

# Supporting Community Resilience

NEMA  
Annual Report

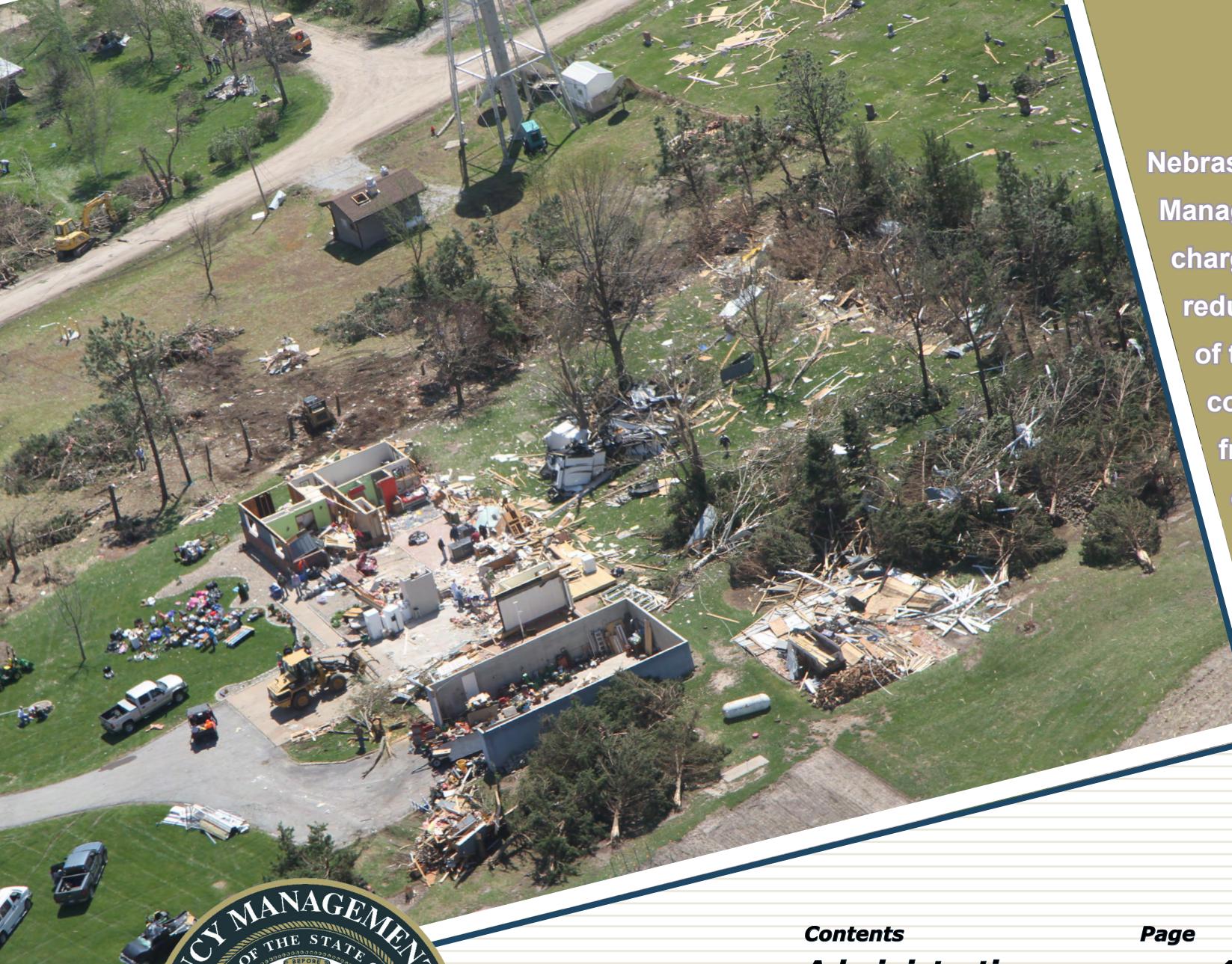
2014



# Mission

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency is charged by state statute with reducing the vulnerabilities of the people and communities of Nebraska from damage, injury, loss of life and property resulting from natural, technological and man-made disasters.

Cover Photo:  
Volunteers work in Pilger following June 17 tornadoes that leveled a swath through the village.



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Upper left:  
Damage was heavy in Beaver Crossing after a May 11 tornado struck.

# Supporting Community Resilience

Dear Fellow Nebraskans:

Three federally-declared disasters in Nebraska during 2014 reminded us that working together offers the most effective response when crises strikes. Nebraska Emergency Management Agency's role following a disaster is to support the local response — to help when local resources are fully exhausted or when they are sure to become exhausted. All disasters begin and end at the local level, where the initial response involves neighbors helping neighbors. Whether it's an ice storm, tornado, wildfire or flood, the beginning of all crisis response rests with the locals. Nebraska's resilience is built on communities working together.

With that in mind, it is imperative that individuals, communities, state and federal representatives engage as partners in preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. The whole community effort enhances the resilience and security of our state.

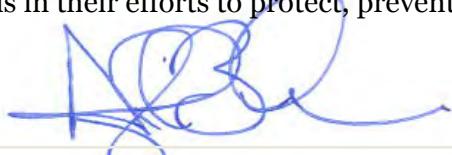
NEMA will continue to serve the citizens of Nebraska in times of disaster. However, emergency management is more than just responding to the challenges posed by a catastrophic event like the tornadoes that swept through several communities in the state this year. The successful recovery of those communities was dependent on their preparedness prior to the disaster.

In addition to successful responses to three federally-declared disasters, major accomplishments in 2014 included:

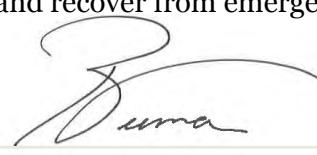
- NEMA received positive preliminary feedback on re-assessment by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program in November.
- The public assistance staff closed out three previous disasters and expects to close out three other disasters in early 2015.
- Through NEMA, the State of Nebraska joined the Great Plains Interstate Fire Compact which includes: Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. The compact shares personnel and resources when needed in the event of a wildfire.
- NEMA planners worked with local emergency management directors to update and revise local emergency operation plans (LEOPs) for 18 of the state's 93 counties.
- NEMA had positive results from its first hostile action-based (HAB) exercise with the Cooper Nuclear Power Station.

In 2015, NEMA strives to be a results orientated, purpose-driven and focused agency supporting all facets of emergency management within the state of Nebraska. Some of the agency's goals include: building emergency management capabilities throughout the state, coordinating emergency management information and activities efficiently and effectively and supporting local and state officials in their efforts to protect, prevent, prepare, respond and recover from emergencies or disasters.

Sincerely,



Major General Daryl Bohac, Director



Bryan Tuma, Assistant Director



**Major General  
Daryl Bohac, Director**



**Bryan Tuma  
Assistant Director**



**Left:** Many Pilger businesses were destroyed by a June 16 tornado.  
**Right:** A NEMA field team and the agency's mobile operation center deployed to Beaver Crossing to work on recovery after a May 11 tornado.

## Overview

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is comprised of four sections: administration, response and recovery, preparedness and technical hazards and is part of the Nebraska Military Department.

The agency works to protect lives and property of Nebraskans by preparing for, responding to, recovering from and mitigating against disasters, threats, hazards and emergencies.

In his role as adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac is director of the agency, with day-to-day operations administered by Assistant Director Bryan Tuma, who joined the agency in June. Tuma previously served as superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol and had to hit the ground running as he joined the agency shortly after three federal-declared disasters had occurred in May and June.

NEMA is staffed with 39 full-time employees, a program specialist from the Public Policy Center and two temporary employees working in the response and recovery section.

NEMA relies extensively on full- and part-time emergency management representatives in Nebraska's 93 counties to carry out programs at the local level. It is this partnership with local directors that is a key reason Nebraskans have been able to effectively respond in times of emergency.

NEMA also supports Nebraska's lieutenant governor as state homeland security director, acts as the state administrative agency for the state's homeland security program and is the point of contact for integration of emergency management and homeland security programs with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

As the state administrative agency, NEMA has responsibility for overall funding, fiscal accountability, program management and integration with other state agencies to interact and carry out the state homeland security program.

## Administration

Oversight of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency is the responsibility of the administration section. The State Homeland Security Strategy and the Agency Strategic Plan are also this section's responsibility and are in place to lead and guide agency performance.

At the national level, NEMA interacts with the National Emergency Management Association. Statewide, NEMA actively supports the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management and its professional membership.

## Public Information

During and following a disaster, getting accurate and timely information to the public is a priority of NEMA's public information officer (PIO). Working with local, state and federal communicators, the PIO can activate a joint information center (JIC) following a disaster or event that affects citizens of the state. The JIC can include PIOs from other state agencies as well as representatives from local and federal entities involved in the response to an event.

In 2014, PIOs deployed with NEMA field teams to Beaver Crossing and Pilger following tornadoes and worked with the PIO at the State Emergency Operations Center to get vital information to the public as quickly as possible.

The PIO also fulfills the federal requirement that nuclear power station incidents activate a JIC in the event of an incident at one of the state's two nuclear power stations.

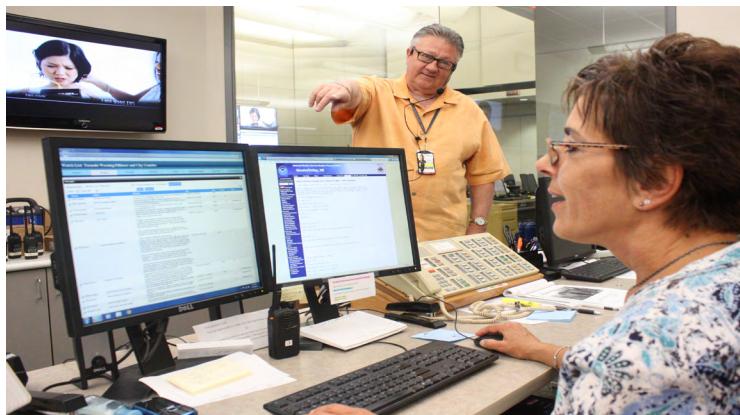
## IT/COMMO

The information technology/communications (IT/Commo) unit strives to meet the daily and disaster needs of the agency.

IT/Commo staff have a goal of actively pursuing and recommending cutting-edge electronics, including new computers, new radios or other new technologies, that can assist not only in the office, but in the field as well.

This year IT/Commo provided a variety of solutions for improved efficiency to the agency. The IT/Commo staff:

- Installed wireless networking with four access points at the State Emergency Operations Center;
- Added scanning capable systems condensed into multiple use copy machines;



Duty officer staff are on call whenever NEMA's offices are closed. A duty officer reports to NEMA during on-call hours if a situation warrants their presence at the State Emergency Operations Center.

- Installed a state networking connection into the National Guard Joint Operations Center ensuring a spot for NEMA during disasters;
- Added Apple computer technology;
- Updated logging system software;
- Installed a state radio system (SRS) consolette that enables NEMA's use on the system as just one resource;
- Added virtual private network (VPN) connections at the alternate emergency operations Center (EOC) in Grand Island
- Updated geographic information system (GIS) equipment for better mapping capabilities
- Added a component to resource management web that will enable tracking of where resources are located.
  - Installed a new "blue tree" Internet connection system in both the mobile operations trailer (MOT) and the mobile operations center (MOC).
  - Added a cache of very high frequency (VHF) radios to the resources used in the field during disasters
  - Added gateways to enable patching multiple radio systems together.

IT/Commo continues to support all components of emergency management at the state, regional and local level.



Assistant Director Bryan Tuma addresses NEMA staff in the State Emergency Operations Center.

## Assistance to Local Government

The Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) provides direct support for essential expenses such as salaries, benefits, equipment, supplies, maintenance of facilities and other necessary costs of state and local emergency management departments and agencies.

Local emergency managers play an integral, if not leading role, in the various planning, exercise and training (PET) regions. Nebraska's 93 counties are organized in to eight PET regions. In addition to traditional emergency management duties, local emergency managers now focus on a variety of activities to improve emergency management in the state.

The six project EMPG areas from which each jurisdiction is asked to identify activities they want to accomplish are:

- Administration of emergency management programs
- Planning
- Training and exercise
- Disaster response and hazard mitigation
- Technical hazards
- Public education and outreach.

# Preparedness

NEMA's Preparedness Section has responsibility for administering grants associated with emergency management preparedness. Preparedness staff work with emergency managers and first responders statewide on local emergency operations plans, the emergency preparedness training and exercise program and the involvement of the public through Citizen Corps and Medical Reserve Corps.

## Grants

One of the core programs within NEMA is grants management. Grants are received from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Transportation (DoT)/Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).

NEMA, as the state administrative agency (SAA), is the only Nebraska agency eligible to apply directly for these funds, and in turn ensures that local emergency management organizations are established and maintained with them. As

the SAA, NEMA is responsible for filing the state applications, distributing program guidelines to the state and local agencies, receiving applications, maintaining oversight and compliance monitoring and facilitating the distribution of funds.

From these federal agencies, NEMA receives:

- State Homeland Security Grant
- Emergency Management Performance Grant
- Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant

### Highlights of 2014:

The **Investment Justification Workshop** was held May 7, with the state planning team, senior advisory council, the Nebraska



Workshops on threat, hazard identification and risk assessment, the state preparedness report, and training, exercise and planning were held on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Innovation Campus.

Public Safety Communications Council, and local officials. The purpose of the workshop was to identify goals and objectives as local jurisdictions address hazard – risk – capability gaps.

**Funds were allocated to the state's eight planning, exercise and training (PET) regions.** Based on the total award from DHS, the workshop's recommendations were forwarded to the Homeland Security Policy Group. As the state's director of homeland security, Nebraska's lieutenant governor approved amounts based on those recommendations.

As within every year, NEMA continued its **grant monitoring program** as required by DHS. This year, the 2013 grants were monitored for compliance over the following areas; employee reimbursement, equipment, fiscal, local emergency operation plan (LEOP) compliance, National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance, other direct costs, personnel and direct labor, PET expenses, reporting requirements, supplies and materials, special conditions, and travel-vehicle mileage. The number of grants monitored breakdown is as follows; eight PET regions, 36 counties, three state agencies, for a total of 67 grants monitored and compliant.

As a result of the monitoring visits conducted in 2013, the grants management unit met throughout 2014 to totally revamp the Grants Management Handbook for grant recipients. The original plan was to update the handbook and have it posted on the NEMA website by early 2014; however, once the process began the need for a more user-friendly product was identified.

## Citizen Corps

Nebraska Citizen Corps promotes individual and community preparedness through education, training and volunteer opportunities.

A full-time coordinator organizes and advocates for Citizen Corps councils and partner programs across the state. In 2014, State Homeland Security funds were used for:

- Managing the Nebraska Citizen Corps Program,
- Providing technical assistance to local programs,
- Strengthening Citizen Corps councils,
- Promoting community preparedness initiatives,
- Providing training and exercise opportunities, including the annual Nebraska Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) conference,
- Recognizing outstanding preparedness efforts through the Be Prepared Awards,
- Assisting with the continuing development of a State Citizen Corps Council.

Federal funds were sub-granted to the planning, exercise and training regions to:

- Strengthen Citizen Corps councils in Nebraska,
- Develop and strengthen intra-regional and inter-regional collaboration,
- Promote community preparedness and National Preparedness Month,
- Support partner programs with funds for training materials and exercises,
- Help sustain local partner programs with the purchase of needed equipment.

## Planning

The planning unit oversees the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP), State Preparedness Report, State Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), statewide communications interoperability implementation and revisions of county local emergency operation plans (LEOP).

Working with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (PPC), NEMA has established planning capabilities for the integrated planning process for the eight planning exercise and training (PET)/communication regions. A comprehensive program of planning support education has been developed to assist in integrating local planning needs into the SEOP/LEOP planning program. This support will allow LEOPs to address the Core Capabilities which are critical elements necessary to achieve the National Preparedness Goal setup by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The planning unit coordinates the development of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant investment justifications, serves as the agency liaison to Lincoln and Omaha's Metropolitan Medical Response Systems and coordinates the Citizen Corps and Medical Reserve Corps programs.

The unit also coordinates the Homeland Security Senior Advisory Committee and the Homeland Security Planning Team.



Hall County Emergency Management Director Jon Rosenlund and NEMA's Tonya Ngotel participate in a planning workshop.



Hayes County Emergency Management Director Char Hamilton and NEMA's Patrick Rooney work together at a local emergency operations plan workshop.

# Training and Exercise

The NEMA training and exercise unit presents an active program, integrated into Nebraska's eight PET regions. Activities are conducted at all levels, from assistance to local jurisdictions through regional and state level training and exercises.

NEMA offers support to state agencies, local jurisdictions and eight training regions in the form of basic certification academies and targeted courses for emergency management personnel.

The basic academy supports certification as required under Nebraska law. Attendees acquire the basic skills necessary to function as a certified emergency manager in the state.

Thousands of individuals in Nebraska completed online independent studies in the NIMS 100, 200, 700 and 800 courses, along with specialized training in areas specific to agriculture, health and human services, hazardous materials and other fields. NEMA continues to establish a level of training in compliance with requirements identified by the Department of Homeland Security and Nebraska statute.

NEMA also conducts an annual state-level exercise each year to test the readiness of local, county and state agencies, and their ability to work together in a large-scale incident. In 2014, the state exercise tested the state agency's continuity of operations plan with a tabletop exercise which involved testing agency plans.



**Participants in NEMA's basic academy get an in depth look at emergency management and the planning, exercising and training processes.**



**Instructor Katy Goolsby-Brown gives NEMA's Leo Larkin pointers in a benefit cost analysis course held at NEMA on Nov. 5. The course focused on evaluation of hazard mitigation projects.**



**Emergency management directors Kirt Smith of Hamilton County and Terry Miller of Saunders County participate in Para-clete technician training at NEMA.**

# Response and Recovery

The core missions of NEMA's Response and Recovery Section are to be ready to coordinate a timely and efficient state response in support of local government and to effectively administer both state and federal recovery programs to speed local jurisdictions' return to normal following a disaster.

NEMA's Response and Recovery section had a fully-engaged year in 2014 with three new disasters including:

**DR-4179-NE** — May 11 tornadoes and severe storms in the south-central part of the state, notably Beaver Crossing;

**DR-4183-NE** — June 14 to 21 tornadoes, severe storms and flooding in the northeast part of the state, notably Pilger; and

**DR-4185** — June, 1 to 4 severe hail and storms, notably Blair.

In addition, a **state declaration** was designated for the Aug. 31 storm in Dakota City.

A primary duty of Response and Recovery is coordinating daily operations of three single engine air-tanker (SEAT) bases in western and north central Nebraska. The bases were established for quick and efficient initial attack on wildfires. In 2014, the SEAT was situated at a base in Chadron and suppressed two small fires in remote areas in the northwest panhandle. The SEAT

kept those fires to a minimum number of acres lost. It was on stand-by for two other fires that were suppressed by local resources. The annual report of the SEAT usage was filed with the Nebraska Legislature by Dec. 1.

Nebraska joined the Great Plains Interstate Wildfire Compact this year and immediately began working with South Dakota on border fire issues. A South Dakota SEAT assisted on a fire in Nebraska on federal forest grounds and the Chadron SEAT base was used by South Dakota on a fire in South Dakota.

Response and recovery staff coordinated and monitored activities with Federal Management Agency (FEMA) personnel, who were working in Nebraska on the three declared federal disasters.

The section also maintains a duty officer system with two staff on call 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week. Duty officers monitor con-

ditions in the state, and when severe weather or disasters occur, the duty officer system allows for rapid response of the State Emergency Operations Plan.

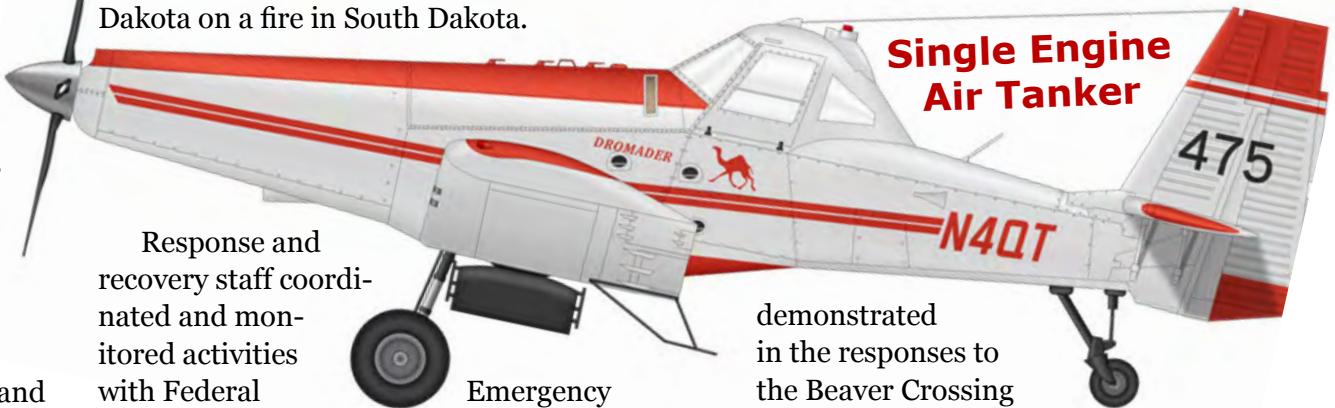
## Long-Term Recovery Process

Recovery is an integral part of the Response and Recovery section. The goal is to assist local areas impacted by disaster events by returning their communities back to normal or, if possible, better.

The state's active weather year has shown the need for active involvement by the state in the long-term recovery process.

The coordination of voluntary resources and personnel in the response phase leads directly into assisting with planning in the recovery phase.

A huge emphasis was put on coordinating voluntary organizations and resources and was



**Single Engine Air Tanker**

demonstrated in the responses to the Beaver Crossing area and especially the northeast Nebraska, Pilger areas.

Public assistance and hazard mitigation staff responded to three new federal and one state disaster while continuing their work on disasters from the previous declarations.

# Public Assistance

Quick and efficient response is the goal of NEMA's public assistance unit staff, whether it is for a federal or state declared disaster.

Following a disaster, descriptions of the damage and plans for repair were written by Federal Emergency Management Agency project specialists. Once the projects are written and funding obligated, NEMA administers the funding and ensures that proper completion of projects occurs to meet programmatic guidelines.

The coordination and review of the federal disasters projects and the creation of the state disaster projects is ongoing. The review, coor-



**Debris and damage litter the landscape in Pilger in the aftermath of the June tornado.**

dination, payment process, inspections and ultimate closeout of the previously declared disasters, continued while responding to the current events.

In the last 50 years, Nebraska has had 58 federally-declared disasters and emergencies, and 26 of those disasters were declared in the last decade totally \$522 million in grants provided to communities for public assistance

and hazard mitigation projects.

NEMA has worked to assist state and local government through floods, tornadoes, wild-fires, hail, ice and snow storms.

To successfully respond in times of disaster, NEMA administers the Governor's Emergency Fund, which was established to provide assistance to political subdivisions that have suffered from a disaster or emergency.



**Above:** Volunteers work in the Wisner donation center.



**Center:** Destruction was widespread in Pilger.  
**Right:** A grandstand was destroyed in Beaver Crossing.



# Hazard Mitigation

NEMA hazard mitigation staff work to reduce the impact of disasters on lives and property across Nebraska. Guidance and assistance is provided to communities to mitigate for everything from tornadoes, fires and floods to any other natural or man-made hazard.

After a federal disaster declaration has been approved for the state, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds are available for local governments to develop long-term initiatives that will reduce loss of life and property. The most recent declarations brought opportunities for education outreach to the public on a variety of hazard mitigation related issues such as safe rooms and flood plain education. It also provided educational opportunities for local officials and first responders.

Gov. Dave Heineman convened a disaster recovery task force, led by NEMA's hazard mitigation officer, to prioritize the projects statewide for disaster funding. The task force's goal is to ensure that as many projects are submitted and approved by FEMA as possible. On Oct. 3, the task force convened at NEMA, reviewed and made recommendations on the current requests that will forward the state's efforts to minimize the threats to communities and their citizens. Pre-disaster mitigation funding was also pursued and work is being done for approval of eight mitigation projects under this annual appropriation.

Hazard mitigation saves taxpayer dollars through measures such as the reduction of power outages due to storms, property buyouts of frequently flooded homes, flood reduction projects, tornado safe rooms, backup power to critical infrastructures and warning systems.

## Hazard Mitigation Program (HMP) Educational Opportunities

The hazard mitigation unit at NEMA facilitated several educational opportunities across the state after the severe summer storms that wreaked havoc in more than 36 counties. Per the state's request, FEMA subject matter experts came to several locations to lead workshops and teach classes on safe room installation, flood plain management and benefit cost analysis.

FEMA's continuing education and outreach (CEO) branch brought in rebuilding experts into local home improvement stores to educate the general public on mitigation efforts that can be done when rebuilding or repairing a home or business from the effects of disasters. Two teams of FEMA staffers went to eight retail outlets in the areas of highest impact from the state's summer storms. More than 750 citizens stopped at the outreach booths for more information on how to rebuild stronger and smarter. It was a great opportunity for Nebraskans to learn better mitigation practices.



Saferoom installation was the topic of a workshop in Pilger as the community began rebuilding following the June tornado.

# Technical Hazards

The agency's Technical Hazards Section includes radiological emergency preparedness, radiological instrumentation calibration laboratory and support for the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC), designated Nebraska emergency response teams and the Nebraska Hazardous Incident Team.

Planning, preparing and training for technical hazards events that could harm or negatively affect Nebraskans is a major part of the work undertaken in this section. Taking action before and after an incident could significantly reduce negative consequences of an incident in the state.



**Jon Schwarz, manager of the NEMA Technical Hazards Section, gives a radiological emergency preparedness overview at the EM101 workshop offered for local government officials.**

## Radiological Emergency Preparedness

The section notifies local emergency response managers of unclassified radiological shipments through their jurisdictions.

Two nuclear power stations in eastern Nebraska, and interstate movement of radioactive material and radioactive waste across the state, make preparing for radiological emergencies a priority for NEMA.



**State public information officers, Jim Bunstock and Jodie Fawl, work with an Omaha Public Power staff member during an exercise at the joint information center (JIC) for Ft. Calhoun Nuclear Station.**

The radiological emergency preparedness (REP) unit works to assure that Nebraskans are safe in the event of a radiological emergency through planning and training.

The unit updates local radiological emergency response plans (RERP) and procedures for counties near the state's nuclear power stations.

The nuclear power stations routinely conduct drills and exercises in which NEMA participates. In 2014, NEMA was involved in four nuclear power station drills and three functional exercises. The year also saw the start of a new eight-year exercise cycle with the participation in the first ever hostile-action based (HAB) event exercise in Nebraska with the Cooper Nuclear Station.

REP staff members are certified radiological instructors and offer free training to all emergency first responder agencies throughout Nebraska, upon request.

One staff member calibrates radiological equipment and exchanges this equipment, on an annual or four-year cycle, depending on the type of equipment, with equipment kept by local emergency first responder agencies throughout Nebraska's 93 counties. The section maintains a database of these exchanges and provides a listing to local emergency management directors.

Operational checks and calibration are also done for radiological equipment within those counties that could be affected by a nuclear power station incident, on a quarterly and annual basis.

# State Emergency Response Commission

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency supports the State Emergency Response Commission through a full-time coordinator, four full-time planners and a planning supervisor who assist in the development and design of a hazardous materials response plan.

By statute, SERC supervises and coordinates activities of the local emergency planning committees (LEPCs) across the state. LEPCs update hazmat plans and provide training to specific localized chemicals and conduct response exercises.

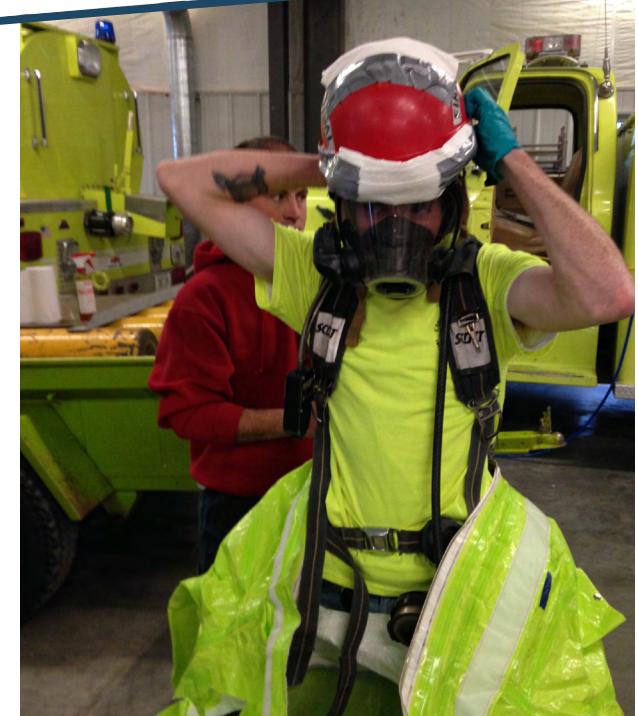
The LEPCs and SERC are tasked with ensuring that proper chemical reporting is completed and first responders have the knowledge, skills and abilities to respond to chemical specific incidents within their jurisdictions. Facilities and businesses storing hazardous materials or chemicals are required to report inventories of substances or products that meet or exceed reporting thresholds to the LEPC, SERC and local fire department.

These activities are supported through a U.S. Department of Transportation – Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration grant managed by NEMA.

Activities in the past year have included training specific to crude oil, exercises specific to agricultural chemicals and a first-ever hazmat challenge.



Members of the State Emergency Response Commissions convene for their quarterly meeting. Members of SERC are appointed by the governor and are requested to supervise and coordinate activities of the local emergency planning committees.

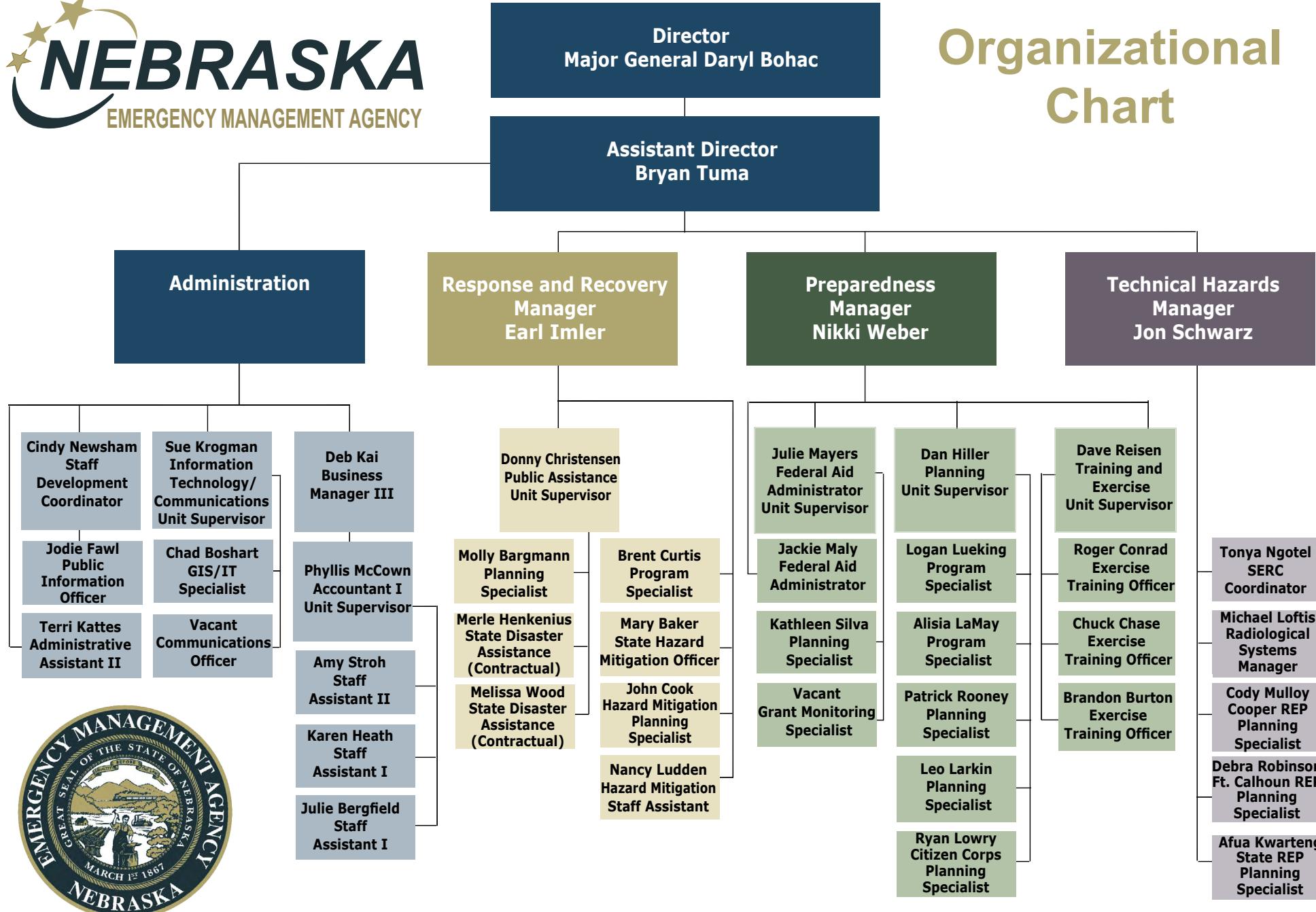


A hazmat operations course sponsored by Wayne County Emergency Management was a training opportunity offered in 2014.





# Organizational Chart





## Severe Weather Awareness Week

Gov. Dave Heineman declared March 24-28, 2014, as Nebraska Severe Weather Awareness Week and honored severe weather awareness poster contest winners during a ceremony at the Nebraska State Capitol on March 13, 2014. Pictured from left, Dan Hiller of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency; Michelle Woitalewicz of Howard County Emergency Management; Bill McPherson of Thayer County Emergency Management; Ensley Frame, Gretna, (fourth place); Takaylynn Hergott, Hebron, (second place); Joshua Jerabek, Farwell (third place); John Kaslon, Ashton; Gov. Heineman and Lynn Marshal, Sarpy County Emergency Management director and then president of Nebraska Association of Emergency Managers; and Brian Smith of the National Weather Service. Kaslon's winning poster is pictured at left. Kaslon's poster depicts a tornado approaching a farm, and includes an inside look at a basement, with an emergency tote full of supplies that are ready should disaster strike.



**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 FEMA and other federal partners.

NEMA's 2014 Annual Report was produced by Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl. For additional information about the report or other agency publications contact her at: 402-471-742, [jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov](mailto:jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov)

