TestNebraska.com](https://www.testnebraska.com).

This week, **Gov. Pete Ricketts** unveiled how the State of Nebraska plans to use federal coronavirus funds to get Nebraska growing. Nebraska is receiving \$1.25 billion through the CARES Act to aid coronavirus relief efforts. Of the relief funds, \$166 million will go to Douglas County. The remainder will be allocated by the state. The main priorities for these funds include:

1. Stabilizing businesses and livestock producers;
2. Supporting community institutions to meet critical needs such as food security, shelter, and mental health care; reimbursing state and local governments for coronavirus-related expenses; and
3. Shoring up the state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and potential general fund budget flexibility.

Including the \$1.25 billion provided through the Coronavirus Relief Fund, Nebraska has received over \$10 billion in federal coronavirus assistance. These funds have gone toward public health initiatives, the provision of health care, small-business payroll protection, extra unemployment benefits and education—among other uses. These funds also include the \$1.6 billion Nebraskans have received in economic impact payments. These are the direct payments of up to \$1,200 per individual tax filer and \$500 per dependent.

For a detailed breakdown of federal coronavirus funding in Nebraska, including the state's plan to allocate the \$1.084 billion at its discretion, [click here](#).

As our response to COVID-19 continues, a new resource from the Federal Emergency Management Agency is now available to provide guidance for emergency managers responding to a disaster during an ongoing emergency. FEMA recently released its [COVID-19 Pandemic Operational Guidance for the 2020 Hurricane Season](#) and even though we don't respond to hurricanes in Nebraska, it looks to be a great resource for response to tornados, floods and other events during the ongoing COVID-19 emergency.

Sincerely,

Bryan Tuma  
NEMA Assistant Director

# Howard County Emergency Management Director Resigns

**Michelle Woitalewicz** resigned her position as Emergency Manager for Howard County effective, May 8. She accepted a position as a dispatcher for Howard County.

“I want to thank everyone for putting up with me for the past 11 years and hope to see some of you around,” she wrote in her resignation letter. “I will always be a phone call away, if needed. I will miss you all and the wonderful world of emergency management, but look forward to my new adventure. Best wishes to you all.”

Her positive attitude and professionalism will be missed by the emergency management community in Nebraska.



**Woitalewicz**

## Guidance for Restricted County Fair Openings Available on NDA Website

Guidance for restricted county fair openings in Nebraska has been created in cooperation with representatives from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, the Nebraska Association of Fair Managers, the Nebraska State Fair, Nebraska Extension, Nebraska FFA and several local health departments.

The decision to move forward, or not, with a county fair will fall to the local board or organization that oversees that particular fair.

The guidance is hoped to slow the spread of COVID-19 and can be found at:

<https://nda.nebraska.gov/COVID-19/fairopenings.pdf>

## Community Fishing Nights cancelled,

Game and Parks offers online fishing resources

To keep Nebraskans safe by maintaining social distancing in light of COVID-19, Game and Parks has cancelled Community Fishing Nights.

“While we are unable to get together for an evening of fishing with young and new anglers this summer, our website has multiple resources to help fill the void,” said **Larry Pape**, Game and Parks’ aquatic education specialist. “Game and Parks looks forward to fishing with Nebraskans next year at Community Fishing Nights.”

Game and Parks’ instructional and informational fishing materials online at [OutdoorNebraska.gov/fishing](https://OutdoorNebraska.gov/fishing) including: a fishing guide, fishing forecast, a Going Fishing Guide, the YouTube – Game and Parks’ channel, maps – and a variety of other publications available online that detail fishing specific areas such as the Sandhills, Omaha area, Interstate 80 lakes and trout waters.

In addition, the same site can be used to purchase fishing and park entry permits.

## Get Nebraska Growing: DED to Co-Administer COVID-19 Relief Grants

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) will co-administer four new state grant programs – using \$392 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act COVID-19 Relief funding – to help support Nebraska’s economic recovery.

The grants are designed to provide assistance to individuals, families and businesses that have been economically impacted by COVID-19, and will fill gaps by addressing four critical areas of need:

- Financial support (i.e., support for operating costs) for small businesses and for livestock producers.
- Workforce training and retraining for un- and underemployed Nebraskans.
- Enhanced rural broadband access.
- Gallup-based leadership training to promote positive outcomes for impacted businesses.

Click [here](#) to learn about these grant programs in detail. To stay up-to-date with the latest news, information and updates, visit and bookmark <https://getnebraska-growing.nebraska.gov/>. For questions, contact the Get Nebraska Growing info line at 855-264-6858.

**Grant applications will be accepted starting on the following dates:**

- June 3: Workforce Retraining
  - June 8: Stabilization Grants for small businesses
  - June 15: Stabilization Grants for livestock producers
  - June 22: Gallup Business Leadership Training and Remote Access (Rural Broadband) grants
- Visit the DED website at [www.opportunity.nebraska.gov](http://www.opportunity.nebraska.gov).



**NEMA Recognizes DHHS Public Information Officer Mike Wight on his Retirement After 48 years with the State**

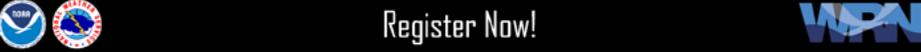
Department of Health and Human Services Public Information Officer Mike Wight has worked on state responses to fire, floods, tornadoes and pandemics throughout his 48-year career with the state. NEMA staff invited him over to NEMA to celebrate him on the occasion of his retirement, May. 15. Pictured above left, Wight accepts a Radiological Survey Meter recognizing his years of service to NEMA and the state from Technical Hazards Unit supervisor James Rashilla. At Right, NEMA assistant Director Bryan Tuma recounts a story of Wight's work with the state as NEMA PIO Jodie Fawl and Wight look on. In addition, to deploying to various disasters, Wight has served as a spokesperson at Nuclear Power Plant Exercises and worked in the Joint Information Center as JIC Manager. Wight also has taught the Basic Public Information Officers Courses with Fawl.

Join Us for a Partner Webinar

# Should Advisories Go Away?

National Weather Service Proposing Changes  
To the Watch / Warning / Advisory System

Register Now!



There is a proposal in the National Weather Service (NWS) to eliminate all Advisory, Special Weather Statement (SPS) and Short Term Forecast (NOW) products, and streamline all sub-Watch/Warning-level information into a plain-language statement. A one-page handout on the proposed changes is available [here](#). A webinar will cover more information on the proposal and will be offered at the five following times:

**1 p.m. CDT June 3 [Click to Register](#)**  
**11 a.m. CDT June 4 [Click to Register](#)**  
**Noon CDT June 17 [Click to Register](#)**  
**Noon CDT July 9 [Click to Register](#)**  
**1 p.m. CDT July 23 [Click to Register](#)**

# NEBRASKA

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Lt. Governor 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 to: Jodie Fawl, Public Information Officer, 2433 N.W. 24th St., Lincoln NE 68524; 402-471-7428, [jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov](mailto:jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov).

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