

THE BEACON



Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

March 2010

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Winners of the Severe Weather Awareness Poster Contest were: Megan Allie Moore, Southern Elementary School in Blue Springs, third; Derek Voigt, Jeffrey Elementary School, Osceola, second; Hannah Koperski, St. Paul Public School, first; and Sam McCaslin, St. Agnes School in Scottsbluff, fourth; Back row from left: Morgan Kramer of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Mark Meints, Gage Co. Emergency Manager representing Nebraska Association of Emergency Managers; Governor Dave Heineman, Dan Neitsfeld, National Weather Service, and Al Berndt, assistant director, NEMA.

Severe weather awareness poster contest winners named

Tornado safety tips were the focus of **Hannah Koperski's** winning poster in the 2010 Severe Weather Poster Contest sponsored by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, National Weather Service and Nebraska Association of Emergency Management.

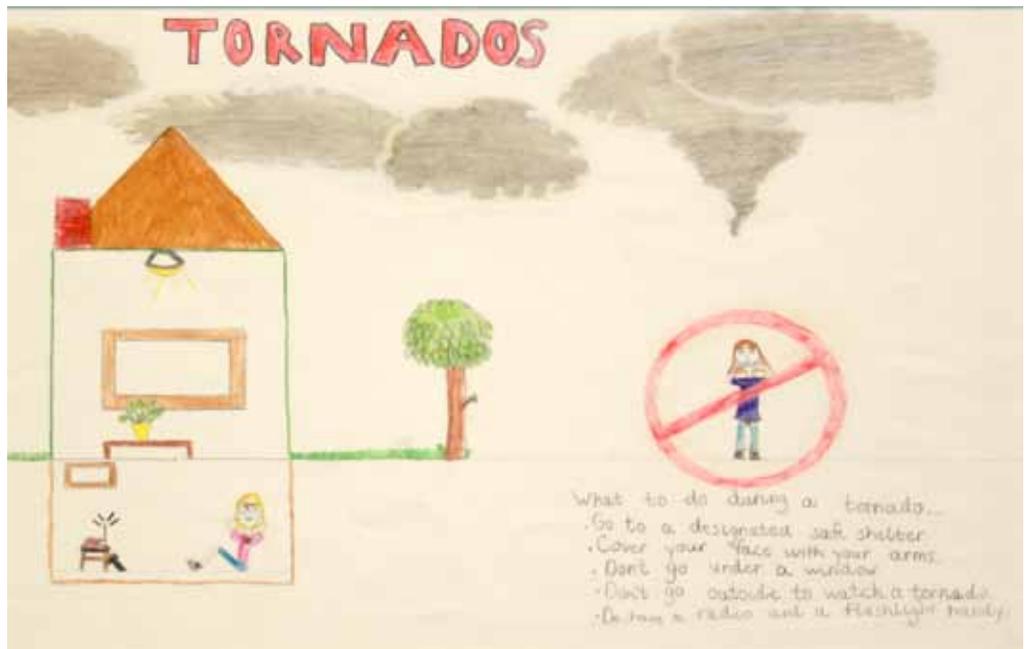
The St. Paul Public School fourth grader cautioned: "Go to a designated safe shelter; cover your face with your arms; don't go under a window; don't go outside to watch a tornado; and do have a radio and a flashlight handy."

The contest was open to fourth

grade students in Nebraska schools. The top four finishers were recognized by **Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman** at a proclamation signing for Severe Weather Awareness Week at the State Capitol March 10 at 10 a.m. Severe Weather Aware-



Hannah Koperski of St. Paul is recognized by Governor Dave Heineman at the Severe Weather Awareness Week proclamation signing. At right: Her winning poster.



ness Week is March 22-26. The week is an opportunity to increase awareness and response to severe weather hazards. It is designed to encourage Nebraskans to be prepared for severe weather by making a safety plan and reviewing proper safety precautions for protecting their lives during severe weather. A statewide tornado drill is scheduled as part of the week March 24.

Through the poster contest, fourth graders from across the state encouraged Nebraskans to follow weather safety precautions. Derek Voigt of Jeffrey Elementary School in Osceola earned second place for his poster: "Tornado Safety...So Easy a Cave Man Can Do It." Megan Allie Moore of Southern Elementary School in Blue Springs finished third for her "Weather Safety Tips" poster and Sam McCaslin from St. Agnes School in Scottsbluff was fourth with his "Have a Plan! Be Aware! Find Shelter!" poster. Posters were judged on originality, effort and accuracy. The top prize is a \$200 U.S. Savings bond. The top four winners will also receive Keep Safe. Keep Going emergency power kits from Energizer.

Local emergency managers will present honorable mention certificates to the following students:

Joseph Ackerman of Edgar, Sandy Creek Elementary School; Sammie Anderson of Blue Springs, Southern Elementary School; Kimberly Belflower of Grant, Perkins County Schools; Mikayla Bletscher of Beatrice, Paddock Lane Elementary School; Laura Dreiling of Grant, Perkins County Schools; Alexis Eller of Stromsburg, Cross County School; Sarah Garrels of Wymore, Southern Elementary School, Blue Springs; Derek Greenlee of Bartley, Southwest Elementary School, Indianola; Logan Greenlee of Bartley, Southwest Elementary School, Indianola; Ginni Johansen, Osceola, Jeffery Elementary School; Sara Reeve of Burwell, Burwell Elementary School; Eran Rose-Gronewold of



Winners of the poster contest were honored by from left, Michele Woitalewicz, Howard County Emergency manager, Dan Neitsfeld, National Weather Service, Mark Meints, Gage Co. Emergency Manager and Al Berndt, assistant director of NEMA.

Cortland, Prescott Elementary School, Lincoln; Kassi Plock of Burwell, Burwell Elementary School; Valerie Perez of Grant, Perkins

County Schools; Andrea Tiemeyer of Fairfield, Sandy Creek Elementary School; and Bryce Zuege of Imperial, Chase County Schools.



Representatives of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, the Nebraska Association of Emergency Managers and the National Weather Service judge posters.



Photos by Tim Hofbauer, Columbus/Platte County Emergency Manager
Platte County

Right: Lowland areas were flooded south of the Loup River six miles west of Columbus above the Lake Oconee area on March 8. Above: The ice jam that caused the flooding.



Photos by Bernie Hunke, Cuming County Emergency Manager
Cuming County

Left: Ice and debris pass under Highway 32. Above: Flooding begins on a road north of Highway 32W.



Photo by Lynn Marshall, Sarpy County Emergency Manager

Sarpy County

Water rose over the boat dock at Haworth Park in Bellevue. This picture looks north upstream on Saturday, March 20. Bellevue officials are monitoring the the Missouri River which measured 26.9 feet on Saturday. Water is expected to begin receding March 22.



Photo by Bill Pook, Region 5/6 Emergency Manager

Dodge County

Blocks of ice remain in a yard along the Platte River on Big Island Road near Fremont, March 11. River ice was found two blocks away from the bank, said Bill Pook of Region 5/6. The water rose rapidly at night and 10 people were rescued with flat bottom boats.

President declares major disaster for Nebraska

Gov. Dave Heineman was notified Feb. 26 that his request for a federal disaster declaration for Nebraska was approved by **President Barack Obama** for winter storms in December and January.

The approval covers 34 of the 48 counties in the original request. The 14 remaining counties are still under consideration. Nebraska Emergency Management Agency has begun assessment to potentially add the other counties.

NEMA will coordinate with federal officials to determine the full scope and impact of storm damages and begin recovery efforts. NEMA held applicant briefings in the affected counties beginning March 8 prior to the Federal Emergency Management Agency kickoff meeting and project formulation.

The declaration means federal aid is available to help supplement state and local recovery efforts in 34 counties struck by severe winter storms from Dec. 22 to Jan. 8. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will make funding available to state and eligible local governments on a cost-

sharing basis for emergency work and repairs of facilities damaged in the following 34 counties:

Adams, Antelope, Brown, Burt, Butler, Cass, Cherry, Clay, Dakota, Dodge, Douglas, Gage, Garfield, Hamilton, Jefferson, Johnson, Keya Paha, Lancaster, Madison, Morrill, Nance, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Rock, Saline, Saunders, Seward, Stanton, Thayer, Thurston, Washington, Wheeler and York.

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties and tribes within the state.

Al Berndt, NEMA assistant director, said, "These storms produced large amounts of snow and ice throughout the eastern part of the state resulting in an estimated \$11 million in damages. This declaration will help the counties affected in their recovery."



Earl Imler, NEMA Public Assistance Officer, leads an applicant briefing in Lancaster County on March 11.



Radiological Transportation Exercise

Nebraska Department of Energy hosted a drill March 15 near Haymarket Park in Lincoln to test response to a radiological accident. Lincoln Fire and Rescue practiced its procedures for handling a radiological emergency. Firefighters demonstrated ability to treat contaminated victims, decontaminate workers and survey the scene for radiological hazards. Victims were transported to BrianLGH-West Medical Center and St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center where hospital personnel tested their procedures. Participants and observers also included: Lancaster County Emergency Management, Lincoln Police Department, Department of Health and Human Services, Lancaster County Health Department, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska Army National Guard and Nebraska Public Health.



Nebraska launches Phase II of Statewide Radio Network

Gov. Dave Heineman was joined by some of the state's top emergency personnel in activating Phase II of the new radio network in North Platte on March 3.

By the end of 2010 the new radio network will connect Nebraska public safety personnel from seven state agencies, as well as local first responders and utility crews from one of the state's largest power providers.

Phase II components include radio towers and upgraded communications equipment at the Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) Troop D dispatch center, along with newly installed radios in NSP vehicles.

Together the first two phases of the radio network cover 38 western counties, and include approximately 150 State Patrol vehicles and additional State Fire Marshal vehicles.

The statewide radio network is the result of a partnership between the state and the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD).

In addition to providing enhanced communications for state agencies, NPPD crews and some federal personnel in Nebraska, the

new network will also serve as a backbone to connect eight regional communications networks and enable statewide interoperability among emergency personnel. Radio equipment will be installed for other state agencies and NPPD trucks in the coming months.

State agency partners include: Nebraska State Patrol, the State Fire Marshal's Office, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, and the departments of Agriculture, Correctional Services and Roads. Other partners include the Office of the Chief Information Officer, which provides support for the statewide radio network, and Nebraska Educational Telecommunications, which is providing access to radio towers across the state.

The area for Phase II includes: Arthur, Blaine, Brown, Chase, Cherry, Custer, Dawson, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Grant, Harlan, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Keya Paha, Lincoln, Logan, Loup, McPherson, Perkins, Phelps, Red Willow, Rock, and Thomas Counties.

Calendar

- March 22-26** Severe Weather Awareness Week
- March 24** Statewide Tornado Drill
- March 27** Weatherfest--10th Annual Central Plains Severe Weather Symposium and Family Weatherfest 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. 2210 Holdrege St. www.cpsws.unl.edu/

State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) News

Safety Council presentation

NEMA's **Tonya Ngotel**, SERC coordinator, and **Mark Lohnes** of the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality presented a Lunch and Learn session to the Nebraska Safety Council. They gave a general overview of the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act, provided specific information on Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC), and how they interact with SERC. The importance of chemical inventory reporting (Section 312, Tier II reports) was also covered.

TRANSCAER

<http://www.transcaer.com>

TRANSpotation Community Awareness Emergency Response has a few new faces in Nebraska. **Tonya Ngotel**, NEMA and **Darin Clark** with the Nebraska Hazardous Materials Association have been selected to represent Nebraska on a National TRANSCAER Team. They will work with partners from Union Pacific, Burlington Northern, The American Chemistry Council and CHEMTREC to assist with developing hazardous materials training for the first responders of Nebraska. Their first task is to arrange a TRANSCAER Tour in 2011. If your community sits near a railroad and you are interested in hosting a training please contact tonya.ngotel@nebraska.gov.

HAZMAT AGREEMENTS

The 10 original "MOU Cites" have been working diligently over the past months to develop a new "Administrative and Operational Agreement" for Hazardous Materials Response. The new agreement will replace the old existing agreement that has been in place since 1999. It is anticipated that the new agreement be in place in the coming months.



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.