

# THE BEACON



Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



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## Officials assess extent of snow damage

State and federal assessment teams met with local officials during the week of Jan. 11-15 to assess whether the state met expenditure thresholds for public damages as a result of record or near-record snowfall during storms in December and January.

Five teams fanned out across the state to assess local conditions and meet with county commissioners and supervisors about what might qualify for federal assistance.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials and Nebraska National Guard representatives on behalf of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency visited more than half of the state's 93 counties.

"Based on the information they compile, we will determine whether the state meets federal thresholds for receiving assistance to help with costs incurred by various political subdivisions due to these winter storms," said **Al Berndt**, assistant director for NEMA.

Regular plowing responsibilities won't count, Berndt said. But emergency trips ahead of public power trucks, for example, would.

A report will be forwarded to **Gov. Dave Heineman** which will allow him to determine whether the state will apply for federal assistance.



**Cover Photo:** Record or near-record snowfall from December and January storms dumped snow across Nebraska. Piles of snow lined streets, roads and parking lots. Blizzard conditions and low temperatures affected the region and hampered snow removal.

**Top:** Jim Schmailzl of the Nebraska Department of Road updates Nebraska National Guard, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and Federal Emergency Management representatives at NEMA on the status of Nebraska roads on Jan. 9. The officials met to develop an emergency action plan for continued response to the snow emergency.

**Center:** The Platte River remained open Jan. 9

**Right:** Single lane roads closed by drifts like this road in Cedar County were common throughout Eastern Nebraska.



# Nebraska's snow-covered roads



Dakota County



Filmore County



Cass County



Lancaster County



Gage County



**Above:** Al Berndt of NEMA talks to reporters about damage assessment teams.



**Right:** Berndt and FEMA's Federal Coordinating Officer Stephen Thompson talk to reporters.



## Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program course held

Emergency managers, nuclear power plant officials and representatives of the military were among participants in a Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) course at the Bellevue Volunteer Fire Department Training Center, Jan 12-14.

The 34 participants were trained by Department of Homeland Security instructors, **Larry Long** and **Jeff Donald**.

The HSEEP class is designed to build self-sustaining exercise programs and provide a standardized methodology for designing, developing, conducting and evaluating exercises.

Participants worked with a fictional jurisdictional identity which allowed participants to identify training and exercise needs that were specific to the individual needs of a community.

The course features approximately 15 exercises over three days and focuses on the capabilities and priorities unique to each fictional community.

According to course manager **Aaron Alward** of NEMA an exercise training officer, HSEEP is a capabilities and performance-based exercise program.

The intent of HSEEP is to provide common exercise policy and program guidance capable of constituting a national standard for all exercises, Alward said. HSEEP includes consistent terminology that can be used by all exercise planners, regardless of the nature and composition of their sponsoring agency or organization.

“I would especially like to thank the Bellevue Volunteer Fire Department for the use of their exceptional training center,” Alward said. “The hospitality they showed to us was greatly appreciated.”





## State Emergency Response Commission holds quarterly meeting

The State Emergency Response Commission held its quarterly meeting Jan. 5 at NET in Lincoln.

A highlight of the meeting was a presentation by representatives of the Norfolk Fire Department. The firefighters reporter on a propane fire in December. The incident commander shared lessons learned from the fire which included a large-scale evacuation.

SERC consists of 19 members from state and local government, including fire, law, public health, school industry transportation and the public.



## Upcoming NEMA Training

80-Hour  
Hazmat Technician Course  
April 19-29 in Grand island

Participants must provide proof of operations level hazmat training.

Instructors: Fairmont Fire Protection District Training Team  
Course Manager: Tonya Ngotel (402) 471-7176, [tonya.ngotel@nebraska.gov](mailto:tonya.ngotel@nebraska.gov)



The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (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* is published monthly by NEMA to share news about the agency and emergency management activities throughout the state. Story ideas can be forwarded to: Jodie Fawl, Public Information Officer, NEMA, 1300 Military Road, Lincoln, NE 68508; (402) 471-7428; or [jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov](mailto:jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov).