

# Annual Report 2019



**NEBRASKA**  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Good Life. Great Strength.



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An aerial observation flight of historic flooding conditions in portions of northeast Nebraska on March 15 documents an example of the many farms inundated by flooding in 2019.

## Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

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

*We envision safer, less vulnerable communities in Nebraska, made possible through collaborative partnerships committed to saving lives and reducing the impact of disasters. Our mission is to coordinate, support and serve Nebraska through an effective and relevant emergency management agency. Our guiding principles are:*

1. *All emergencies begin at the local level. NEMA collaborates with local, state, tribal and federal officials to provide coordinated assistance to Nebraska communities that augment local capabilities when appropriate.*
2. *NEMA activities are grounded in principles of emergency management. Emergency management must be comprehensive, progressive, risk-driven, cost-effective and flexible.*
3. *Respectful, collaborative relationships and professional leadership are integral to quality emergency management. Emergency management activities must be inclusive and involve the whole community.*

# Annual Letter



Major General  
Daryl Bohac,  
Director



Bryan Tuma,  
Assistant  
Director



## Agency Partners and Stakeholders:

We will remember 2019 as a year of widespread flooding in Nebraska. More importantly, it was a year of neighbors helping neighbors, strangers helping strangers, volunteers rescuing people and animals in need and Nebraskans working together on response and recovery efforts to put this state back together. When snow and rain from a bomb cyclone fell in March on already snow-packed and frozen ground, it wasn't long before the rapid rise in air temperature caused melting ice and snow to flood homes, businesses and farmsteads all across the state. The Platte, Elkhorn, Missouri, Loup and Niobrara rivers set record highs and the resulting floods left hundreds of miles of state and local roads damaged, bridges and culverts washed out and road bases weakened. Huge chunks of ice barreled down our waterways wiping out dams and bridges. Several communities lost essential functions, such as drinking water and waste-water processing.

Federal Disaster 4420 was approved by **President Donald J. Trump** at **Gov. Pete Rickett's** request and addressed both individual and public assistance needs in the state. Heavy rains throughout the summer led to an extension of the disaster through July 14. A second disaster request was made for heavy rainfall from July 15 through September. That request was denied, appealed and then denied again.

We are so grateful for the people who stepped up to help in our response to this historic disaster, including our Nebraska first responders and emergency managers who spent long hours responding to the needs of their citizens. We have some of the finest local emergency managers we could ask for in Nebraska and their early reports of damage helped us get a better picture of what was happening statewide. They let us know what their communities needed and worked quickly to help us gather information for an expedited disaster declaration.

Our colleagues in state agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other emergency support function (ESF) personnel spent long hours working in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) supporting the state's effort to meet needs at the local level. The Red Cross, Nebraska Preparedness Partnership and Salvation Army were among the NGOs that assisted. NEMA cannot do it alone. Our ESFs, NGOs, local emergency managers and first responders are great partners who worked tirelessly to support the people of this state.

In addition to the many Nebraskans who responded to our disaster, our federal partners also stepped up to assist in the response. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region VII Incident Management Assistance Team members were active in the SEOC before Nebraska even received its expedited federal declaration. A joint field office remains open in Lincoln to support the work that continues on recovery. Representatives of FEMA, the Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and others have and continue to provide exceptional support.

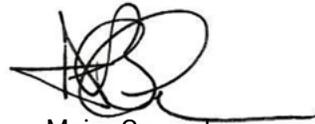
We are also grateful to the states of Washington, Louisiana, South Carolina and Minnesota for sending representatives, through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, to help us in our response. Their work in Individual Assistance, Public Assistance and on flights with the Nebraska Army National Guard were important components of our

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response. All of us at the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency thank each one of these federal and state representatives who left their homes from all across the nation to provide their dedicated support.

As we move forward, we are working on building the state's resilience following disasters through a renewed focus on preparedness efforts, enhanced activation planning, long-term recovery strategies and engaging all relevant partners and local jurisdictions. We're improving our capacity to adapt to changing conditions and to withstand and rapidly recover from disruptions caused by disasters. Our work will continue in the years to come as we develop long-term recovery strategies that will help us and local communities build resilience as we move forward. This work will help us remain Nebraska Strong.



Major General  
Daryl Bohac,  
Director



Bryan Tuma,  
Assistant  
Director

## About NEMA

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is part of the Nebraska Military Department and works to protect the lives and property of Nebraskans by preparing for, responding to, recovering from and mitigating against disasters, threats, hazards and emergencies.

As a relatively small state agency, 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 why the state can respond effectively in times of emergency.

While NEMA has responsibility to assist local governments when they require support after a disaster, another key to the agency's ability to respond is through the support of the state's emergency support function agencies and organizations.

As a small agency, NEMA also relies on the support of other state agency staff and other organizations to coordinate a disaster response.

In his role as adjutant general, Maj. Gen. **Daryl Bohac** is director of the agency, with day-to-day operations

administered by Assistant Director **Bryan Tuma**.

NEMA supports Nebraska's lieutenant governor in his role as state homeland security director, and acts as the state administrative agency for the homeland security program, the point of contact for integration of emergency management and homeland security programs with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

As the state administrative agency, NEMA has responsibility for overall funding, fiscal accountability, program management and

integration with other state agencies to carry out the state homeland security program.

The Nebraska Homeland Security Strategy and the agency strategic plan are updated regularly by NEMA and are in place to lead and guide the agency's performance.

At the national level, NEMA interacts with the National Emergency Management Association to keep up with issues that affect all states. Statewide, NEMA actively supports the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management and its membership.



Gov. Pete Ricketts confers with state agency leadership regarding flooding prior to a news conference, March 13 at the Nebraska State Capitol. Pictured from left, Nebraska Department of Transportation Director Kyle Schneweis, Ricketts, NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma, Nebraska State Patrol Superintendent John Bolduc and NEMA Director Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac.

# Federally-Approved Disaster Declaration

When local governments exceed their capacity to respond to disasters, they can seek assistance from the state. When costs and resources are beyond the state's capacity to recover, it can seek assistance through a presidential disaster. In 2019, Nebraska asked for two and received one presidential disaster declaration. The denied request was appealed and then denied again.

**DR-4420 ■ March 9 to July 14, 2019 ■ Winter Storm, Straight-line Winds and Flooding ■ Declared: March 21**

**Counties** – Adams, Antelope, Arthur, Banner, Blaine, Boone, Box, Boyd, Brown, Buffalo, Burt, Butler, Cass, Cedar, Cherry, Cheyenne, Clay, Colfax, Cuming, Custer, Dakota, Dawes, Dawson, Deuel, Dixon, Dodge, Douglas, Fillmore, Franklin, Frontier, Furnas, Gage, Garden, Garfield, Gosper, Grant, Greeley, Hall, Harlan, Hayes, Holt, Hooker, Howard, Jefferson, Johnson, Kearney, Keya, Kimball, Knox, Lancaster, Lincoln, Logan, Loup, Madison, Merrick, Morrill, Nance, Nemaha, Nuckolls, Otoe, Pawnee, Phelps, Pierce, Platte, Polk, Richardson, Rock, Saline, Sarpy, Saunders, Scotts Bluff, Seward, Sheridan, Sherman, Sioux, Stanton, Thayer, Thurston, Valley, Washington, Wayne, Webster, Wheeler and York counties.

**Tribes** – Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, Santee Sioux Nation, Winnebago Tribe, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, Sac and Fox Tribe.

**Public Assistance** – Reimbursement for repairs on roads, bridges, water control facilities, buildings, equipment, utilities, parks and recreational facilities.

**Damage Estimate:** \$412,054,637 on 2,210 projects.

**Individual Assistance** – Repair damage from disaster not covered by insurance. Includes temporary housing, repair, replacement and semi-permanent or permanent housing construction and other needs including personal property.

**Total Registrations:** 7,028

**Individuals+Housing Program:** \$27,167,789

**Housing Assistance:** \$24,299,813

**Other Needs Assistance:** \$2,937,975

**Small Business Administration** – provides low-interest disaster loans to businesses, private nonprofit organizations, homeowners, and renters.

**Home Loans:** 913 for \$39,967,600

**Business Loans, Economic Injury Disaster Loans:** 68 for \$9,144,700

**Total Approved Dollars:** \$49,112,300

**National Flood insurance Program (NFIP)**– provides affordable insurance to property owners, renters and businesses.

**Estimated Number of Claims:** 1,026

**Total Paid, all claims:** \$39,673,497

*Figures as of 12-27-19*



The Elkhorn River flooding on March 16 was typical of scenes across the state after a rapid melt of snow and ice occurred on frozen ground.

# Administration Section

The Administration Section at Nebraska Emergency Management Agency works closely with all staff at NEMA to complete travel documents, make lodging arrangements, purchase supplies, maintain records and distribute accounts payable. The section works in concert with the agency's business manager who reports directly to the assistant director. When a field team deploys to disasters across the state, the section is responsible for purchasing response supplies and paying of expenses related to the disaster. This section is also responsible for updating and maintaining agency directives.

One of the Administration Section's tasks in 2019 was a reorganization of the agency. Assistant Director **Bryan Tuma** worked with Maj. Gen. **Daryl Bohac** on changes to the organizational structure and number of staff. The historic flooding early in the year affected 84 of the state's 93 counties and caused increased demands on a small staff. NEMA reorganized to meet the challenges associated with recovery and addressed other structural changes. This was all done within the existing personnel service limit of the agency. NEMA re-purposed grant dollars and other non-general fund sources to make this possible. Among the changes are:

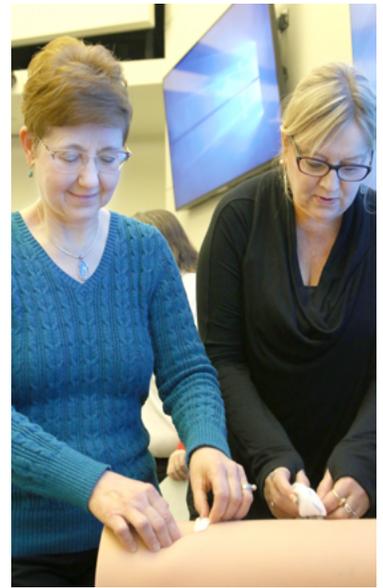
1. **Increased staff** — from 43 to 58 employees, including two section administrators
2. **Reorganization of agency sections** — to Administration, Communications, Preparedness and Operations, Recovery, and Long Term Recovery.

The need for a Long Term Recovery Section became quickly evident following the flooding as there was a need to:

- Develop a long term recovery strategy,
- Ensure that Nebraskans displaced by flooding could readily find adequate and affordable housing now and in the future, and
- Focus on cooperation with voluntary agencies involved in recovery.

The new section will address program requirements, build public/private partnerships, and leverage resources from nongovernmental organizations and voluntary organizations active in disaster to best meet challenges of future disasters.

Members of the Administration Staff include: Bohac, Tuma, Business Manager **Deb Kai**, Administrative Assistant **Phyllis McCown**, and Staff Assistants **Karen Heath** and **Betty McCracken**.



*Phyllis McCown, left, and Karen Heath, right, of the NEMA Administration Unit participate in "Stop the Bleed" training designed to build resilience by preparing the public to save lives. The training raises awareness of basic actions to stop life threatening bleeding following everyday emergencies along with man-made and natural disasters.*



*A Nebraska State Patrol observation flight records the sunset near Columbus, March 15 as flood waters rise.*

# Preparedness and Operations

The Preparedness and Operations Section at NEMA includes the Grants Unit, Planning, Exercise and Training Unit, Technical Hazards Unit and Public Information. In times of emergency, the section works to provide an effective, efficient and timely response in support of local governments affected by disaster. The section manager of Preparedness and Operations is **Sean Runge**.



NEMA offers a Basic Capstone Course at least once a year at NEMA to familiarize emergency managers with NEMA and emergency management issues in the state.

## Planning, Exercise and Training Unit

Two units, the Planning Unit and the Exercise and Training Unit combined in 2019 to become the Planning, Exercise and Training (PET) Unit. **Dave Reisen** serves as unit supervisor.

Other staff members in the unit are Exercise Training Officers: **Roger Conrad, Larry Fichtner** and **Chris Ulrick**; Program Specialist II **Logan Lueking**, Program Specialist I **Leo Larkin** and Planning Specialist **Matthew Harrison**.

The PET Unit oversees the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP), Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR), State Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), and revisions of county local emergency operation plans (LEOPs).

NEMA adheres to a five-year planning calendar and processes full revisions of LEOPs. Nineteen full revisions of LEOPs were completed in 2019.

NEMA has established planning capabilities for the integrated

planning process in the eight PET/communication regions.

The unit assisted in the coordination of Nebraska's annual Investment Justification Workshop. NEMA representatives met with the Homeland Security Policy Group and Senior Advisory Committee (SAC) to complete the project award process.

The unit also serves as the agency liaison to Omaha's Metropolitan Medical Response Systems/Health Care Coalition (HCC).

The unit works with Nebraska's eight planning exercise and training (PET) regions. Activities are conducted at all levels, from assistance to local jurisdictions through regional and state level training and exercises. NEMA offers support to state agencies, local jurisdictions and the eight regions in the form of basic certification and targeted courses for emergency management personnel.

In 2019, the unit tracked and coordinated training for 12,995 offerings of independent study

courses taken by Nebraskans, along with 17 resident emergency management training courses.

The agency updated its incident logging and information system to Knowledge Center in 2019, and the NEMA exercise training officers held 17 sessions on the new software, training 277 people statewide.

NEMA continues to establish a level of training in compliance with requirements identified by the Department of Homeland Security and Nebraska statute.

The PET Unit has assigned a program specialist to support the state's yearly single engine air tanker (SEAT) contract and to assist in operations at the SEAT bases, along with staff members from the Nebraska Forest Service.

An agency metric in 2019 included attendance at regional PET region meetings. NEMA staff provided assistance and updates, enhanced access to programs and grants, articulated PET requirements and assisted local officials.

# Grants Unit

NEMA receives grants from both the **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**, and the **Department of Transportation (DoT)/Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)** to support preparedness efforts in Nebraska.

As the State Administrative Agency (SAA), NEMA is the only Nebraska agency eligible to apply directly for this funding, and in turn ensures that local emergency management programs are not only established but sustained. The SAA is responsible for filing the applications on the state's behalf, distributing program guidelines to state and local jurisdictions (sub-recipients), receiving applications from sub-recipients for funding, facilitating the distribution of these non-disaster grant funds, and maintaining compliance through oversight and monitoring over the life of the grants.

NEMA's Grant Unit receives and administers the following grants:

- State Homeland Security Program Grant (SHSP)
- Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)
- Countering Violent Extremism Grant (CVE)
- Non-Profit Security Grant Program to States (NSGP-S)
- Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant (HMEP)

Like other federal grant programs, the SHSP grant has seen decreases in funding over a five year period. This, along with an increase of federal expectations and grant requirements, was the catalyst for a restructuring of the grant process three years ago. The process wasn't without its growing pains; however, out of this came a refinement and a more transparent process for the distribution of funds. With less money being awarded each year, State and local entities are now being asked to share in the costs for projects that historically have been 'stand-alone' or individually



*Local emergency managers and emergency support function staff work on the Threat, Hazards, Identification and Risk Assessment and Stakeholders Preparedness Review during the states annual meeting.*

funded by the SHSP. In 2018, through a Presidential Executive Order, SHSP saw its first increase in funding to the 36 'baseline states', of which Nebraska is one. For 2019, that funding was increased again, allowing for projects that could not be funded previously due to the lack of money, to be funded.

In prior years, grant guidance allowed for more flexibility in terms of project scope. Now the focus has been narrowed to sustainment of existing projects and incremental scope increase, in other words – a project-driven approach to bridge the gaps between risks and capabilities. No longer are sub-recipients given funding to work with based on a formula, now the awards are project based and collaboratively decided on via the investment justification (IJ) process.

Communities, state agencies and federal partners who are experts in one of the seven investment areas participated as subject matter experts to rank/rate projects. After the rankings, the process then transitioned to the Senior Advisory Committee (SAC). The SAC recommended project proposals from PET Regions, state agencies, Hazmat MOU Cities, MMRS and

Citizen Corps, to be refined and balance the budget to correspond to the funding.

Their recommendations were forwarded to the next level in the process, the lieutenant governor and the Homeland Security Policy Group for review and approval or disapproval. Based on this outcome, projects were awarded. As a result of this process, NEMA submitted projects to DHS/FEMA that directly aid in reducing vulnerabilities and increase the level of preparedness of its emergency managers, regions, first responders and state agencies.

Over the grant's period of performance, NEMA continuously provides technical assistance and monitors sub-recipients as required by DHS/FEMA. SHSP is monitored for compliance in: employee reimbursement, equipment, fiscal, local emergency operations plan compliance, National Incident Management System compliance, other direct costs, personnel and direct labor, PET expenses, reporting requirements, supplies and materials, special conditions and travel/vehicle mileage.

Current Members of the Grants Unit include Supervisor **Julie Mayers** and Federal Aid Administrator **Tanya Lyon**.

## Countering Violent Extremism Grant

Nebraska was the only state to receive a Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Grant in 2018 and the state continued its implementation in 2019.

Nebraska took a unique approach to its application and submittal. The project was entitled, *Addressing Barriers to Reporting signs of Radicalization using a Public Health Approach*.

Communities in rural areas have few resources to help them respond to residents with concerning behaviors.

Partnering with Nebraska's public health system was the key factor in connecting with these communities.

Nebraska's goals were to:

- Identify local barriers to reporting concerns;
- Increase community trust in response to concerns; and
- Create a toolkit for other rural public health departments based on lessons learned.

Implementation was done through a partnership between Two Rivers Public Health Department, University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, and Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

Threat assessment training was done throughout the grant period, and was conducted both at the local levels and for the state agency stakeholders.

The period of performance concluded on July 31, 2019.

It is worth mentioning that Nebraska's unique approach to the potential problem of home grown terrorism has earned attention from DHS/FEMA as a best practices program, and will be used as a model for the nation.

## Nonprofit Security Grant Program for States

Nebraska received Nonprofit Security Grant Program for States (NSGP-S) funds for the second year in 2019. The funds were awarded to the **Hindu Temple in Omaha, CHI Health and Madonna Rehabilitation Center in Lincoln.**

*NSGP-S provides funding support for target hardening and other physical security enhancements to nonprofit organizations that are at high risk of a terrorist attack. The program seeks to integrate the preparedness activities of nonprofit*

*organizations with broader state and local preparedness efforts. NSGP also serves to promote emergency preparedness coordination and collaboration activities between public and private community representatives as well as state and local government agencies.*

*In Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019, Congress appropriated \$10 million from the State Homeland Security Program for non-profit organizations for state and territory nonprofits.*

## Public Information

Delivering the right message to the right people at the right time is a vital function in disaster operations and is the responsibility of Public Information Officer (PIO) **Jodie Fawl** at NEMA.

This year, the PIO worked with local, state and federal communicators, to activate a joint information center (JIC) following the flooding event in March.

The Nebraska JIC staff includes PIOs from other state agencies, as well as representatives from local and federal entities involved in the response to an event. Once the JIC was closed, the PIO worked with FEMA External Affairs staff at the joint field office in Lincoln to

meet public information needs for recovery.

A Basic Public Information Officer G290 course was offered in Norfolk in an effort to train local staff on public information and joint information center principles. The NEMA PIO works with local emergency managers to promote preparedness via social media campaigns, the annual severe weather awareness poster contest and other events.

A revision of the Joint Information System Plan was completed in 2019. Three trainings on the plan were held as well as a functional JIC exercise to familiarized state PIOs with the plan and JIC position checklists.



Nebraska state agency public information officers participate in a joint information center exercise at NET in October in cooperation with Nebraska Public Power District and the NEMA Technical Hazards Unit.

# Technical Hazards Unit

The Technical Hazards Unit (THU) covers four distinct programs for the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency: radiological emergency preparedness for Cooper Nuclear Station, statewide radiological material transportation, the agency's radiological equipment calibrations laboratory and the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC). These programs work together to mitigate man-made hazards and ensure an effective response if an incident were to occur.

Radiological emergency preparedness (REP) involves planning, training and exercises for the area surrounding Nebraska's sole nuclear power plant, Cooper Nuclear Station in Nemaha County. NEMA's two REP specialists prepare the communities surrounding the nuclear power plant to respond to an incident involving the power plant. The majority of NEMA staff participate in the quarterly drills at the plant.

THU is also involved in the planning and training of local responders for a response to an accident involving radioactive materials crossing the state. THU maintains situational awareness of dates and routes of any radioactive waste shipments moving through the state. Members of THU participate in national and regional planning efforts regarding the shipment of radiological waste and spent nuclear fuel. In support of this program, THU receives funding from the Western Governors Association (WGA). In 2019, THU received \$1,977 from WGA.

The radiological calibration laboratory calibrates and maintains radiological monitoring equipment. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and FEMA regulations require annual calibration and quarterly performance checks on equipment positioned around the nuclear station. NEMA's radiological calibration specialist maintains the state's radiological monitoring equipment within performance specifications and meets regulatory requirements.



*Deb Robinson, REP Planning and Training Specialist II, gives directions to University of Nebraska-Lincoln Journalism students participating in an ingestion pathway exercise.*

The State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) is the 19-member governor-appointed commission tasked with supporting hazardous materials planning and training in Nebraska. NEMA is the designated coordinating agency for all SERC activities. State statute designates the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy as the point of contact for hazardous materials releases and reporting.

NEMA's SERC coordinator manages the U.S. Department of Transportation's Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Grant. HMEP monies are used to fund transportation related hazardous materials planning and training activities, as well as printing the local emergency operations plans for each of Nebraska's 93 counties. Nebraska has a variety of hazardous materials response resources across the state, supervised and coordinated by SERC. The primary response to hazardous materials comes in the form of local fire departments. Using HMEP funding, the State Fire Marshal's Office provides hazardous materials awareness, operations and technician training to local paid and volunteer departments. Funding was also provided to conduct aircraft fire rescue training at Central Nebraska

Regional Airport in Grand Island and the North Platte Regional Airport.

With the State Homeland Security Grant, 10 fire departments and the Nebraska Hazardous Incident Team have signed memorandums of understanding with the state to be provided funding for training and planning. In return, these departments exist as state emergency response teams for hazardous materials incidents. These fire departments are located in Beatrice, Columbus, Grand Island, Hastings, Red Willow County, Norfolk, North Platte, Omaha, Papillion and Scottsbluff.

Members of SERC, LEPCs and local fire departments attended several trainings and conferences, representing Nebraska on a local, regional and national basis. A composite team of hazardous materials technicians competed in the annual Hazmat Challenge in Los Alamos, New Mexico. NEMA also hosted the Nebraska

**James Rashilla** is the unit supervisor; **Deb Robinson**, is a REP planning and training specialist II; **Walter Kirkland** is a REP planning specialist; **Terry Miller** is the radiological calibration specialist; and **Alyssa Sanders** is SERC coordinator.



Highway 92 in Douglas County was closed on March 17 as a result of flooding that wiped out portions of the road.

## Recovery Section

The Recovery Section manages disaster recovery and provides assistance to state entities, local governments, Native American tribal governments, special districts and certain nonprofit organizations impacted by disasters, as requested. Recovery staff works to ensure that state and federal support is provided in an efficient and timely manner. The section also works with public entities to reduce, limit or eliminate the impacts of future disaster events through the Hazard Mitigation Program. The section administers multiple federally-funded disaster assistance programs which are managed by two units: Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation. To successfully respond and recover in times of disaster, NEMA also administers the Governor's Emergency Fund, which was established to provide assistance to political subdivisions that have suffered from a disaster or emergency and as a result are under a financial burden that exceeds their ordinary capacity to respond to disaster. **Donny Christensen** is section administrator and **Molly Bargmann** is section manager.

## Public Assistance

The NEMA Public Assistance (PA) Unit provides assistance to state, tribal and local governments as well as certain private non-profits throughout the disaster recovery process. NEMA provides Public Assistance for both federal and state-declared disasters and is a major component of the disaster recovery process.

The Public Assistance Program provides supplemental federal disaster grant assistance. It provides reimbursement for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned facilities. The program also assists the facilities of certain private non-profit organizations with critical

infrastructure. The Public Assistance Program encourages cost-effective hazard mitigation measures for damaged facilities. NEMA manages this program for all eligible entities within Nebraska.

In 2019, Nebraska faced a historic flooding event. In early March, a bomb cyclone produced severe winter storms and intense, prolonged flooding throughout the Midwest. This incident period began on March 9 and was extended through July 14, damaging public infrastructure in 84 counties. More than 400 subgrantees have applied for Public Assistance funding, totaling over \$400 million in damage. Through the Individual Assistance Program, \$26 million was provided to 3,425 households in 29 counties that experienced damage. NEMA recovery staff are also closing out \$40 million in grant-funded projects from six previous disaster declarations.

The extensive damage brought new aspects of the PA model to



Flooding in central Nebraska in July, like this pictured in Kearney, resulted in the incident period for DR-4420 to being extended to July 14.

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## Public Assistance Continued from Page 11

Nebraska; most notably, applicants are using the 428 program, which authorizes procedures for PA to develop alternate projects to rebuild critical infrastructure in new locations.

NEMA also used the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, which provided mutual aid to support the response and recovery. This program brought experienced specialists to run the Individual Assistance Program, among other duties, to add additional support.

In addition to the March flooding, two

other storm events caused significant damage across the state that did not result in federal disaster declarations.

The first was another period of flooding in North Central Nebraska between July 15 and Sept. 17 that caused road damage and bridge washouts.

The second event was a major blizzard that caused utility damage to much of the panhandle over the Thanksgiving holiday.

The challenges of this year have

caused the Public Assistance team to grow in size and capacity.

The staffing increase will meet the increased workload from 4420 and better prepare the agency to handle future large-scale disasters.

**Patrick Conway** is the Public Assistance Unit supervisor and **Kyle Barzen-Hansen** is a program specialist.

Planning specialists in the unit are **Abby Schletzbaum, Kyle Winchell, Makaria Kirianov, Haley Stoker, Nathan Steed** and **Tami Reynolds**.

## Hazard Mitigation Unit

Hazard Mitigation staff work with eligible public entities to reduce the risk to people and property from natural and man-made hazards.

Providing federal funding for long-term mitigation measures helps to reduce or eliminate the severe effects of future disasters.

The Hazard Mitigation Unit provides technical assistance throughout the entire lifespan of a mitigation project, including oversight of the development of project applications, site visits during construction to ensure all approved project plans are being followed and final project inspections and closeouts.

### 2019 NEMA Hazard Mitigation at a Glance

<b>New Disaster Declared</b>	<b>1 (DR-4420)</b>
<b>Grant Programs Managed</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Current Individual Projects (In progress)</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>New Hazard Mitigation Funding</b>	<b>\$50 million</b>
<b>Hazard Mitigation Assistance Paid Out</b>	<b>\$1,580,000</b>

Hazard mitigation saves taxpayer dollars through measures such as property buyouts of frequently flooded homes, flood reduction projects, tornado safe rooms, backup power to critical facilities, and emergency warning systems along with a host of other activities. On average, for every dollar spent on mitigation, six dollars of benefits are

created, including reducing damage and loss of life.

For the Hazard Mitigation Unit, 2019 was a record-breaking year. In March, Federal Disaster DR-4420 was declared due to statewide flooding and straight-line winds that were the result of severe winter storms. In addition to the initial onslaught of weather, continued and repeated flooding brought devastation to many areas across the state.

As a direct result of this disaster, more than \$50 million in funding from the federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is estimated for Nebraska. This program provides federal funding to public entities to be used in hazard mitigation projects. The funds are only available when there has been a presidentially declared disaster. The funding received from this disaster was more than seven times the amount of all combined HMGP funds Nebraska has received since 2012. The Hazard Mitigation Unit has been faced with the unprecedented task of organizing and prioritizing hundreds of new



Flooding in Pierce County damaged 849 Road to highways 12 and 81.

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projects and initiatives designed to reduce the loss of life associated with disasters.

In response to DR-4420, the Hazard Mitigation Unit added several new faces. Four new members joined the team in 2019.

This re-vamped team has brought a new energy and fresh perspective that has dovetailed with the experienced members on the staff. The Hazard Mitigation Team has tackled these new challenges and responsibilities head-on, and have made major strides in pushing forward the mission of hazard mitigation to the residents of Nebraska.

Members of the Hazard Mitigation Unit include: Program Specialist **Lexy Hindt** and Planning Specialists **John Cook, Joe Green, McKenzie Slack,** and **Jessica Scharf.**

In July, the Governor's Task Force convened to help prioritize the new mitigation projects across the state. The Governor's Task Force met on three separate occasions and successfully prioritized and obligated millions of dollars in new mitigation projects.

In 2019, NEMA also received funding

for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Grant. The PDM Grant is an annual federal grant program that is designed to provide funding for various mitigation projects across the nation. PDM guarantees \$575,000 to be available to each state, but additional projects extending beyond that amount can compete for funding nationally. NEMA was able to use the PDM grant to select 10 planning project applications that will be submitted to FEMA for final approval.

Starting in 2020, the PDM Grant will be phased out and replaced by the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program. Although final details about the new BRIC program have not been announced, BRIC will seek to maintain the spirit of the PDM Grant. However, BRIC's funding will be tied to real disasters, not congressional appropriation. The BRIC program will set aside up to 6 percent of all annual disaster expenses nationwide, for the purpose of funding future mitigation projects. The new program will incorporate new strategies and best-practices to help deliver funding in areas for the greatest benefit for mitigation. For 2020, the hazard mitigation team will be hard at work learning the new BRIC program.

NEMA's Hazard Mitigation Team is also currently working on the State Hazard Mitigation Plan update. All states are required by federal regulations to submit plan updates every five years in order to be eligible to receive Public Assistance, Flood Mitigation Assistance, HMGP, and PDM Funds. Although the plan update was originally submitted and approved by FEMA in early 2019, it was determined that the invaluable experiences and lessons learned from DR-4420 should be incorporated into the plan update. In addition, the updated state plan will align with and support the actions of the newly-created Long-Term Recovery Plan.

In spite of the turmoil that 2019 and DR-4420 brought, the Hazard Mitigation Team was able to closeout the DR-4179 grant for tornadoes, straight-line winds and flooding in 2014, as well as progress towards closing out two additional federal grants. The staff continues to work on seven open HMGP grants, four open PDM grants, and the State Hazard Mitigation Plan update.

2020 will undoubtedly be another exciting year for the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency as a whole, and the Hazard Mitigation team is ready for the challenge.



*The bridge on Highway 281 over the Niobrara River was washed out by flooding in March. The bridge, southeast of Spencer, was downstream from the Spencer Dam which failed and sent an 11-foot wall of water and ice downstream.*

# Long Term Recovery

*Long Term Recovery was added as a section at NEMA during 2019 to meet the needs of the state following the largest disaster in Nebraska history. The need to work with local, state and federal agencies, as well as long term recovery and housing groups was evident following the extensive flooding that occurred across the state.*

"We're moving from the intensity of response to the urgency of recovery," were the words **Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac** delivered to staff in the State Emergency Operations Center on March 22, 2019.

With that statement, Nebraska embarked on a long term recovery effort that continues today.

The unprecedented flooding of 2019 left homes, businesses, communities and lives forever changed, and it was clear even then that the road to recovery was never going to be short or easy. However, NEMA has been engaging partners and stakeholders at local, state, and federal levels since the beginning of the event to put wheels in motion on multiple fronts—wheels which are continually turning faster every day—toward a goal of full recovery for the state and all Nebraskans.

**Earl Imler** was named state coordinating officer for DR-4420 and was eventually selected to become the Long Term Recover Section manager. **Chris Schroeder** joined NEMA as a program specialist to work on long term recovery. He will serve as the voluntary agency liaison (VAL). The section will work on housing and issues related to volunteer agencies and organizations.



*Members of the Governor's Task Force for Disaster Recovery meet at the Joint Field Office.*

The state also entered into a partnership early on in the disaster with Hagerty Consulting, an emergency management firm that has assisted in the recovery of some of the nation's most cataclysmic disasters for nearly 20 years. With Hagerty's assistance and the state's leadership, many pieces have come together since March to form a strategic action plan that will not only direct the long term recovery of this year's flooding, but also prepare Nebraska for future disasters.

A major component of both current operations and future plans is the Governor's Task Force for Disaster Recovery. Activated and mobilized in October at the direction of Gov. **Pete Ricketts**, the Task Force is a collection of federal and state agency representatives, and local

community stakeholders, managed by NEMA, with six priorities: housing, infrastructure, agriculture, economics, health, social services and natural and cultural resources.

These discussions have opened the door to new partnerships and avenues for Nebraskans to help Nebraskans such as the state's economic development districts offering to help their constituents and communities with grant monitoring, management, and reporting.

The governor's task force has also given rise to additional groups and new initiatives, including a local impact team, whose primary objective is identifying and influencing the needs of people and families at the local level.

Additionally, NEMA and members of the governor's task force are continuing to engage long term recovery groups and community assistance partners, assisting in their formation, troubleshooting issues, and offering any guidance that proves necessary to provide.

While all of these organizations, agencies, and people continue toward the collective goal of full recovery for Nebraska, one thing is certain: Nebraskans have taken the words of Maj. Gen. Bohac to heart.

They have embraced the urgency of recovery, for each other and for the state of Nebraska.



*Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac addresses State Emergency Operations Center Staff during March flooding.*

# Citizen Corps

Another part of the Long Term Recovery Section is the Citizen Corps Program (CCP).

Nebraska CCP works with emergency management, public health, first responders and other preparedness partners to provide public education, training and volunteer opportunities for Nebraskans. CCP focuses on disaster preparedness and response for individuals, families and communities.

Each year, the State Homeland Security Grant helps fund projects aimed at making sure Nebraskans are better prepared for and able to respond to disasters.

In 2019, Nebraska CCP was actively involved in the response to the Nebraska floods as well as a number of preparedness and response activities across Nebraska. These activities included:

- Playing an integral role in shelter setup and management during the onset of the disaster,
- Assisting local emergency management in damage assessment,
- Sandbagging operations,
- Volunteer and donation management,
- Door-to-door community outreach in disaster stricken areas,
- Debris cleanup,
- Volunteering at local preparedness and disaster survivor resource events,
- Training alongside other volunteer responders,
- Assisting with public health initiatives, and presenting at regional and national conferences.

CCP partnered again with Nebraska Disaster Behavioral Health for its annual conference. CCP assisted



*Participants in the Annual Nebraska Citizen Corps Volunteer Preparedness Conference, in August in Bellevue, practice rapidly setting up a shelter. The conference also featured training on: traffic incident management training, CPR and Act F.A.S.T. (First Arrival Simple Treatment).*

with behavioral health partners to exercise disaster plans.

Local Citizen Corps programs continued to provide Psychological First Aid (PFA) training as well as community emergency response team (CERT) courses, Rapid Shelter Team Setup/Shelter Management, Stop-the-Bleed and Hands-Only CPR classes throughout the year. These trainings help communities become more resilient.

The State Homeland Security Grant was used to help purchase equipment that volunteers used for local responses. Nebraska CCP volunteers also had an opportunity to attend the Nebraska Volunteer Preparedness Conference sponsored by Nebraska Citizen Corps in partnership with the Tri-County Planning, Exercise and Training region. Volunteers heard presentations from local and national experts on disaster response and participated in training events

throughout the conference.

The State Homeland Grant Program (SHGP) was used to fund the state Citizen Corps coordinator position which provides technical assistance to local programs, works with local, state and federal agencies to strengthen partnerships and assists with the development of the State Citizen Corps Council. **Quinn Lewandowski** serves as the CCP coordinator through an arrangement with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.

The grant was also used to help purchase equipment that volunteers used for local responses.

During National Preparedness Month in September, CCP worked with **Lt. Gov. Mike Foley** on the 12th annual Be Prepared Awards program, which recognizes volunteers and community organizations for excellence in emergency preparedness and disaster response.

# Communications Section

The Communications Section is a new section at NEMA and is comprised of the Information Technology and Communications Unit, the State Watch Center, Statewide Interoperable Communications (SWIC) and FirstNET. Meetings have been held with both policy and working groups and plans are underway to conduct a statewide workshop in April 2020. **Sue Krogman**, is section manager and Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC).

## IT/Commo Unit

The NEMA Information Technology and Communications Unit has seen some changes this year while continuing to progressively move the agency forward with ever-changing technologies.

**Chad Boshart** was promoted to Information Technology/Communications (IT/Commo) Unit Supervisor, and **Nathan Martinez** was hired as IT Support Analyst.

The unit upgraded the video wall system and is replacing equipment that is at, or near, end of life. These upgrades will give the agency a state-of-the-art video display system to support NEMA and other entities that use the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).

The IT staff installed new computers throughout the agency and replaced existing computers at the alternate EOC in Grand Island. In support of the March flooding, they set up the state network and computers at the FEMA joint field office (JFO) staff at that facility.

**Troy Harris**, communications coordinator, assisted with the state disaster response by working with the Office of the Chief Information Officer to program and deploy more than 60 radios to assist field units with traffic control, law enforcement and other disaster response actions.

Additionally, personnel coordinated with local law enforcement to provide communication capabilities to National Guard troops assisting on the ground.

During the year, the section facilitated a Communications



*NEMA staff Chad Boshart and Nathan Martinez, center and right, participate in Grid Ex, a Lincoln Electric System exercise on the power grid.*

Leader (COML) course, and a state-sponsored Communications Technician (COMT) course. Harris completed the COML Train the Trainer course and participated as an evaluator in the Central States Communications Association exercise in Oklahoma.

In cooperation with Army National Guard Aviation and the Office of the Chief Information Officer, the section added the State Radio System to all Nebraska National Guard helicopters and participated in an exercise to demonstrate the new capabilities.

NRIN – the Nebraska Regional Interoperability Network – is working to offer multiple cost-saving opportunities for local governments. This would include assisting with any regionalization they may do with other public service answering points for redundancy and efficiency. NRIN continues to work with other state-wide projects, including the

State Radio System and the new next generation 911 program.

The GIS staff, assisted by the Nebraska State Patrol, helped support the state's flood disaster by providing an ArcGIS Online dashboard. This dashboard gave timely and up-to-the-minute information on the status and extent of the flooding and was used by state agencies in the SEOC. It could be remotely accessed via computer, tablet or smartphone. Due to the success of this technology during the floods, it allowed the agency to develop an opportunity to work with ESRI to create dashboards, story maps and easy to use surveys to support the NEMA Watch Center and the agency.

The staff also assisted the State Fire Marshal by providing digitized boundaries for fires across the state, as well as supporting local emergency managers with maps and current GIS data.

# State Watch Center

The State Watch Center gathers and disseminates intelligence on natural and man-made hazards and threats with potential, imminent, or ongoing impacts to the state of Nebraska. It is currently staffed with Unit Supervisor **Brent Curtis** and Program Specialist **Jill Burmester**.

A daily situational briefing and “dashboard” analysis is distributed Monday through Friday—or more often, as conditions warrant—to almost 500 public safety stakeholders at all levels of local, state and federal government. This briefing helps provide situational awareness about weather, incidents, events and available response resources in the state. The one-page dashboard report was added in February 2018, to provide leadership and others with a summary overview

of hazards, potential threat severity over the next seven days and significant events that have occurred or impacted the state over the previous three days.

At the end of 2019 the State Watch Center began working with ESRI, a mapping and spatial analytics software company, to revise and evolve the daily briefing and Incident Status Report.

From its inception, the daily briefing was, under normal operating conditions, compiled daily. During 2020, the Watch Center will roll out a “live” briefing that will be updated in real time, as events, incidents, and weather conditions develop. This will provide public safety stakeholders with current information on demand. The State Watch Center and ESRI are

also working to enhance the Incident Status Report (ISR) that emergency managers across the state use to provide NEMA with information and requests for state resources. The new ISR will reflect a modern approach and a simple, logical workflow to ensure emergency managers spend less time sending critical information.

The watch center is responsible for monitoring events in the state and integrating with stakeholders from other agencies and the emergency managers across the state that represent each of Nebraska's counties.

The watch officer system, staffed on a rotating basis by all qualified, full-time NEMA personnel, provides on-call 24/7 response, monitoring and information gathering for NEMA.



Flood pictures: 1. A Chinook gets ready to scoop up hay for stranded animals. 2. Flooded Camp Ashland. 3. Ashland levee breach. 4. A debris pile after flooding in Winslow. 5. One of about 25 submerged and or destroyed travel trailers at Merritt's Beach Park in Plattsmouth. 6. Flood waters pushed chunks of ice along Nebraska rivers.

# NEMA Funding

## State Homeland Security Grant Program

Total received from the Department  
of Homeland Security Grant Program

**\$4,077,500**

Regions	CCP	Hazmat Teams	LETPP	Comm	PET	Cyber	Total Award
East Central	\$ 950	\$20,000		\$ 15,000	\$ 35,033	\$ 4,200	\$ 75,183
North Central	\$ 8,000		\$ 29,250	\$108,225	\$135,526	\$16,000	\$ 297,031
Northeast		\$20,000		\$116,219	\$ 52,336		\$ 188,555
Panhandle	\$ 9,200	\$20,000	\$ 18,500	\$ 15,000	\$ 76,500		\$ 203,881
South Central	\$24,500	\$45,000	\$ 74,881		\$ 60,000		\$ 139,400
Southeast	\$25,000			\$ 11,900	\$ 27,500	\$75,000	\$ 50,500
Southwest	\$ 3,000	\$20,000		\$ 40,000	\$ 19,000		\$ 82,000
Tri-County	\$46,054	\$40,000	\$102,654	\$305,000	\$128,700		\$ 622,408

Total: \$1,747,658

### Statewide Initiatives

<b>Agriculture</b> Through memorandum of understanding (MOU) via Northeast Region	\$ 55,000
<b>Citizen Corps Program</b> Through MOU via Panhandle Region	\$ 123,286
<b>Fusion Center</b> Through MOU via Panhandle Region	\$ 302,890
<b>Hazardous Device Technicians</b> Through MOU via Panhandle Region	\$ 278,450
<b>Metropolitan Medical Response Systems</b> Awarded to Tri-County Region	\$ 19,500
<b>Nebraska Hazardous Incident Team</b> Through MOU via East Central Region	\$ 19,981
<b>Nebraska Regional Interoperable Network</b> Through MOU via East Central and South Central Regions	\$ 715,235
<b>Total Award to Local Units of Government:</b>	<b>\$3,262,000</b>
<b>The remaining 20 percent is kept at the state level-per grant guidance</b>	\$ 815,500
<b>NEMA:</b> funds allocated to the PET program, management and administration	\$ 611,625
<b>NSP:</b> funds allocated to build and sustain the Nebraska Fusion Information Network	\$ 199,000
<b>Total Award to Nebraska:</b>	<b>\$4,077,500</b>

### Emergency Management Performance Grant

**\$3,849,969**

**Total Grant**

Local Emergency Management Agencies Receive

**65.8 percent**

of the EMPG grant or

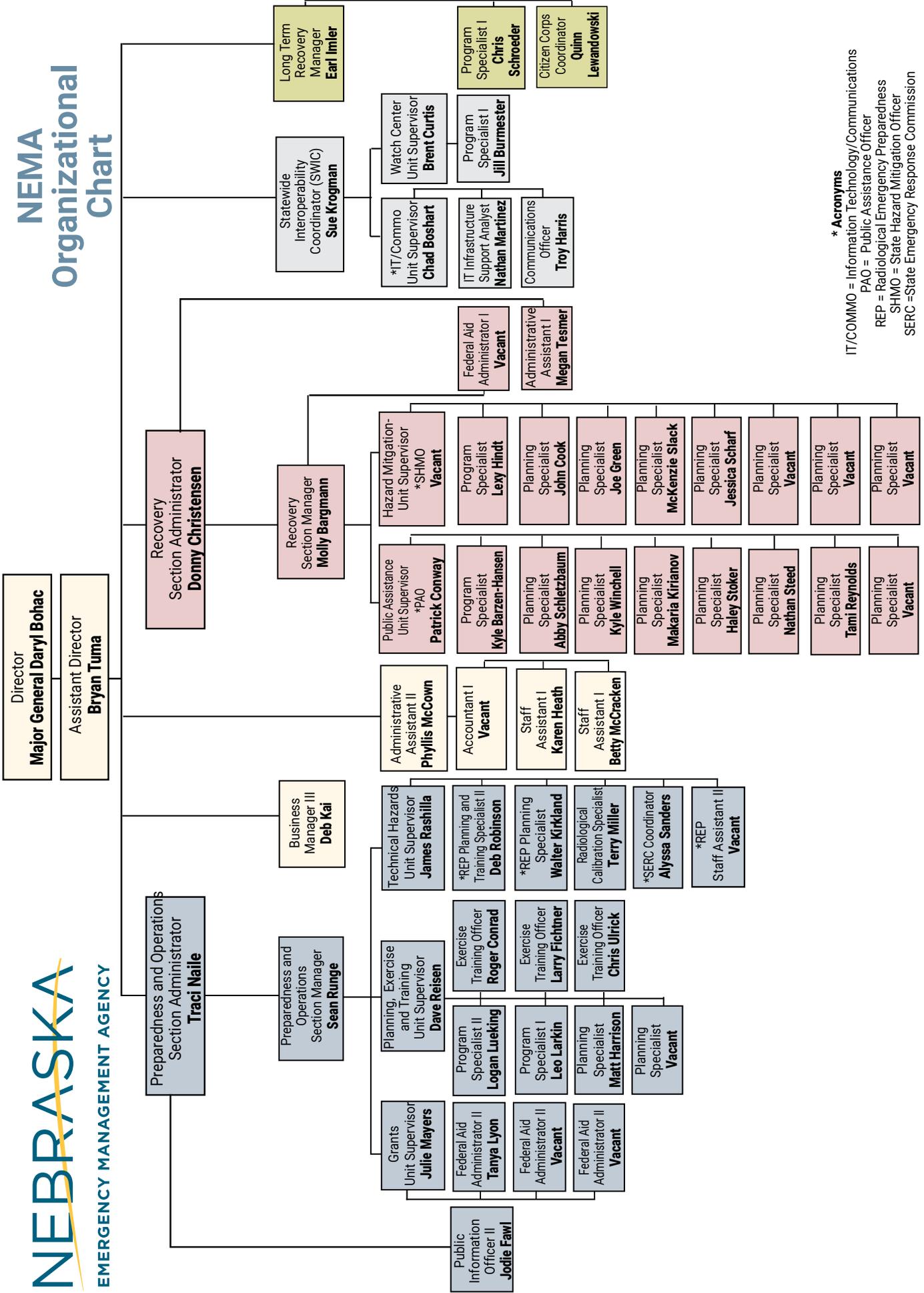
**\$2,463,097 million**

### Expenditures

#### GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY FUND

Federal	\$8,801,090
State	\$2,086,257
Cash	\$8,402

State Appropriation:	\$1,356,882
Solely for SEAT	\$ 362,520
Federal Grants:	\$7,110,232
Radiological Emergency Preparedness:	\$320,912



**\* Acronyms**  
 IT/COMMO = Information Technology/Communications  
 PAO = Public Assistance Officer  
 REP = Radiological Emergency Preparedness  
 SHMO = State Hazard Mitigation Officer  
 SERC = State Emergency Response Commission



## Contact Information

**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.

*Nebraska Emergency Management Agency's 2019 Annual Report was produced by Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl. For additional information about the report, other agency publications or to be added to the agency email list for news releases and publications, call 402-471-7428 or email: [jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov](mailto:jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov).*

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