



January-February 2016

The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



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MOC II Added to NEMA's Mobile Response Capabilities

NEMA is retrofitting a new mobile operation center, the MOC II, in order to enhance the agency's response capabilities. The MOC II was formerly owned by the Federal Protective Service and was obtained by NEMA through the Federal Excess Property Program (FEPP), which is administered in Nebraska by the Nebraska Forest Service.



*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.

One of the cornerstones of an effective emergency management program is good situational awareness, and in an effort to enhance the state’s ability to gather intelligence, we are exploring the possibility of establishing a watch center. Directors from emergency support function agencies met recently at NEMA to learn about the concept and discuss how a watch center could benefit the state.

A watch center would focus on the all-hazards threat environment and would tie the planning and response capabilities of state government to the preparedness measures adopted for the State of Nebraska. Watch centers are staffed by interagency teams whose responsibility is to monitor, collect and integrate incoming information from a variety of sources and disseminate it as appropriate to state agencies and other key stakeholders. The watch center would serve a coordination role by ensuring that a common understanding of the situation is shared by all relevant state agencies and key stakeholders.

The watch center would be designed to improve our common operating picture, coordinate our response, provide better information on emerging threats, centralize logging and records and supplement the state emergency operation center capabilities and activities.

As the state’s homeland security director, Lt. Gov. Mike Foley asked NEMA to gather information from state agency representatives to explore the possible development of a watch center for Nebraska. The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, under contract with NEMA to aid in homeland security planning efforts, conducted interviews with key state agency personnel to gauge interest in pursuing the watch center concept.

Improving our methods and ability to gather information is vital to the success of the state’s emergency management program. Development of a watch center is an innovative approach to accomplishing that goal.



Emergency Support Function Representatives meet in the State Emergency Operations Center.

Sincerely,



Lt. Gov. Mike Foley addresses agency directors, emergency support function representatives and NEMA staff.



Denise Bulling of the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center discusses the response to the idea of a watch center in Nebraska, which could improve situational awareness as well as coordination of response to emergencies and disasters.



Emergency Support Training

Representatives of emergency support function (ESF) agencies and organizations participated in annual training in the State Emergency Operations Center in January. The exercise tested capabilities of the agencies to respond remotely from the SEOC if they were activated during a disaster.



All-Hazards IMT Training

A week-long training on the duties, responsibilities and capabilities of an effective incident management team planning section chief was held at NEMA in February.



EM 101

Earl Imler addresses members of a central nebraska economic development group as part of a NEMA EM 101 presentation outlining how emergency management works in Nebraska.



ICS 300, ICS 400 Training

Above: Deputy State Fire Marshals Allen Michels and Brian Busse instruct incident command system principles in ICS 300 at NEMA on Feb. 24. Right: class participants work together on an exercise.



Preparedness



Clockwise from top left: D’Ette Scholtz and Ashley Mueller of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Office give a presentation on 10 ways to develop an engaged COAD; Brent Curtis of NEMA discusses the COAD’s role in the Pilger tornado response; from left, Jon Rosenlund of Hall County introduces panelists Carla Maurer of Heartland United Way, John Jones, American Red Cross and Rick Ruzick of Hall County Housing, who discussed the Centennial Towers Fire COAD case study; and Ryan Lowry of NEMA talks about Citizen Corps and volunteer opportunities.

Cooperation, Communication, Coordination, Collaboration

Community Organizations Active in Disaster Workshop Held in Grand Island

Hall County Emergency Management Agency hosted a Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) Workshop on Feb. 9 at the Grand Island City Hall for nearly 40 participants, that outlined how to form and

maintain a COAD in a community.

Presentations included: “10 ways to Develop a an Engaged COAD”, Citizen Corps, “COAD in Action: Pilger Tornado”, a panel session on the Centennial Towers fire COAD case study, the role of the Nebraska VOAD, the Hall County Chaplain Corps and a “Guide to Case Management”.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Office discussed the four Cs of COADs: cooperation, communication, coordination and collaboration.

“By establishing community inclusiveness, everyone has a voice,” Mueller said.

Ryan Lowry of NEMA’s Citizen Corps program outlined the three areas of focus of the Citizen Corps program: public education, training and volunteer opportunities.

Brent Curtis of NEMA discussed the success of the Pilger COAD which included distribution of 1,000 weather radios across four counties and more than \$545,000 in financial assistance distributed in the area.



Nearly 40 attendees listen to a COAD presentation in Grand Island.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Helps Fund Boy Scout Shelter



Nancy Ludden was recognized for her commitment and service to NEMA by Assistant Director Bryan Tuma following 16 months in the hazard mitigation unit. Ludden joined NEMA in a temporary assignment after retiring from the State Fire Marshal's Office.



Left: The Boy Scouts of America Cornhusker Council held a grand opening for its Conservation Education and Storm Shelter Building at Camp Cornhusker in Dubois on Jan. 23.



Right: State Hazard Mitigation Officer Mary Baker accepts recognition on behalf of NEMA for being a "Significant Investor, Awesome Benefactor" providing a hazard mitigation grant; inside the shelter.



Merle Henkenius meets with applicants in northeast Nebraska.



Merle Henkenius photographs a completed assistance project.

Merle Henkenius Retires from Public Assistance Unit

Merle Henkenius' temporary assignment with NEMA began in Aug. 2010, and it turned out not to be so temporary. He retired this year on Jan. 29.

Repeated disasters meant a lot of

inspections of the work needed to be completed. Henkenius crisscrossed the state many times over as he traveled to check the work done on FEMA-funded storm damage repairs.

He met with applicants and verified that the work was done according to scope.

He took pictures of the the work as well as scenes he saw along the way. He sees art in the ordinary. Things that others drive past and ignore are extraordinary photos waiting to be taken by Henkenius.

A quote from his yet to be published collections of essays and fine art photos, *Long Days and Small Wonders*, explains it best:

"It's the everyday article, after all, that gnaws a niche in consciousness, wiggles in and stays, In fact, these overly familiar subjects almost beg interpretation, and I've long been intrigued by how stored and discarded stuff seems to arrange itself into art, all on its own."

(Check out more excerpts from his book at: www.merlehenkenius.com/.)

Henkenius said he'll miss his work for the state.

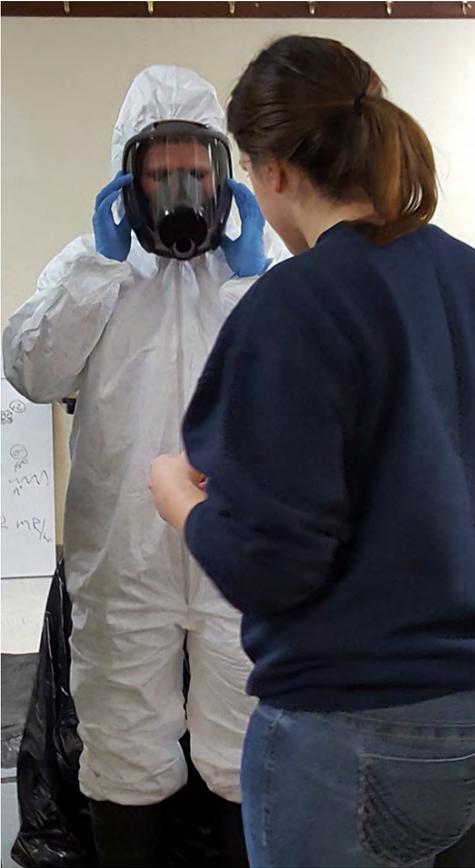
"NEMA sent me out with cameras, a gas card and a truck," Henkenius said. "It's like they sent me to do my favorite things. I like the people I work with, I



Prairie Shipwreck near Chadron.
Photo by Merle Henkenius

Continued on page 8

Technical Hazards



All-Hazards IMT Training

NEMA Program Specialist Alisia LaMay attended the Radiological Emergency Response Operation (RERO) course at Anniston, Va. during the first week of February. RERO is a 5-day course offering lectures, hands-on training and team exercises. The lectures include operational-level radiological concepts using guidance and information from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, U.S. Department of Energy, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Use of the hands-on training modules provided students with the knowledge and skills to perform in a radiological emergency response operation. RERO culminates with a final exercise involving the emergency response operations skills and training learned during the course.

Preparedness Awards Application Period Now Open

The application period for the 2016 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards is now open.

The awards highlight innovative local practices and achievements by individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions toward making their communities safer, better prepared and more resilient.

Three new categories were added this year, providing even more ways to showcase preparedness efforts. The new categories are: **Outstanding Inclusive Initiatives in Emergency Management**, **Outstanding Private Sector Initiatives** and **America's PrepareAthon! in Action**.

These awards offer a chance to receive national recognition for preparedness efforts. Winning a FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Award or honorable mention can

help you:

- Gain additional resources for your community preparedness efforts
- Expose your program to national media
- Expand your organization's local, state and federal networks

Download an application form from <http://www.ready.gov/preparedness-awards> and apply today. You can also nominate an individual or organization who inspires you to prepare.

To be considered for this year's awards, all applications must be sent to citizencorps@fema.dhs.gov by **March 28, at 10:59 p.m. central time** and feature program activities occurring between Jan. 1, 2015 and March 28, 2016. Once all applications have been received, FEMA will select winners in each of the following categories:

- Outstanding Citizen Corps Council

- Community Preparedness Champions
- Awareness to Action
- Technological Innovation
- Outstanding Achievement in Youth Preparedness
- Preparing the Whole Community
- Outstanding Inclusive Initiatives in Emergency Management (new)
- Outstanding Private Sector Initiatives (new)
- Outstanding Community Emergency Response Team Initiatives
- Outstanding Citizen Corps Partner Program
- America's PrepareAthon! in Action (new)

Winners of the 2016 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards will be announced in the fall, and will be FEMA's honored guests at a community preparedness roundtable event in Washington, DC.

NEMA Hosts Residential Safe Room Kickoff in Pilger



Left: Kim Niemann, city clerk in Pilger, center, checks out the capacity of an Atlas tornado shelter with Federal Emergency Management representatives, from left, Maria Maldonado and Tara Hallmark of FEMA Region 11. NEMA hosted a residential safe room kickoff meeting at the Pilger temporary office/fire barn. Right: Lona Lewis from Global Storm Shelters gives information to Ted Neiman and Max Schroeder, both residents of Pilger that have signed up for the residential safe room grant.



Trent Howard has been named Emergency Management Director for Region 11. Faythe Peterson retains the title of coordinator and will work primarily with grants while Howard will focus on disaster management.



Jefferson County Emergency Management Director John McKee has agreed to fill in as the Saline County Emergency Management Director until a fulltime replacement is named.



Richardson County Emergency Management Director Brian Dixon has resigned March 18 to take a position as an emergency manager with the City of Shoreline, Washington within the Seattle Metro.



ICS 300 Offered in Hebron

An Incident Command System (ICS) 300 course held in Hebron on Feb. 20-21 attracted 20 students including representatives from the National Guard, local fire and rescue from Beatrice, Deshler, Fairbury and Hebron, Thayer county officials and law enforcement from Imperial. Left: Eddie Mueller from Lincoln Fire Department instructs; right: Pat Borer from Lincoln Fire leads the class. Thayer County Director Bill McPherson will also be holding ICS 400 classes March 12-13. Thayer County tested its new Rapid Tag system to register participants.

Story and Photos submitted by Jim Dunker, Director Fillmore County Emergency Management



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State Homeland Security Director

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

The Beacon is published six times a year and includes emergency management news and activities from across the state. Please forward story ideas or photos for inclusion to:

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[@NEMAtweets](https://twitter.com/NEMAtweets)

New ETO Joins NEMA Training and Exercise Staff



Larry Fichtner

industrial education.

Fichtner is married to Julie and they have two sons, Kyle, 28, and Dillon, 25, both mechanical engineers.

In his free time, Fichtner volunteers in the press box for Pius High School football games, enjoys car racing, hunting, fishing, welding and woodworking.

Larry Fichtner joined NEMA in January as a new exercise training officer in the training and exercise unit.

Fichter comes from the Lincoln Regional Center where he served as a safety specialist focusing on emergency management, safety and injury reviews.

Prior to that, He worked with the Nebraska Safety Council and as a deputy state fire marshal for nearly 10 years.

He serves as a volunteer on the Critical Incident Management Team working as a peer to emergency medical technicians and firefighters. He has served as a volunteer firefighter on the Waverly Volunteer Fire Department for 20 years.

He graduated from UNL with a bachelor of science in

Henkenius Continued

love the travel and I like meeting new people."

But, he has stuff to do. Which is why he decided to retire.

He wants to concentrate on photography, restore a Model T, take more flying lessons and travel. He wants to get that novel published and write some



Assistant Director Bryan Tuma, left, recognizes Merle Henkenius for his service to NEMA.

more books. He's written or co-written 10 books including the *Ultimate Guide to Plumbing: Complete Projects for the Homeowner*, a plumbing book that's sold 300,000 copies.

Before arriving at NEMA Henkenius had a full career of published articles and photographs. Henkenius has written and illustrated many *Popular Mechanics* articles on home improvement and repair. He wrote for *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Readers Digest*, *Sports Illustrated* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

"Merle is an incredible storyteller, photographer, friend and coworker," said Jodie Fawl, public information officer. "He was a Jack of all trades and master of many. We're going to miss him."

Calendar

March 9 — Severe Weather Awareness Week proclamation signing and poster contest winner recognition, 10 a.m., Nebraska Capitol

March 21-25 — Severe Weather Awareness Week

March 22 — Tornado Drill, 10 a.m.

March 26-27 — Hazardous Materials Awareness Days, Nebraska Hazmat Symposium, Kearney

April 6-8 — Nebraska Association of Emergency Management, Columbus

Spotter trainings have been scheduled across the state through the various National Weather Service Offices. To find one near you, visit www.weather.gov/ and enter your location. Links to most of the classes are listed in the News Headlines at the top of the page.