



# THE BEACON



Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

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# NEMA supports National Guard Aviation Drill

Flight crews from 11 states prepared for fire fighting missions during the last week of April in a training conference hosted by the Nebraska National Guard.

The training culminated in a hands-on session where crews in UH-60 Blackhawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters repeatedly dropped hundreds of gallons of water from attached Bambi Buckets on simulated fires at the National Guard camps near Mead and Ashland.

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency supported the Nebraska National Guard aviators with coordination efforts for its light operations exercise during the Great Plains Army Aviation Fire Fighting Conference.

“The training was put on by the Army National Guard to meet several goals,” said **Brian Podwinski** of NEMA. “They wanted to ensure all air crews obtained the necessary certifications for working at wild-fires and enable NEMA to utilize their incident management team.”

NEMA provided incident command similar to what air crews would expect to see in a real incident, Podwinski said.

NEMA deployed a Type III Incident Management Team in training, to fulfill this function. NEMA team members worked toward completing necessary certifications while they effectively coordinated air and ground operations with the Wildland Incident Response and Assistance Team (WIRAT) and Nebraska Aviation Unit.

The Nebraska State Fire Marshal has organized WIRAT, which consists of State Fire Marshal employees from across the state and Nebraska Forest Service staff who are involved in all aspects of wildland fire fighting.

WIRAT provides assistance on wildland fire incidents when the local organizations have exhausted all resources and strategies. The team is highly trained in incident command, including the capability to work large incidents, coordinate water supplies and aerial support, and provide field supervision with tactical considerations and support.

NEMA staff ensured that communications with air and ground crews worked effectively and provided safety for all ground and air crews.

“We worked on bridging communication gaps between military aircraft with civilian ground operators using civilian band frequencies,” Podwinski said.

“When a wildland fire happens in Nebraska, National Guard helicopters could be deployed to assist with the fire fighting efforts,” said NEMA’s **Nikki Weber** who worked as planning section chief for the exercise.

WIRAT members marked the drop sites and NEMA coordinated communications so the pilots could talk to the fire fighters on the ground to make the perfect drop. This function was done out of NEMA’s Mobile Operations Center with radios and the Mobile Operation Trailer with its communications capabilities.

“This was a great experience which provided a remarkable insight into how an Incident Management Team interacts with the resources necessary to respond to fires of this magnitude,” **Bob Wilhelm** of NEMA said.

NEMA staff who participated were: **Henry Tamasi**, incident commander, Ashland; **Podwinski**, incident commander, Mead; **Weber**, planning section chief, Mead; **Dave Reisen**, planning section chief, Ashland; **Donny Christensen**,

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NEMA and Cal-Fire participants included, from left, Frank Podesta, Bob Wilhelm, Sheila Hascall, Terry Guerrero, Alisia LaMay, Brian Podwinski, Jon Chin, Aaron Alward, Nikki Weber and Donny Christenson

## On the Cover:

A National Guard Helicopter dumps water on a targeted building as part of the Nebraska National Guard’s 2010 Aviation Fire Fighting Conference Flight Operations Exercise April 30. — Photo by Tech Sgt. Alex Salmon



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logistics section chief, Mead; **Earl Imler**, operations section chief, Ashland and Mead; **Aaron Alward**, operations section chief, Mead; **Wilhelm**, operations section chief, Mead; **Alisia LaMay**, logistics section chief, Mead and Ashland; and **Sheila Hascall**, logistics section chief, Mead.



## Pipeline 101 prepares for TERREX 2010

As part of TERREX 2010 the Nebraska Pipeline Association, in conjunction with Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, hosted Pipeline 101 a two-hour seminar designed to inform exercise participants of the pipeline facility responsibilities and day-to-day activities.

Held in the Nebraska Information Analysis Center, personnel from state and local agencies with a stake or interest in the response to the pipeline events attended.



Nebraska pipeline company representatives introduce themselves to workshop participants.



Jeff Canady of Pipeline Regulatory Consultants leads the Pipeline 101 course.



### IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

## Prepare now to survive a tornado

Advance planning and quick response is the key to saving lives when confronted with tornadoes. Severe storms that spawn tornadoes, nature's most violent storms, can approach quickly, leaving very little time to make life-or-death decisions.

Thunderstorms and tornadoes can form any time of the year though they are more prevalent from April through July with May and June being the peak months.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) encourage Nebraskans to be prepared for the worst.

"Each household needs to have a disaster preparedness plan," said FEMA's Steve Thompson, federal coordinating officer for disaster operations in Nebraska. "Planning and practicing specifically how and where you will take shelter in the event a tornado could be a matter of survival."

Heed severe weather warnings issued by the National Weather Service. Know what to look for and where to seek shelter. If a tornado approaches while you are away from home, take shelter in a building with a strong foundation. If in a car and shelter is not available, lie in a ditch or low-lying area.

At home or work, seek shelter in a room on a lower floor with no windows. Interior rest rooms also make good shelters.

Now is a good time to review and update any previous preparedness plans. Besides having an emergency kit, plan for where to shelter and how to get in touch following a tornado.

For more information on tornadoes, preparing shelters and emergency kits, visit the FEMA website at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov), click on Quick Links to access the FEMA Library.





NEMA Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl (standing right) speaks with other state agency Public Information Officers at a Joint Information Center seminar at NET.



State agency staff toured NET's mobile production facility as part of their JIC training.



Public Information officers discuss JIC experiences. Dave Reisen, NEMA exercise training officer, helped lead the training.

## State PIOs participate in Joint Information Center training

Public Information Officers and communications staff from state agencies participated in a NEMA sponsored Joint Information Center (JIC) Seminar held May 12 at NET, in Lincoln.

The state's JIC forms at NET for exercises and in the event of a disaster. The JIC is where public affairs professionals from organizations involved in an incident work

together to perform critical crisis communications and public affairs functions. PIOs from the various state agencies staff the JIC in the event of an emergency. The purpose of a JIC is to provide timely, accurate and understandable information during an emergency to advise and warn the public of hazardous or threatening situations.

The 35 participants discussed

the need for flexibility in setting up and working in the JIC and learned that according to the State Emergency Operations Plan, it is activated at the discretion of the NEMA assistant director or his designee.

NEMA PIO **Jodie Fawl** and Exercise Training Officer **Dave Reisen** presented the seminar and NET officials gave a tour of the NET facilities.



Joe Chandler, Carol Kanter and Michelle Wolfe of FEMA Region VII lead a Mitigation Planning Workshop for Local Governments on behalf of NEMA.



FEMA Region VII's Joe Chander discusses mitigation.

## ***Mitigation planning workshop held for local governments***

A one-day workshop on mitigation planning for local government was held May 19 at the Lancaster County Health Department. Federal Emergency Management Agency Region VII presented the course on behalf of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

According to **Sheila Hascall**, NEMA program specialist and state hazard mitigation officer, the workshop discussed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. That act amends

the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by adding Section 322 on Mitigation Planning. It requires local governments to prepare and adopt jurisdiction-wide hazard mitigation plans as a condition of receiving Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds for “brick and mortar” mitigation projects.

The workshop assisted representatives of local communities or multi-jurisdictional planning areas

to develop a mitigation plan that meets community needs as well as risk assessment, plan objectives, project action and plan updates.

This workshop explained each of the requirements, demonstrated how FEMA's new Mitigation Planning *How-to-Guides* can be used to address each requirement and provided opportunities to begin the planning process in group activities with representatives of the same community or planning area.



Todd Manns, emergency management coordinator for Berthoud, Colo. fire and rescue leads ICS-402, an ICS Overview for Executives/Senior Officials. The two-hour course is designed for people with a policy responsibility and was held May 19 at the Center of People in Need in Lincoln. NEMA also offered ICS 300 and 400 at the center during the same week.



Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy's Homeland Security Policy Group met May 21. Above, from left, Col. Brian Tuma of the Nebraska State Patrol, Sheehy, NEMA Assistant Director Al Berndt and Steve Oltmans, chief of staff for Omaha's mayor, listen to Jayne Scofield of the Nebraska Division of Communications who spoke at right.



Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy met with Matt Clough, DHHS chief operating officer and Kerry Winterer, DHHS chief executive officer, in an introduction to public health preparedness and response, May 5. Part of the meeting included a tour of the State Emergency Operations Center at NEMA. Pictured (front, from left) Ben Crelin, a Lincoln Southwest student who was shadowing the Lt. Governor, Clough, Winterer and Sheehy. Back row, Russ Wren, emergency response/Strategic National Stockpile coordinator, Joann Schaefer, chief medical officer, and Randy Fischer, program manager/local health department liaison.

## NEMA Training

### Decon Trailer Training

June 5            Lincoln  
alisa.lamay@nebraska.gov

### 40-Hour Hazmat Technician Refresher

Aug. 16-20      Beatrice  
angela.hammond@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).