NEMA Participates in Disability Pride Event at Bethany Park in Lincoln
As August comes to a close, we begin our observance of National Preparedness Month throughout September. Renewing our emphasis on efforts to help Nebraskans prepare for emergencies is timely. We want all citizens to: Make a Plan. Get Involved. Stay Informed.

Planning prior to a disaster prevents suffering by ensuring every member of your family knows what to do to stay safe when disaster strikes.

The staff at Nebraska Emergency Management are observing National Preparedness Month by promoting it as an opportunity to ensure that everyone has a plan for disasters and the tools needed to keep their family safe following a disaster.

As part of our observance of National Preparedness month, we are unveiling our new vision, mission, values and goals, and guiding principles.

**Vision** — A resilient Nebraska built upon inclusive collaboration and communication.

**Mission** — Provide and foster leadership through guidance and support to Nebraskans before, during, and after disasters.

**Values and Goals** —
- **Equity** — Emphasizing an inclusive, whole community approach to emergency management in all disaster phases
  - **Strategic Goal:** Reduce Nebraska’s vulnerability by maintaining an emergency management system focused on the whole community.
- **Timeliness** — Being responsive, communicative, and adaptable in all activities.
  - **Strategic Goal:** Increase NEMA’s responsiveness through continuous process improvement in a competent emergency management system.
- **Professionalism** — Cultivating and sustaining meaningful, productive partnerships with Nebraska’s communities and emergency managers statewide.
  - **Strategic Goal:** Continue to develop and improve the professionalism of emergency management personnel.
- **Efficiency** — Maximizing a cost-effective, focused, prepared, and productive approach to the Mission.
  - **Strategic Goal:** Strengthen a resourceful emergency management system.

**Guiding Principles** — We believe an emergency management system is a dynamic, mutually beneficial, and inclusive network of partners, stakeholders, and organizations, encompassing all Nebraskans, throughout all phases of disasters.

All NEMA teammates are accountable for ensuring the success of the Agency’s vision, mission, and values. It is a shared responsibility.

Sincerely,

Ervin L. Portis
Assistant Director
The NEMA Hazard Mitigation Unit is excited to announce that the application period for Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Fiscal Year 2022 grant application period will open Sept. 30 through Dec. 16.

Completed Notice of Interests (NOIs) must be submitted to the NEMA Hazard Mitigation Unit no later than Sept. 23.

The unit is hosting a series of webinars, open to the public, to discuss the BRIC and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) and to provide information on how to apply. See blue sidebar in right column for dates and time.

BRIC will support states, local communities, tribes and territories as they undertake hazard mitigation projects, reducing the risks they face from disasters and natural hazards.

The BRIC program recognizes the growing hazards associated with climate change and the need for natural hazard risk mitigation activities that promote climate adaptation and resilience with respect to those hazards.

BRIC aims to implement projects that reduce risks posed by natural hazards to reduce future losses by funding priority projects and activities.

Priorities include risk reduction of both acute events and chronic stressors, driven by climate change, which are either observed or expected.

For more information contact the NEMA Hazard Mitigation Unit at nema.hazardmitigation@nebraska.gov.

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**Recovery - Live Cycle Disaster Training**

**Seward County:** Seward Civic Center Auditorium
616 Bradford St. Seward, NE 68434

**Contact/Registrar:** Lexy Hindt, 402-471-7182
lexy.hindt@nebraska.gov

**Overview:** This course is designed for new or experienced city/county clerks, administrators, elected officials or any individuals who will be involved in the disaster recovery process. Attendees in this course will gain an overview of NEMA’s Recovery Programs and their role before, during and after a disaster occurs. Topics include: Hazard Mitigation Planning, Public Assistance Grant Program, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Long-Term Recovery. There is no registration fee for attending; NEMA is not providing meals, room, board or mileage to attend this course. Each session is limited to 80 participants.

**Recovery - Life Cycle Disaster Training - York**

**York County:** Holthus Convention Center Meeting Room,
3130 Holen Ave. York, NE 68467

**Contact/Registrar:** Lexy Hindt, 402-471-7182
lexy.hindt@nebraska.gov

**Overview:** This course is designed for new or experienced city/county clerks, administrators, elected officials or any individuals who will be involved in the disaster recovery process. Attendees in this course will gain an overview of NEMA’s Recovery Programs and their role before, during and after a disaster occurs. Topics include: Hazard Mitigation Planning, Public Assistance Grant Program, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Long-Term Recovery. There is no registration fee for attending; NEMA is not providing meals, room, board or mileage to attend this course. Each session is limited to 80 participants.
FEMA, state emergency management, and representatives from the w–Missouri River Natural Resources District (Papio-Missouri NRD) discussed the recent selection of a resilience project that has been identified as part of FEMA’s $1.1 billion climate and disaster resilience investment at an early morning news conference Sept. 1 at the Papio-Missouri NRD.

The project for the Papio-Missouri NRD is the first Nebraska project to be selected for further review under FEMA’s Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) National Competition. The Papio WP-4 Project is a flood risk reduction and water storage structure – a dam – in the South Papillion Creek Basin Watershed near the city of Gretna. The structure is designed to control runoff from a 500-year rainfall event with the belief that there will be future urban development in the watershed. The proposed project is intended to provide benefits, which include protection of 40+ properties, nine structures, and environmental benefits to 48 acres. Those benefits include a water quality improvement, new riparian habitat and recreational space for local and Omaha metro populations.

This project is a long-term solution with an estimated use period of 50 years.

Speakers at the event included: Gov. Pete Ricketts, FEMA Region Administrator Andrea Spillars, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Director, NEMA; Chairman of the Papio NRD Board of Directors Kevyn Sopinkski and Rep. Don Bacon, of Nebraska’s 2nd District.
Larry Fichtner, NEMA exercise training officer, leads an Incident Command System (ICS 300) class at Penteman Armory in early August.

Members of the NEMA Recovery and Communication sections set up a virtual applicant briefing for DR-4662-NE which is a Major Disaster Declaration for Severe Storms and Straight-line Winds that occurred May 12.

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NEMA and FEMA promote Preparedness at the Nebraska State Fair

NEMA and FEMA staff worked together to promote preparedness at the booth at the Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island. Pictured clockwise from left, photo 1: Elizabeth Huggins and Tanya Lyon; photo 2: Joshua Yox, Lisa St. Cin; Photo 3: Jodie Fawl, Tanya Lyon, Logan Lueking and Elizabeth Huggins.
Small nonfarm businesses in 17 Nebraska counties and neighboring counties in South Dakota and Wyoming are now eligible to apply for low interest federal disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration, announced Director Tanya N. Garfield of SBA’s Disaster Field Operations Center-West. These loans offset economic losses because of reduced revenues caused by drought in the following primary counties that began June 21, 2022: Arthur, Banner, McPherson, Scotts Bluff and Sioux.

The neighboring Nebraska counties are: Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Garden, Grant, Hooker, Keith, Kimball, Lincoln, Logan, Morrill and Thomas;

The neighboring South Dakota County is Fall River; and the neighboring Wyoming counties: Goshen, Laramie and Niobrara.

In addition, eight other counties are also eligible due to an agricultural disaster declared Aug. 22. Small nonfarm businesses in another eight Nebraska counties are also eligible to apply for low interest federal disaster loans from SBA. These loans offset economic losses because of reduced revenues caused by drought that began August 23, 2022.

The primary county is Dodge and the neighboring counties are Burt, Butler, Colfax, Cuming, Douglas, Saunders and Washington.

Small nonfarm businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private nonprofit organizations of any size may qualify for Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to $2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have been met had the disaster not occurred. “Eligibility for these loans is based on the financial impact of the disaster only and not on any actual property damage. These loans have an interest rate of 2.935 percent for businesses and 1.875 percent for private nonprofit organizations, a maximum term of 30 years and are available to small businesses and most private nonprofits without the financial ability to offset the adverse impact without hardship,” Garfield said.

Businesses primarily engaged in farming or ranching are not eligible for SBA disaster assistance. Agricultural enterprises should contact the Farm Services Agency about the U.S. Department of Agriculture assistance made available by the Secretary’s declaration. However, nurseries are eligible for SBA disaster assistance in drought disasters.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at https://disasterloansassistance.sba.gov.

Applicants may also call SBA’s Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance.

For people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

Completed applications should be mailed to:

U.S. Small Business Administration,
Processing and Disbursement Center,
14925 Kingsport Road,
Fort Worth, TX 76155

The deadline to apply for economic injury is April 17, 2023.

Deadline Approaches for SBA Disaster Loans for Property Damage Due to Severe Storms and Straight-Line Winds

The deadline for Nebraska private nonprofits to apply for an SBA federal disaster loan for property damage caused by severe storms and straight-line winds May 12, 2022 is Sept. 26.

Private nonprofits that provide essential services of a governmental nature are eligible for assistance in Antelope, Boone, Burt, Cedar, Cuming, Custer, Dixon, Garfield, Greeley, Holt, Knox, Logan, Pierce, Polk, Sherman, Thurston, Valley, Wayne, Wheeler and York counties.

The interest rate is 1.875 percent with terms up to 30 years. Loan amounts and terms are set by SBA and based on each applicant’s financial condition. Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at https://disasterloansassistance.sba.gov. Applicants may also call SBA’s Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance.

Check out SBA’s full news release at: https://www.sba.gov/article/2022/aug/26/deadline-approaching-nebraska-sba-disaster-loans-property-damage-due-severe-storms-straight-line
Check Out Contractors Before Hiring

As the agency enforcing Nebraska’s Contractor Registration Act, Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL) reminds Nebraskans to use caution when hiring contractors to repair or remodel their homes and businesses.

NDOL’s recommendations should be considered when hiring contractors to repair or rebuild following a disaster.

Make sure all contractors are registered with NDOL and are in compliance with local licensing and building permit requirements. A searchable listing of registered contractors is available at [https://dol.nebraska.gov/conreg/Search](https://dol.nebraska.gov/conreg/Search).

Consumers can minimize the chances of being scammed by an unscrupulous contractor by following these recommendations:

- Beware of a contractor who makes you an unsolicited offer by showing up at your doorstep with a great deal.
- Check references.
- Get written estimates, a written contract, proof of insurance and a written warranty.

Contractor registration is required of all contractors prior to doing work in Nebraska, but does not ensure quality of work or protect against fraud. However, consumers following the above recommendations can greatly increase their chances of having a positive experience when using the services of a construction contractor. For more information, go to the Nebraska Department of Labor website at dol.nebraska.gov or call 402-471-2239.

Individual and Community Preparedness Webinar Announcement

The Practical Preparedness Webinar is scheduled for Sept. 28 from 12 to 1 p.m.

**September 28, 2022**
12 p.m. to 1 p.m. CDT
[Register here](#)

As part of National Preparedness Month, join FEMA Region 7 and Jennifer Fales of Stone Owl Preparedness LLC, for a webinar on practical ways to prepare for a disaster or other emergency.

Personal preparedness means creating an emergency plan, developing an emergency kit and building skills in case of a disaster. In this webinar Fales will discuss how to prepare for the big emergencies that rarely happen and the little emergencies that happen every day.

This webinar will cover prepper rules, prepping for low-cost/no-cost, basic skills and supplies, common preparedness challenges and building an emergency kit for your vehicle.

Yox Assumes State Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator Role

Joshua Yox, NEMA’s long-term recovery specialist, was recently assigned the role of Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) State Coordinator.

He will also work with the Nebraska Citizen Corps Council to increase citizen volunteer engagement in community preparedness.

Yox’s said his goal for this role is to empower local MRC units to overcome the many tough challenges that MRC units face and be successful in their respective missions.

The MRC is a national network that comprises more than 200,000 volunteers in roughly 800 community-based units located throughout the United States and its territories. MRC units organize and utilize local volunteers who want to donate their time and expertise to prepare for and respond to emergencies and to support ongoing preparedness initiatives. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals as well as other community members without healthcare backgrounds who want to improve the health and safety of their communities. Currently there are six establish MRC units in Nebraska and another one in the process of being created. These units face many tough challenges. Nonetheless, Nebraska MRC units lead the way in keeping Nebraskan families, friends and neighbors safe and healthy.
A wildfire south of Gering starting Aug. 1, destroyed three homes and damaged several others as it spread through the dry vegetation in Nebraska's Wildcat Hills. More than 15,500 acres burned in the Carter Canyon Fire. The Nebraska Incident Management Assistance team responded to assist the Gering Fire Department and the mutual aid departments who responded. Nebraska National Guard helicopters worked to extinguish fires and a multi-mission aircraft surveyed the canyons looking for heat signatures, smoke and possible flareups.
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**Cotter Joins Hazard Mitigation Unit**

Kevin Cotter joined the hazard mitigation unit on Aug. 29 as a planning specialist. Cotter was a corrections officer for the Virginia Department of Corrections and a volunteer emergency medical technician for the Virginia Beach EMS the last year and a half.

Cotter is in a public administration with an emergency management concentration master’s program with Regent University in Virginia Beach.

Cotter is originally from Boston and has a bachelor of government with a concentration in foreign policy.

He enjoys football, working out and spending time with his wife, LeAnne, and their two children, Hayden, 8, and Dakota, 1.

**Ediger to Assist I.T. Staff**

Jake Ediger joined NEMA on August 16 to work as a temporary information technology staff member. Ediger will be working with Nathan Martinez and Nathaniel Smith on website development and system maintenance.

Ediger is a senior in computer science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a minor in math. He will graduate in May 2023. Previously, Ediger interned at Hamilton Telecommunications in Aurora and at Buildertrend in Omaha.

He enjoys Husker football, video games and baseball.

**Jackson Selected as Public Assistance Planning Specialist**

Abby Jackson joined NEMA as a planning specialist in the Public Assistance Unit on Aug. 1.

Jackson graduated from the University of Nebraska at Omaha with a Bachelor of Science with a major in emergency management and a concentration in geography and public health.

Jackson was an intern with NEMA during her final semester.

She was born and raised in Omaha where she attended Omaha Benson High School. She participated in golf, volleyball and soccer while there.

She enjoys watching UNO hockey and training her dog, Max.

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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 in the newsletter to: Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl, 402-471-7428 or jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov.