



# ANNUAL REPORT 2012



# NEMA *is* READY



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## Emergency Management

NEMA staff and other state agency representatives work together at the State Emergency Operations Center to respond to disasters affecting the state. NEMA moved to new offices at the Joint Force Headquarters on the Nebraska National Guard Base in August 2012.



## Mission

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is charged by state statute with reducing the vulnerabilities of the people and communities of Nebraska from damage, injury, loss of life and property resulting from natural, technological and man-made disasters.

# A Year of Fire



**Director  
Maj. Gen.  
Judd Lyons**



**Assistant  
Director  
Al Berndt**

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) strives to be a results-oriented, purpose-driven and focused agency supporting all facets of emergency management in the state. The events of the past five years—tornadoes, floods and wildfires—have tested us, but working together with local emergency managers, other state agencies and federal partners, we were prepared and able to successfully respond.

Following the wet and flooding conditions of 2010-11, we faced an entirely different kind of threat in 2012. Searing temperatures and prolonged drought scorched the state, leaving an abundance of dry fuel in the form of parched cropland, prairies and ponderosa pine stands. We recorded 1,570 wildfires that burned more than 500,000 acres, the majority of which were started by lightning strikes.

While the wildfires clearly tested the response portion of NEMA's duties, the agency also continued its focus on recovery, preparedness and mitigation, all while packing and moving our offices from "The Bunker" at 13th and Military Road to the newly constructed Joint Force Headquarters on the Nebraska National Guard Air Base at 2433 N.W. 24th St. The new State Emergency Operations Center includes quality technology, equipment and space for NEMA staff and essential support personnel from other state agencies to respond in times of crisis. On behalf of the staff of NEMA, it is a pleasure and honor to serve the citizens of our great state as we learn from the lessons of the past and focus on meeting the challenges of the future.

*Major General Judd Lyons, Adjutant General, Director  
Al Berndt, Assistant Director*





**NEMA Assistant Director Al Berndt updates staff at the Region 23 Fires in August.**

## Agency Overview

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency exists to protect lives and property by effectively preparing for, preventing, responding to and recovering from threats, hazards and emergencies. Mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery are essential parts of NEMA.

Housed under the Nebraska Military Department, NEMA is structured into four performance sections: administration, response and recovery, preparedness and technical hazards. In his role as Adjutant General, Major General Judd Lyons is the director of the agency. Day-to-day operations are admin-

istered by Assistant Director Al Berndt.

NEMA is staffed with 35 full-time employees, one GIS support position from the University of Nebraska, one program specialist from the Public Policy Center and three temporary employees working in the response and recovery section.

NEMA relies extensively on full- and part-time emergency management representatives in Nebraska's 93 counties to carry out programs at the local level.

It is this partnership with local directors that is a key reason Nebraskans have been able to effectively respond in

times of emergency.

NEMA also supports the Nebraska lieutenant governor as state homeland security director and acts as state administrative agency for the state's homeland security program and point of contact for integration of emergency management and homeland security programs with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. As state administrative agency, NEMA has responsibility for overall funding, fiscal accountability, program management and integration with other state agencies to interact and carry out the state homeland security program.

## Assistance to Local Governments

The Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) provides direct support for essential expenses, such as salaries, benefits, equipment, supplies, maintenance of facilities and other necessary costs of state and local emergency management departments and agencies.

The six project areas from which each jurisdiction is asked to identify activities they want to accomplish are:

- ▶ Administration of emergency management program
- ▶ Planning
- ▶ Training and exercise
- ▶ Disaster response and hazard mitigation
- ▶ Technical hazards
- ▶ Public education and outreach.

Local emergency managers play an integral, if not leading role, in the various Planning, Exercise and Training Regions, and NEMA wants them to be able to take credit for all of these activities, as well as their more traditional emergency management duties.

## Administration

Oversight of grant and performance programs, including the State Emergency Performance Grant program, is the responsibility of NEMA's administration staff. The State Emergency Operations Plan, the State Homeland Security Strategy and the Agency Strategic Plan are the responsibility of administration staff and are in place to lead and guide agency performance.

At the national level, NEMA interacts with the National Emergency Management Association. NEMA actively supports the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management and its professional membership.

The information technology and communications unit provides Geographic Information System maps for support staff during emergency response. Communications staff continue to work on statewide interoperable communications and with local emergency managers on the Paraclete system which is being used for improved mutual aid communication.

# Preparedness

NEMA's preparedness section is responsible for administration of grants, working with emergency managers on local emergency operations plans, emergency preparedness training and exercise program and involvement of the public through the Citizen Corps program.

**Grants** supports local emergency management agencies in the enhancement of their programs. Since 1999, NEMA has been the designated state administrative agency for all homeland security grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Each year NEMA holds an investment justification workshop with the State Homeland Security Committee and local first responders to write the investment justifications for the grant application. In 2012, the allocations for state agencies and local regions were based on the amount in each investment justification and total population of each Planning Exercise Training/Communications region. Based on the total award from DHS, committee recommendations were forwarded to the Governor's Policy Group. Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman made awards based on the recommendations from the policy group.

NEMA is the point of contact to help local jurisdictions and communication regions with planning for statewide interoperable communications within a single system. The planning staff assists the regions in updating their Tactical Interoperable Communication Plans (TICP) which is then incorporated into the LEOP.

NEMA is assisting local jurisdictions on three projects that will have a profound impact on first responder interoperability—Regional Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), Interconnectivity, Strategic Technological Reserve Investment Mutual Aid Frequency Overlay.

NEMA has continued the grant monitoring program as required by DHS. Thirty-two counties and regions were visited this past year. The monitoring visit covers equipment acquisition and inventory, personnel/direct labor, employee reimbursement, travel/vehicle mileage, training/meeting/conference expenses, supplies and materials, other direct costs, project income, pass-through funds, fiscal, single audit review and National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance.

**In fiscal year 2012 the State of Nebraska applied for and received the following grants:**

- ◀ **State Homeland Security Grant**
- ◀ **Emergency Management Performance Grant**
- ◀ **Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant**

**Planning** oversees the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP), State Preparedness Report, Statewide Communications Interoperability implementation and revisions of county Local Emergency Operation Plans (LEOP). Working with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (PPC), NEMA has established planning capabilities for the Integrated Planning Process for the eight Planning Exercise and Training (PET)/Communication Regions. A comprehensive program of planning support education has been developed to assist in integrating local planning needs into the SEOP/LEOP planning program. This support will allow LEOPs to address the Core Capabilities which are critical elements necessary to achieve the National Preparedness Goal setup by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The planning unit also develops all of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant investment justifications, serves as the agency liaison to Lincoln and Omaha's Metropolitan Medical Response Systems and coordinates the Citizen Corps and Medical Reserve Corps programs. The unit also coordinates the State Homeland Security Senior Advisory Group, the State Homeland Security Leadership Group and the State Homeland Security Planning Team.



**NEMA's Training and Exercise** team presents an active program, integrated into Nebraska's eight Planning, Exercise and Training/Communication regions. Activities are conducted at all levels, from assistance to local jurisdictions through regional training and state level drills, exercises and training.

NEMA offers support to state agencies, local jurisdictions and eight training regions in the form of basic certification academies and targeted courses for emergency management personnel.

The basic academy supports certification as required under Nebraska law. Attendees acquire the basic skills necessary to function as a certified emergency manager in the state.

Thousands of individuals in Nebraska completed online independent studies in the NIMS 100, 200, 700 and 800 courses, along with specialized training in areas specific to agriculture, health and human services, hazardous materials and other fields. NEMA continues to establish a level of training in compliance with requirements identified by the Department of Homeland Security and Nebraska law.

NEMA also conducts an annual state-level exercise each year to test the readiness of local, county and state agencies and their ability to work together in a large-scale incident.



## Preparing for Self Sufficiency



Nebraska Citizen Corps works to prepare individuals and communities for self-sufficiency during natural disasters and terrorist incidents.

A full-time coordinator organizes and advocates for Citizen Corps Councils across the state. In 2012, Citizen Corps funds were used for state management of the Nebraska Citizen Corps Program, for technical assistance to local Citizen Corps Councils, to strengthen the Citizen Corps Councils, for training and exercise opportunities, and to assist with the continuing development of a State Citizen Corps Council.

Federal funds were sub-granted to the Citizen Corps Program regions to:

- ▶ Strengthen Citizen Corps Councils in Nebraska
- ▶ Strengthen intra-regional and inter-regional collaboration
- ▶ Promote community preparedness and National Preparedness Month
- ▶ Support partner programs with funds for training materials and exercises
- ▶ Organize and plan an annual Nebraska CERT conference



Volunteers and unit leaders participated in a series of skills challenges at the CERT Conference in August.



The Southeast Nebraska Medical Reserve Corps and Lancaster County Emergency Management held a training on assembling a portable hospital for emergency use.

- ▶ Purchase equipment for local Citizen Corps Councils to help sustain their programs.
- In 2012, Citizen Corps focused on training and exercise opportunities for volunteers.

8	Regions
13	Citizen Corps Councils
10	Community Emergency Response Teams
3	Volunteers in Police Service units
3	Fire Corps units
7	Medical Reserve Corps
1,000+	Neighborhood Watch units.

# Response and Recovery

The core missions of NEMA's Response and Recovery section are to be ready to coordinate a timely and efficient state response in support of local government and to effectively administer both state and federal recovery programs to speed local jurisdictions' return to normal following a disaster.



June 2012 marked the start of an active and volatile wildfire season which had a major impact on the state. Wildfires burned 503,047 acres of land in 2012 compared with 36,582 acres in 2011, a 1,286 percent increase in the number of acres burned. Fires in Brown, Cherry, Dawes, Logan, Keith, Keya Paha, Sheridan and Sioux counties required state resources to support the local firefighting response, prompting the governor to authorize an emergency declaration allowing for the use of state resources to respond to the fires. The Region 23 and Region 24 fire complexes as well as the Wellnitz fire in Sheridan County required a coordinated response using resources from local, state and federal entities. **Significant fires of the season were:**

**Sioux County Fire, June 17-20** — More than 4,500 acres burned on state-owned property. Ground support for fighting the fire came from 150 personnel including a strike team out of Scottsbluff, a hand crew out of Pine Ridge Job Corps and 12 mutual aid fire departments. Twenty-five state employees responded including five members of the Nebraska State Fire Marshal's Wildland Incident Response and Assistance Team (WIRAT) and a four-member team from the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) deployed with the agency's Mobile Operation Center (MOC).

Assets from the Nebraska Army National Guard (NEARNG) included a UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter with crew and a Bambi bucket used to provide air suppression to attack the fire and a National Guard Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) with crew which provided refueling. Spotting services were provided by the Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) with their fixed-wing aircraft. Two tanker flights from South Dakota were also needed for aerial fire suppression. Total state cost to date: \$150,860.

**Logan County Fires, June 30** — WIRAT requested aerial suppression from NEARNG while on the scene with the Stapleton Fire Department and mutual aid resources fighting five fires in Logan County. One person from the Nebraska State Patrol was deployed to Stapleton with NSP's command vehicle and four NEMA staff and the MOC were deployed to support the incident command operation in Stapleton. Five fires in Logan and McPherson counties quickly merged into three, burning 11,123 acres. State cost to date: \$86,358.

**Region 24 Fire Complex, July 20-29** — The Region 24 Complex consisted of the Fairfield Creek, Wentworth and Hall Fires along the Niobrara River near Norden. Lightning on July 20 caused the Fairfield Creek Fire. The fire spread rapidly July 21 in Brown, Cherry and Keya Paha counties. The fires burned 76,242 acres. More than 100 volunteer fire departments provided mutual aid for fire suppression, including three departments from South Dakota. The determination was made that the fires had surpassed state capabilities, and a Type II Incident Management Team (IMT) was hired and mobilized on July 22. The maximum staff assigned to the IMT was 480. In addition to NEMA, the following state agencies responded: National Guard, Department of Roads, State Fire Marshal's Office, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Agriculture, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Nebraska Forest Service and Nebraska State Patrol. Total estimated state cost: \$3,434,225.

**Keith County Fires, August 3-5** — Numerous wildfires began in Keith County during the late afternoon of Aug. 2. A disaster declaration was submitted to NEMA on Aug. 3 requesting assistance from state resources. NEMA deployed three staff members with the agency's MOC to the incident com-



From Left, NEMA's Dave Reisen and Earl Imler update Gov. Dave Heineman on the Wellnitz Fire as NEMA's Brent Curtis looks on.

mand at the Keystone – Lemoyne Fire Hall. The Nebraska Army National Guard deployed two UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters and crew to provide aerial suppression.

Other state assets included WIRAT from the State Fire Marshal's Office and a bulldozer from Nebraska Department of Roads to help with ground suppression of the fires. Total state cost: \$118,699.

**Region 23 Fire Complex, Aug. 28 - Sept. 10** — Hundreds of mutual aid fire departments responded to fires in Dawes and Sheridan Counties stressing local resources beyond their capabilities. NEMA requested a Type II Incident Management Team to come in and manage the fires. The Region 23 Fire Complex started from a series of lightning storms. The complex consisted of two separate fires - Douthit

and West Ash. Approximately 600 emergency responders were brought in by Rocky Mountain Area Incident Management Team C to help fight the fires that burned 86,201 acres. Total estimated state cost: \$4,700,000.

**Wellnitz Fire, Aug. 30-Sept. 10** — At the height of the response to the Region 23 Fire Complex, another fire started by lightning just 60 miles away in Sheridan County north of Rushville. By mid-morning on Aug. 31, the fire had blown up to approximately 4,000 acres and NEMA was receiving requests for state support. A request was made by NEMA to Great Plains Dispatch for an additional Type II IMT for the Wellnitz Fire.

The Rocky Mountain Area IMT2 Team A took command of the Wellnitz Fire on Sept. 2 and brought in about 300 personnel to provide suppression on the Wellnitz Fire. Their purpose was to provide additional resources, not available locally, working in cooperation with state and local agencies. The fire burned 77,683 acres—48,681 in Nebraska and 29,002 in South Dakota. Total estimated state cost: \$1,314,918.

Estimated cost to the state for all fires (excluding costs for aerial suppression and mutual aid) is \$9,805,060.

## Public Assistance staff

was busy in 2012 closing out eight federally-declared disaster programs, an achievement lauded by the Federal Emergency Management Region VII staff.

In the last 50 years Nebraska has had 54 declared disasters and emergencies, and 22 of those disasters were declared in the last seven years.

Quick and efficient response is the goal of NEMA

Public Assistance staff, whether it is for a federal or state declared disaster. NEMA has worked to assist state and local government through floods, tornadoes, wildfires, hail, ice and snow storms.

To successfully respond in times of disaster, NEMA administers the Governor's Emergency Fund which was established to provide assistance to political subdivisions that have suffered from a disaster or emergency.

## Hazard Mitigation staff

at NEMA work to reduce the impact of disasters on lives and property across Nebraska.

Staff provide guidance and assistance to communities to mitigate for everything from tornadoes, fires and floods to any other natural hazard.

After a federal disaster declaration has been approved for the state, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds are made available for local government to develop long-term initiatives that will reduce loss of life and property.

Hazard Mitigation saves taxpayer dollars through measures such as reduction of power outages due to storms, property buyouts of frequently flooded homes, flood reduction projects, safe rooms, backup power to critical infrastructure and warning systems.

## Technical Hazards

Two nuclear power stations in eastern Nebraska and interstate movement of radioactive material and radioactive waste across the state make preparing for radiological emergencies a priority for NEMA. The agency's Technical Hazards Section includes radiological emergency preparedness, public information and support for the State's Emergency Response Commission (SERC). Planning, preparing and training for technical hazards events that could harm or negatively affect Nebraskans is a major part of the work undertaken in this section. Taking action before and after an incident could significantly reduce negative consequences of an incident in the state.



Ingestion pathway training prepares Nebraska responders for a nuclear event.

## Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP)

The radiological emergency preparedness (REP) unit updates local Radiological Emergency Response Plans (RERP) for counties near the state's nuclear power stations.

NEMA notifies local emergency response managers of radiological shipments through their jurisdictions.

The radiological systems

manager calibrates radiological equipment and exchanges them on a four-year cycle to local emergency first responder agencies. NEMA maintains a database of these exchanges and provides a listing to local emergency management directors.

The nuclear power stations routinely conduct drills and

exercises in which NEMA participates. In 2012, NEMA was involved in four nuclear power station drills and two functional exercises.

REP staff members are certified radiological instructors and offer free training to all emergency first responder agencies throughout Nebraska.

## State Emergency Response Commission

NEMA provides support to the State Emergency Response Commission, which supervises and coordinates activities of the Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) across the state. LEPCs help update Local Emergency Operations Plans (LEOP) and provide training to specific localized chemicals and exercise response plans.

SERC is tasked with ensuring that proper chemical reporting is completed across the state. Facilities and businesses storing hazardous materials or chemicals are required to report inventories of substances or products that meet or exceed reporting thresholds.



## Public Information

Getting accurate and timely information to the public in times of disaster is the number one goal of NEMA's public information officer (PIO). Working with local, state and federal communicators the PIO activates a Joint Information Center (JIC) following a disaster or event that affects citizens of the state. In 2012, the PIO cooperated with incident management teams working the fires to get needed information to citizens.

The PIO also fulfills the federal requirement that nuclear power station incidents activate a JIC in the event of an incident at one of the state's two nuclear power stations.

# NEMA NUMBERS

**Wildfires**  
**1,570**

**Acres Burned**  
**503,047**

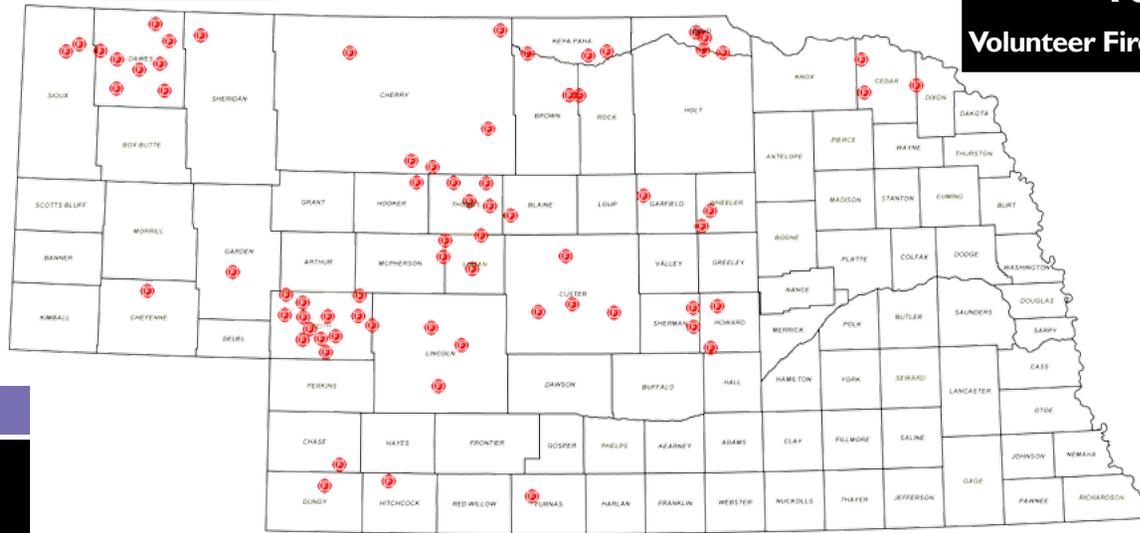
**Mutual Aid**  
**100+**  
**Volunteer Fire Departments**

**State Agencies Deployed**  
**10 agencies**

**Lightning**  
**Started 98 %**  
**of summer fires**

**Fire Costs**  
**\$9,805,060**  
**estimate**

**Aerial Suppression**  
**\$1,556,692**  
**estimate**  
**91% State Assets**



**Wildfires reported to Nebraska Forest Service**  
**June 19-Oct, 10, 2012**

\* Excluding costs for aerial suppression and mutual aid

**EMPG**

**41** Local Jurisdictions and **9** Regions  
representing **77** counties

Participate in the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program.

**Duty Officers**

**24/7** The hours NEMA staff monitor Nebraska for weather emergencies and other disasters.

**Grants** **State Homeland Security Grant Program**

**\$2,801,316** Total received from the State Homeland Security Grant Program.

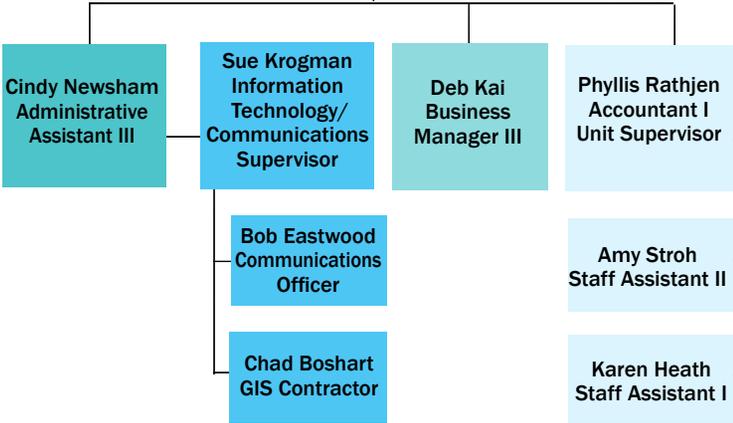
Region	Hazmat MOU	IED/Fusion	Comm/PET	Total Award
Southeast	\$15,000	\$58,553	\$176,820	\$235,373
South Central	\$45,000	\$48,869	\$47,422	\$96,291
East Central	\$15,000	\$25,180	\$24,435	\$49,615
Northeast	\$15,000	\$27,747	\$26,925	\$54,672
Panhandle	\$15,000	\$38,287	\$37,153	\$75,440
North Central		\$59,760	\$107,991	\$167,751
Southwest	\$15,000	\$14,836	\$14,396	\$29,232
Tri-County	\$30,000	\$66,836	\$214,858	\$281,694
Total Region/MOU Hazmat Team Awards				\$1,140,068
NCOR on Behalf of Locals				1,100,985
Total Award to Local Units of Government				\$2,241,053



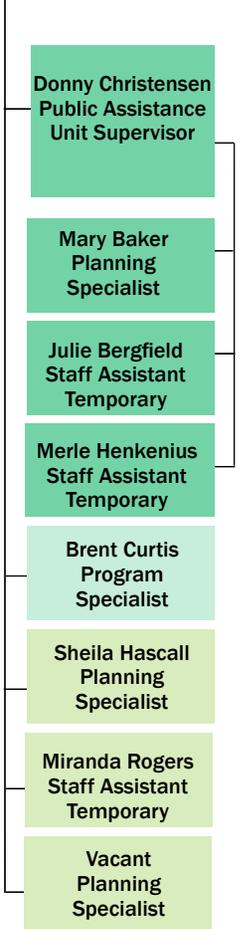
**Director**  
Adjutant General Judd Lyons

**Assistant Director**  
Al Berndt

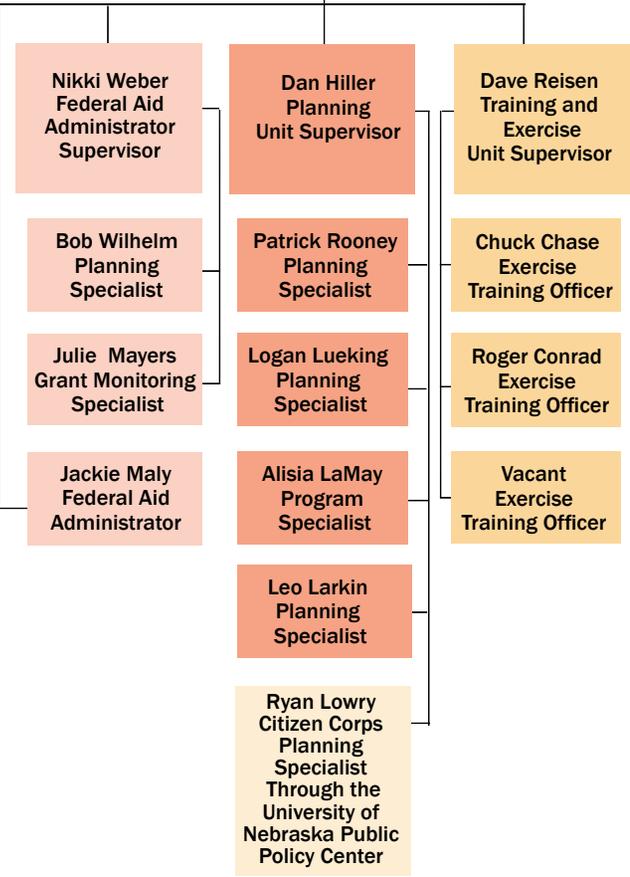
**Administration**



**Response and Recovery**  
Earl Imler  
Manager



**Grants and Preparedness**  
Mardell Hergenrader  
Manager



**Technological Hazards**  
Jon Schwarz  
Manager



# Nebraska Emergency Management Agency Organizational Chart



Nebraska Emergency Management Agency Assistant Director Al Berndt addresses citizens at a community meeting in Crawford regarding the Region 23 Complex Fires.



Winners of the Severe Weather Awareness Week Poster Contest sponsored by the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and National Weather Service, were honored at the Nebraska State Capitol in March. From left, Matthew Guilford, first place; Kalie Glendy, second; Madalyn Crouse, third; and Alice Arnold, fourth.



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*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 FEMA and other federal partners.*

*NEMA's 2012 Annual Report was produced by Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl. For additional information about the report or other agency publications contact her at:  
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NEMA staff work in the Emergency Operations Facility in Omaha during a Ft. Calhoun Nuclear Power Station evaluated exercise. NEMA staff serve as the Nebraska Governor's Authorized Representative.