A Message from NEMA Assistant Director

Bryan Tuma

We envision safer, less vulnerable communities in Nebraska made possible through effective 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.

It’s pretty clear we are going to embark on our severe weather season shortly. Weather reports indicate that we will probably see some of that severe spring-summer type weather with tornado activity and severe thunderstorms possible this first week of May. As always, we will continue to monitor that closely. We are prepared, and we will work with our various stakeholder agencies and other groups to stand up operations when we necessary.

We know that once winter decides to stop rearing its ugly head, we must then be ready to face spring and summer hazards including floods, tornadoes and wildfires. It takes training and exercise to make sure we are all ready to work together in the State Emergency Operations Center at NEMA to provide support to local entities when they request state assistance. That means exercising our plans and procedures for response.

In the next few weeks, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency staff will hold a series of training sessions with staff representing all of the emergency support function (ESF) agencies, organizations and teams who help the state respond following a disaster. ESF representatives work together in the State Emergency Operation Center following a disaster to provide a coordinated state response in support of local communities that have exceeded their capacity to respond.

During a declared disaster, the Nebraska Emergency Management Act (adopted in 1996) grants the governor authority to provide for state-level support to local governments in time of extreme emergency or disaster. The governor can direct the suspension or cancellation of normal state agency operations and redirect resources as necessary. In Nebraska, the emergency support functions are numbered as follows:

- ESF 1 — Transportation
- ESF 2 — Communications
- ESF 3 — Public Works & Engineering
- ESF 4 — Fire Suppression
- ESF 5 — Emergency Management
- ESF 6 — Mass Care, Housing & Human Services
- ESF 7 — Infrastructure Protection
- ESF 8 — Public Health & Medical Services
- ESF 9 — Urban Search & Rescue
- ESF 10 — Environmental Quality
- ESF 11 — Agriculture
- ESF 12 — Energy
- ESF 13 — Public Safety and Security
- ESF 14 — Long Term Recovery and Mitigation
- ESF 15 — Military Support

The ESFs, as well as all local response entities across the state, operate within the principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) which incorporates principles of the Incident Command System (ICS). NIMS is a standardized system used across the nation for emergency response. If you want information on NIMS training please check out the NEMA training calendar. We list a variety of in state option there. Also, many ICS and NIMS courses are available FREE online via the Emergency Management Institute Independent Study Program.

Sincerely,

Bryan Tuma
NEMA Assistant Director
Above: Roy Stam shared photos on Facebook of power lines down eight miles north of Scotia. This scene was repeated across the state.

Below: Region 26 Emergency Management Director Alma Beland, was only able to salvage a side light globe from halfway up the region’s communications tower north of Ord in Valley County. Heavy ice and high winds toppled the 280-foot tower. Nebraska Emergency Management Agency’s Troy Harris located a portable tower in the Northeast PET Region for Region 26 to use until a new tower can be constructed. Marvin Hulinsky, Kevin Garvin and Nic Kemnitz in Wayne prepare the tower for transportation to Region 26. Photos of the ice covered tower were taken by Scott Philbrick.

More than $7 million in damage is estimated to have occurred across 32 counties during the blizzard that crossed Nebraska starting April 13.

Wet heavy snow and ice damaged power lines and impacted motorists from Southwest to Northeast Nebraska.

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency public assistance staff is working with local jurisdictions and power companies to do preliminary assessments on the damage that occurred. Once complete, the information will be forwarded to Gov. Pete Rickets who will decide whether the state will request a federal disaster declaration.

“We look at the publicly-owned infrastructure damaged and eligible for assistance,” said NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma. “If we meet state and county thresholds federal disaster would be especially critical for some of the smaller public power districts that were affected.”
Changes Made to Nebraska Basic Emergency Management Certification

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is required by state law to offer Basic Emergency Management Certification to city, village, county, or interjurisdictional emergency management officials, including representatives of state government agencies and partner organizations who work directly with NEMA to provide emergency management response and support across the state.

Prior to March 7, 2018, Basic Emergency Management Certification required attending the Nebraska Emergency Management Basic Academy, a five-day course, and completing a few independent study courses.

“We reviewed the process and student evaluations and in an effort to be more efficient and effective, while reducing the out-of-office burden, we have revised the Nebraska Basic Emergency Management Certification requirements,” said Dave Reisen, NEMA Training and Exercise Unit supervisor.

The focus of certification will continue to be ensuring that emergency management officials are trained in the essential knowledge and skills needed, as well as reinforce the concept of professionalism and pride.

Certification will require successful completion of specific courses offered through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as well as a two-day (16 hour) Nebraska Basic Emergency Management Certification Capstone course provided by NEMA.

The FEMA Independent Study (IS) Program offers a series of self-paced courses designed for people who have emergency management responsibilities, and the general public. These IS courses are available free-of-charge to those who qualify for enrollment and provide emergency management training to enhance the capabilities of state, local, and tribal government officials; volunteer organizations; FEMA’s disaster workforce; other federal agencies; and the public and private sectors to minimize the impact of disasters and emergencies on the American public. Additional information and registration for IS courses are available at https://training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx.

Successful completion of the following IS courses is required prior to attending the Basic Capstone course (NOTE: different versions of an IS course may available as signified by a letter following the course number; completion of any version is acceptable):
- IS-100 Introduction to Incident Command System (ICS)
- IS-200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
- IS-700 National Incident Management System (NIMS), an Introduction
- IS-800 National Response Framework, an Introduction
- IS-120 Introduction to Exercises
- IS-130 How to be an Exercise Evaluator
- IS-230 Fundamentals of Emergency Management
- IS-235 Emergency Planning
- IS-240 Leadership & Influence
- IS-241 Decision Making and Problem Solving
- IS-242 Effective Communications
- IS-244 Developing and Managing Volunteers
- IS-775 Emergency Operation Center (EOC) Management and Operations
- IS-5 Introduction to Hazardous Materials

After completing the prerequisite IS courses, those who qualify may then register to attend the two-day, Nebraska Basic Emergency Management Certification Capstone course. The course will emphasize various phases of emergency management, including requirements and expectations prior to, during and after an event or incident occurs.

Training principles for the Basic Capstone course include:
- Integrate both group and hands-on activity, using illustrative examples, activities, or videos to emphasize key instructional points.
- Foster a social and professional connection between participants and NEMA staff resulting in long term professional connections that enhance and support the emergency management profession.
- NEMA’s State Strategic Plan will be the basis for all training activities.

Individuals who completed Basic Emergency Management Certification under previous certification guidelines will be grandfathered into any new program, however they may opt, and are encouraged, to complete the new Basic Capstone course as a refresher.

The Basic Capstone course will be offered at least twice annually.

Individuals who complete the IS Course prerequisites and the Basic Capstone course will receive Nebraska Basic Emergency Management Certification.

Questions or comments should be directed to Dave Reisen, Nebraska State Training Officer, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, dave.reisen@nebraska.gov or (402) 471-7177.
The Nebraska Senior Advisory Council met April 12 at the Law Enforcement Center in Grand Island to discuss investment justification. They made decisions on potential grant funding for various projects submitted by regional, county and local emergency managers.

SERC Meeting
The Nebraska State Emergency Response Commission met on April 10 in Lincoln, and welcomed Matthew DiVito of Crete Carrier as the Highway Transportation Representative. Full details of the meeting agenda and past minutes can be found on the SERC website.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Arts and Sciences held its annual Central Plains Severe Weather Symposium and Family Weatherfest on April 7 on Innovation Campus in Lincoln. NEMA staff Jill Burmester and Jodie Fawl along with Jancy Fawl, the preparedness dog, delivered preparedness information to participants for both humans and pets. A variety of children’s activities and experiments are included in the event, which concluded with spotter training presented by the National Weather Service.
On April 17-18, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency’s Brian Folts, Larry Fichtner, Patrick Rooney, Walter Kirkland and Logan Lueking participated in the Advanced Planning Concepts course delivered by Todd Manns of The Blue Cell. The course was held at the Nebraska Taskforce One Office in Lincoln.

Other participants included: Shannon McVaney, Kevin Rahe, Travis Harlow, Amanda Burki, Stever Cody, Jase Blunt, Maj. Martin Neal, Jim Davidsaver and Nick Gangwish.

During the two-day course, instruction and exercises focused on:

- Using the planning “P” process to develop an incident action plan
- Filling out Incident Command System (ICS) forms
- Completing and organizing ICS 219s (T Cards)
- Filling positions within ICS
- Accounting for and tracking resources.
- Conducting meetings and briefs required by the planning process

“I learned that having an accurate and expandable resource tracking system was essential for success,” said Kirkland. “The exercises were believable and could happen anywhere.”
Bradley Joins Technical Hazards Unit


Bradley is a staff sergeant with the 754th Chemical Company of the Nebraska Army National Guard as a squad leader for a hazardous assessment platoon and a mass casualty decontamination element. Bradley competed in this month’s “Nebraska Best Warrior” competition in Hastings, at the Greenlief training center and placed overall for non-commissioned officers.

Prior to starting at NEMA, Bradley worked full-time as an apprentice plumber and apprentice HVAC technician.

He has worked as a mechanic, and optician and as escalation manager for a pharmaceutical company.

He attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Bradley and his wife, Anna, have one 3-year-old son, Westley.

In addition to enjoying time with his family, Bradley likes doing Yoga, karaoke and Zumba.

Basic Public Officer Course Offered in Bridgeport

The Panhandle Public Health District sponsored G290, Basic Public Information, April 4 and 5 in Bridgeport. The course was taught by NEMA PIO Jodie Fawl and DHHS PIO Mike Wight and included exercises, new conference practice and on-camera interviews. Twenty-two participants earned certificates.
National Radiological Emergency Preparedness Conference Held near Seattle

Radiation professionals from around the country representing local, state, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), public health and nuclear power plants (NPPs) met April 16-19 in Renton, Washington, to attend professional workshops, seminars and other training opportunities focused on radiation, nuclear power plants and the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) program.

Vendors were also able to display their latest and greatest equipment and services, that help organizations prepare for, respond to or recover from radiological emergencies. The purpose of the conference is to exchange knowledge, best practices and idea sharing to improve the nation’s overall readiness for radiation emergencies.

According to Deb Robinson, planning and training specialist with Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), topics for the various sessions were wide-ranging.

Topics included exercise data collection and its usage, electronic messaging in emergencies, radiation specific response technologies and programs, and a session that reviewed a nuclear power plants preparations and response to Hurricane Harvey, to name a few. Updates on regulations and guidance from federal partners were also a focus in some sessions as planners, trainers and responders must stay abreast of the latest requirements to ensure public safety.

“One of the great benefits about a conference like this is having the opportunity to learn what others have been successful with, or not successful with, in different parts of the country, Robinson said. “You are also able to explore things like best practices, lessons learned, standard operating practices, planning considerations and training considerations with various partners and stakeholders.”

One session featured Fumitake Masukawa, deputy director of the Nuclear Disaster Management Bureau, Cabinet Office of Japan who presented information on the methodology and participation of the public who live within their emergency planning zones.

“I found this session particularly interesting because the public actively participated in their exercise,” Robinson said. “As citizens they felt a need to be a part of the exercise so they would know what to do if an emergency were ever to occur. To them, exercises involving the nuclear power plants are not an inconvenience. One of the societal differences between there and here.”

Masukawa also noted that there is a common issue that all countries struggle with, one that has no easy resolve: pets.

“Pets are always a challenge in disasters; to pet parents, they are as much our family as their own children,” Robinson said. “However the implications of a radiological emergency make it a more difficult and complex issue. Data showing the effectiveness of decontamination of pets, and other animals for that matter, is virtually non-existent at this point. The potential for pets to cross-contaminate people and other locations is high. How we mitigate that is yet to be determined.”

For more information on the NREP Conference visit www.nationalrep.org
The Hazard Mitigation Assistance Branch in FEMA Region 7 hosted FEMA’s comprehensive two-day Benefit Cost Analysis training (including NEMA staff Mary Baker and Nick Walsh, second row at left) in March at the new Region VII office. Final qualification for federal funding is for mitigation projects to be cost-effective which added to the significance of the training.

FEMA Releases Continuity Guidance Circular

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently released the Continuity Guidance Circular (CGC) following a nationwide, whole community effort to review and revise the guidance.

The CGC guides efforts to develop and maintain the capability to ensure continuity of operations, continuity of government, and enduring constitutional government during an emergency that disrupts normal operations. Development and maintenance of continuity capabilities helps build and sustain a more resilient nation that is equipped to sustain essential functions and core capabilities and deliver critical services under all conditions.

The CGC describes federal and non-federal continuity efforts; outlines whole community continuity roles, responsibilities and coordinating structures; and describes the process for building and maintaining capabilities to ensure the performance of essential functions and delivery of critical services and core capabilities.

Organizations and governments at all levels can draw upon the CGC as a reference when creating or revising continuity plans, programs, and processes. Many jurisdictions and organizations already have an existing continuity program and plan, and will use the Circular to refine capabilities and processes.

To read the Continuity Guidance Circular and obtain additional information, visit www.fema.gov/continuity-guidance-circular.

FEMA offers training, technical assistance, and outreach to assist organizations and governments develop and maintain a continuity plan and program and implement the concepts found within the CGC. The Continuity Resource Toolkit, found at www.fema.gov/continuity-resource-toolkit, contains these additional tools, templates, and resources.

Healthcare Event Response Webinar Available Online

The U.S. Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) Technical Resources, Assistance Center and Information Exchange (TRACIE) has a recorded webinar available which highlights lessons learned and model practices from the Healthcare Response to a No Notice Event – the Las Vegas Shooting.

Nevada Chief and Homeland Security Advisor Caleb Cage, Nevada Department, of Public Safety, Emergency Management Division, addresses EM perspectives from the response.

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 includes emergency management news and activities from across the state. Please forward story ideas or photos for inclusion to: Jodie Fawl, Public Information Officer, 2433 N.W. 24th St., Lincoln NE 68524; 402-471-7428, jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov.