

THE BEACON



Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

November 2010

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Training, Exercise, Planning Workshop held to set priorities

Nearly 90 emergency managers and state agency representatives gathered Oct. 20-21 at NEMA's annual Training and Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW) in North Platte to discuss priorities and receive updates on programs.

"TEPW provides an opportunity for the local, regional and state emergency managers to come together to review priorities," said **Alisa LaMay**, NEMA exercise training officer. "It is a time to collaborate and streamline our approach to training and exercise."

In addition to NEMA division updates, presentations were given on hazardous incident risk assessments, grant information, environmental and historical preservation requirements and Nebraska Homeland Security Strategies.

Participants learned that more than \$124.8 million in grants have been distributed to local emergency management programs and projects in Nebraska since 1999.

A draft version of the Grant Management Handbook which includes resource templates, required forms

and grant requirements on expenditures was also distributed.

The group was also briefed on the status of Homeland Security money outstanding for the PET Regions. Groups who have completed the 2007 State Homeland Security Grant money were announced and include: **State Fire Marshal's office, South Central Region, North East Region and MOU** (Memorandum of Understanding) **Hazmat Teams of Gage, Hall, Red Willow and Scottsbluff counties**, and the cities of **Omaha and Bellevue**.



On the Cover:

NEMA's Bill Meyer speaks with participants at the Training, Exercise and Planning Workshop in North Platte.



Tonya Ngotel of NEMA addresses attendees at the LEPC conference, Oct. 22.



Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy presents the 2010 LEPC Conference Outstanding LEPC Member award from the State Emergency Response Commission to Kevin Garvin of Cedar County.

LEPC holds annual conference in North Platte

The Local Emergency planning Committees Conference was held in North Platte, Oct. 22-23 with **Lt. Gov Rick Sheehy** on hand to present awards and extend his appreciation to emergency-related workers and volunteers.

“What I’m most proud of is how intricate and coordinated all our agencies are, from the local to state to federal level,” Sheehy said. Anytime you can get this number of agencies and people in the same room during a non crisis, it creates the opportunity to get to know

one another so when a crisis does happen, we know who we’re talking to.”

Emergency response is all about planning exercising and training, Sheehy said. Repetition breeds success.

“Here in Nebraska we take an all-hazards approach to our training, but the truth is that less than 10 percent of all emergencies involve the state,” Sheehy said. The remainder are handled at the local level and you should all be commended on doing a great job.”

Sheehy reported that Phase 3 of the statewide interpretation communication was completed and the Phase 4 should be done by February.

Sheehy also provided the latest update from Homeland Security, which is a national campaign to involve the public. The campaign, called the Suspicious Activity Reporting System will be used by Homeland Security in hopes to engage the public in becoming more proactive with “seeing something, saying something.”



Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy (second from left) met members of FEMA’s PST-1 team at the LEPC conference. The team showcased the assets of the Prepositioned Equipment Program (PEP) for LEPC participants. The PEP program was established to provide immediate support for first responders in the event of an incident whether chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive. It also provides support for overwhelming industrial incidents and natural disasters. It promptly brings equipment to an emergency responder and replenishes assets consumed in the response. There are 10 PEP sites located across the United States.

Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)

By Bob Eastwood, NEMA Communications Coordinator

The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) is a modernization and integration of the nation's alert and warning infrastructure. IPAWS will integrate new and existing public alert and warning systems and technologies. Federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local government alert and warning systems will be able to integrate with the national alert and warning infrastructure providing a broader range of message options and communications pathways for the delivery of alert and warning information to Nebraskans and the US population before, during and after a disaster.

During an emergency, alert and warning officials need to provide the public with life-saving information quickly. IPAWS is the nation's next-generation infrastructure of alert and warning networks expanding upon the traditional audio-only radio and television Emergency Alert System (EAS) by providing one message over more media to more people for the preservation of life and property.

Executive Order 13407 established as policy the requirement for the United States to have an effective, reliable, integrated, flexible and comprehensive system to alert and warn the American people. FEMA is designated within the Department of Homeland Security to implement the policy of the United States for a public alert and warning system as outlined in Executive Order 13407 and has established a program office to implement the IPAWS. FEMA and its federal partners, the Federal Communications Commission, Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service and the DHS Science and Technology Directorate are working together to transform the national alert and warning system to enable rapid dissemination

of authenticated alert information over as many communications channels as possible.

The IPAWS vision is to provide timely alert and warning to Americans in the preservation of life and property.

Its mission is to provide integrated services and capabilities to local, state, and federal authorities that enable them to alert and warn their respective communities via multiple communications methods.

Strategic Goals for the program include:

- Create and maintain an integrated interoperable environment for alert and warning
- Make alert and warning more effective
- Strengthen the Resilience of IPAWS Infrastructure

The objective of IPAWS is to create an infrastructure for alerts and warnings that will be interoperable so that federal, state, and local emergency managers can exchange alert and warning messages seamlessly. The following programs within IPAWS support this objective:

Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) is a data exchange format to transport emergency information among alerting systems. CAP will ensure interoperability among public alert and warning systems that partner with the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System. CAP can be used to collect and distribute all types of hazard warnings from local, regional, and national sources.

Commercial Mobile Alert System (CMAS) will allow the public to receive alerts via cell phone. Using cellular broadcast technology, CMAS will send text alerts to cell phones for three types of alerts:

1. Presidential
2. Imminent threat
3. AMBER alerts. Alerts may be pinpointed to county-sized

geographic areas.

Geo-targeted Alerting System (GTAS) -- IPAWS is cooperating with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to develop software for emergency managers that will allow geo-targeting of alerts and warnings. Called Geo-targeted Alerting Systems (GTAS), the software will model the forward progress of, for example, a chemical cloud or toxic spill, so that people in the path of the plume can be warned first, while not disturbing others who are more distant.

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When will IPAWS be ready?

- The initial operating capability of IPAWS will begin approximately six months after the official adoption of the CAP standard by FEMA which was scheduled to occur in October.
- The second milestone in IPAWS implementation will be the participation of commercial mobile carriers beginning in the first quarter of 2012.
- The expansion of the national EAS PEP radio station network to cover 90 percent of Americans directly is planned for completion in 2011.
- Planning for future integration and inclusion of internet service alerting capabilities to the IPAWS suite is on-going.

IPAWS Program Accomplishments to Date

In the past year, IPAWS, in close coordination with private sector partners, made several important advancements to the integration of public alert and warning systems, increasing the ability of local and emergency managers to provide the public with life-saving alerts. Recent accomplishments include:

- IPAWS Technical Specification to Common Alerting Protocol v1.2 (Nov 2009)
- Commercial Mobile Alerting System Interface Specification (Dec 2009)
- Conducted live code exercise of national EAS (EAN) in Alaska (Jan 2010)
- First Expansion Primary Entry Point station brought online (August 2010)
- DM-OPEN v 2.0 brought online in FEMA data center (August 2010)
- (note: DMIS / OPEN v1.0 remains online for transition period)
- Accepted the ECIG CAP to EAS Implementation Guide (August 2010)

In the short term, IPAWS planned milestones include:

- Formally Adopt the CAP Standard
- Roll out the IPAWS CMAS Gateway for carrier

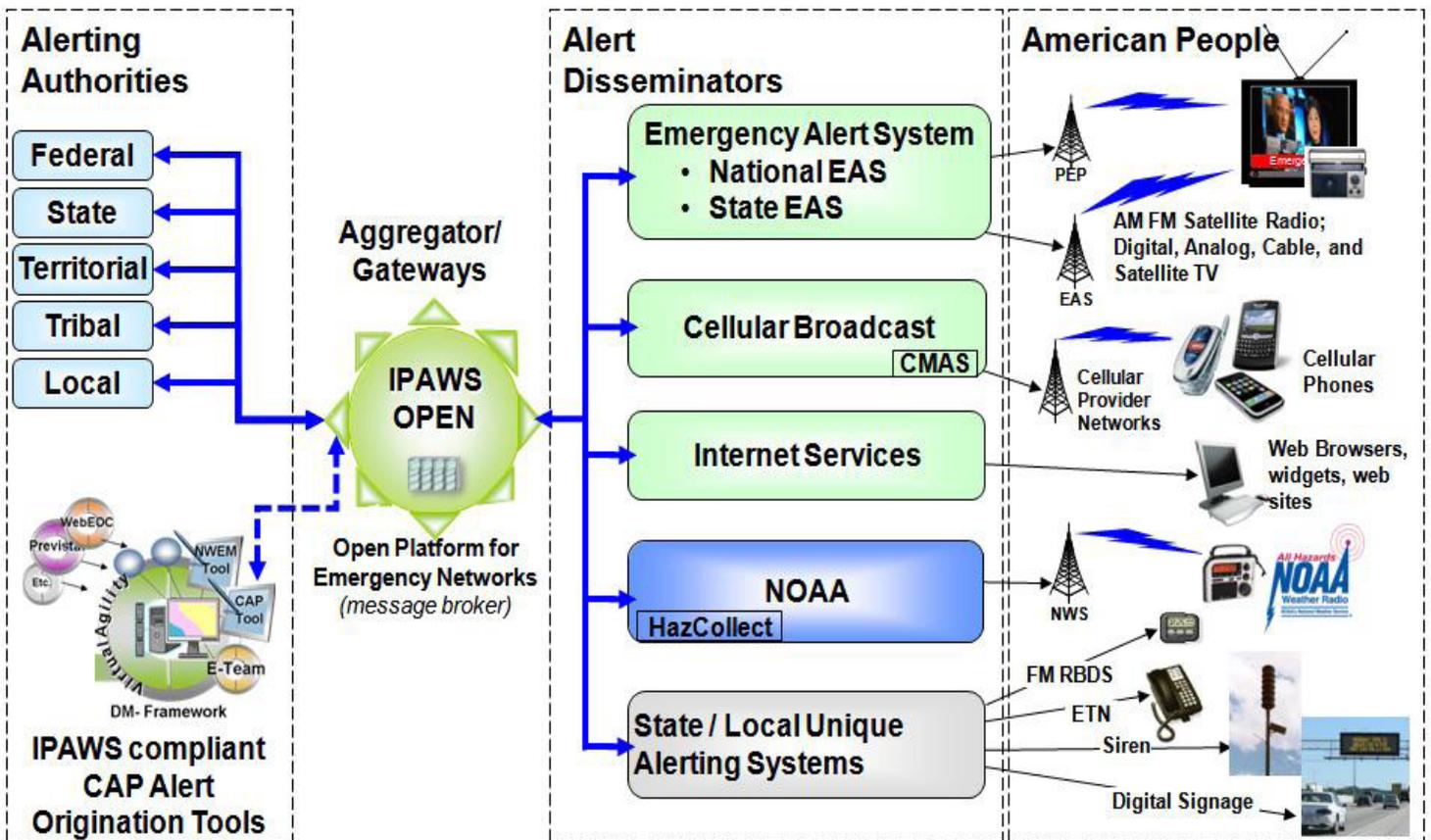
testing (February 2011)

- Complete expansion of PEP stations to provide direct FEMA coverage to 90% of the American population (2012)
- Conduct the first ever nation-wide exercise of the national Emergency Alert System (2011)

Looking ahead, IPAWS will continue to further the goals of creating and maintaining an integrated interoperable environment for alert and warning, making alert and warning more effective, and strengthening the resilience of alert and warning infrastructure through:

- Continued inventory and evaluation of state and local EOC alert and warning capabilities
- Conformance testing of vendor products to IPAWS CAP Profile
- Incorporation of alert and warning capabilities thru internet services
- Evaluation of new alert and warning technologies
- The Nebraska IPAWS system will take the current Nebraska EAS system to another level and insure as many Nebraskans as can be will be provided with warning messages when needed but not have their daily lives interrupted when warnings are not necessary.

IPAWS PLATFORM



Nebraska disaster declaration approved

Gov. Dave Heineman's request for a federal disaster declaration for Public Assistance in seven Nebraska counties following September storms was approved by **President Barack Obama**.

"We appreciate the quick approval of our request," Gov. Heineman said. "Local, state and federal representatives partnered to assess the damage in affected counties. This disaster declaration will help move forward with repairs to public facilities and infrastructure."

Federal aid is now available to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, tornado and straight-line winds, Sept. 13-14.

Cass, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson and Saunders counties are now eligible for federal public assistance. The funding is available to the state, eligible tribal and local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms, flooding, tornado, and straight-line winds.

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

FEMA named **Stephen R. Thompson** the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area.

"Preliminary damage estimates to public infrastructure total more than \$2.7 million," said **Al Berndt**, assistant director of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). "Power lines, trees, crops and buildings were damaged. There was significant damage at the University of Nebraska's Agriculture Research and Development Center near Mead. In addition, roofs were stripped from homes, hotels and farm buildings in several counties, semi-trucks were blown off highways and Interstate 80 was closed for several hours."

NEMA held applicant briefings for this disaster on Nov. 8 in Ithaca and on Nov. 10 in Tecumseh to provide potential applicants with information and documents needed to submit applications.

This disaster (DR 1945) is the fifth major disaster in the state in less than a year.



Public Assistance Officer Donny Christensen of NEMA presents information at a briefing for applicants.



An applicant begins paper work.



Federal Emergency Management Agency staff and applicants listen to Donny Christensen of NEMA during a briefing in Ithaca, Nov. 8.



Advanced Planning course

NEMA staff, National Guard members and emergency managers took an Advanced Planning Course in Bellevue, Nov. 2-3. Participants developed an Incident Action Plan during an exercise on day two of the course.



KFAB Representative honored

Jon Schwarz of NEMA, left, presents James Houghton of KFAB with a Certificate of Commendation from NEMA and a Nebraska Admiral certificate at the Ft. Calhoun Quarterly Meeting Nov. 10. Houghton works with the Radiological Emergency Division for drills and exercises for both nuclear power stations in Nebraska. He has dedicated many hours of service to the State of Nebraska through the Emergency Alert System.



State/FEMA Region VII Grant Meeting

NEMA's Mardell Hergenrader and Evan Knight present at the State/FEMA Region VII National Preparedness Grant Programs Workshop which was held Oct. 26-28 in Kansas City. NEMA's Cindy Newsham also presented and Nikki Weber was also in attendance. Representatives from the four state region and FEMA discussed a variety of topics including the Homeland Security Grant Program, Integration with Planning, Exercises, the National Information Management System, Citizen Corps, the Metropolitan Medical Response System, and Environmental and Historic Preservation.



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

As part of state employee appreciation, the Nebraska Military Department recognized its staff for years of service. General Judd Lyons and Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy were on hand at a luncheon Oct. 27 to present awards. NEMA staff recognized include above: Sue Krogman for 25 years of service. She is the IT Infrastructure Support Analyst/Supervisor. Top right, Training Specialist Dave Reisen was honored for 25 years with the state. Bob Eastwood, communications system coordinator was recognized for 20 years of service.

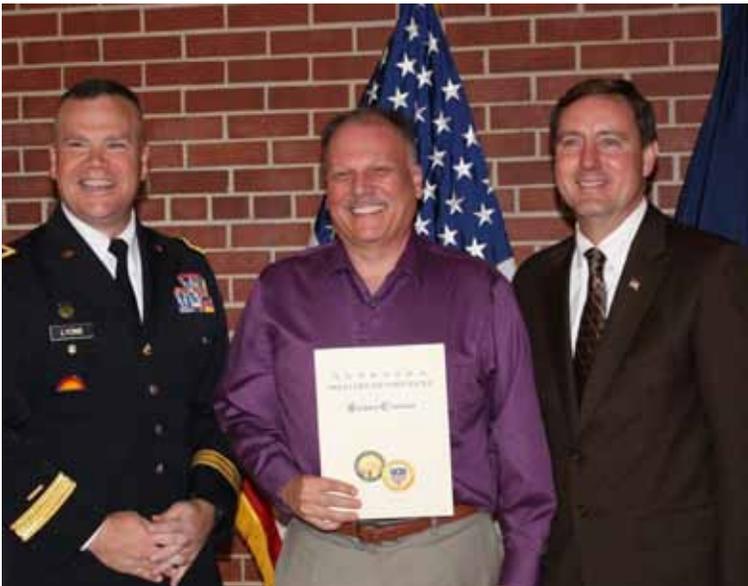


NEMA staff begin process to update Nebraska's hazard mitigation plan

NEMA's hazard mitigation staff are in the process of updating the state's hazard mitigation plan.

Federal law requires the plan be updated every three years. The last update was in 2008. The first planning team meeting was held Nov. 10 at NEMA. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the 2008 plan, changes that would need to be made in 2011 and information needed from each participating agency.

Those in attendance at the meeting included representatives from state agencies, public power districts and NEMA. The information gathered will help move the plan update forward towards completion. Additional planning meetings will be held before the end of 2010 to review the revised sections of the plan and discuss additional changes. The plan is due for FEMA approval by April 25, 2011.



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.