



August/September 2016

The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



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Cover Photo

Whole Community Preparedness

Nebraska Preparedness Conference attendees gather during the conference held in South Sioux City, Aug. 12-13.

Support for the Conference came from the Corporation for National and Community Service, ServeNebraska, UNL Extension, Nebraska Emergency Management, Nebraska Citizen Corps, Nebraska Volunteers Active in Disaster and Dakota County Emergency Management.

See additional pictures and a story about the conference on [page 8](#).



*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.

Three fires near Harrison and Crawford, in the early evening hours of Aug. 10, had the potential to develop into costly and dangerous wildfires that could have threatened a large, dry and fuel-filled area in the northwest part of the state. Thanks to early intervention by Nebraska and South Dakota's single engine air tankers, those fires were contained early. It's just one example of how the SEAT program is minimizing the wildland fire risk in the state.

Dropping fire retardant ahead of a fire front has proven to be an effective method to contain fires. The retardant is holding and stopping fires. Coupled with work by fire-fighting ground crews, fires this year in Nebraska have burned minimal acres.

"There have been no catastrophic fires since the SEAT was established," according to Seth Petersen, fire management specialist with the Nebraska Forest Service. "We haven't had any multi-day fires since the program began. Using the SEAT for initial attack on small fires allows us to get firefighters home on the same day. You don't know what a fire would do if you hadn't used the SEAT, but we haven't had another big fire on the Pine Ridge since 2012."

Petersen serves as the Nebraska SEAT base manager at Chadron. He reports that Nebraska's SEAT has made 21 drops this year of a total 10,500 gallons of mixed fire retardant.

Petersen said he has noticed a significant culture change among the firefighters in the area this year.

"Fire fighters have used the SEAT and they see it's worth," he said. "They realized the benefit of using it for initial attack. It's not intimidating, it's a tool they can use."

Another success of the SEAT program is the cooperation between Nebraska and South Dakota. The SEAT in Chadron has been used by South Dakota on fires and the SEAT in Hot Springs, S.D., has been used in Nebraska. Sharing available assets is a trademark of the SEAT program. Nebraska's SEAT has flown on six different fires in South Dakota and Nebraska this year. It is a great partnership.

As the program has developed we have streamlined procedures to allow fire chiefs to get the plane in the air by making one phone call as soon as they recognize a need for aerial suppression.

In visiting with Nan Gould of Region 23, the streamlined procedures have had good reviews with fire chiefs throughout the region.

"There's one call to make and it's on its way," Gould said. "I know our fire departments appreciate the support we have gotten from the state."

Another effective partnership to keep fires small is with the Civil Air Patrol. This volunteer organization conducts aerial detection flights after lightning storms, thus getting information to fire departments as soon as possible. See an article on the CAP program on page 4.

Overall, I am proud that NEMA has worked with the Forest Service, South Dakota, local firefighters and local emergency managers in developing an effective arsenal for fighting fire in the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Buma".

Operations Section

Resource Unit Leader Course Provides Information on Integral ICS Position

NEMA offered the All-Hazards Resource Unit Leader course, June 27-30.

The course provides an overview of the unit leader responsibilities, the planning section and the planning process to contextualize the resource unit for students unfamiliar with the planning process or the incident command system.

Randy Freed and **Todd Manns** of The Blue Cell were instructors for the course which provides tools to help potential resource unit leaders with skills needed to fill the position responsible for maintaining the status of all assigned resources at an incident.

The 13 participants in the course learned about overseeing the checking in and out of all resources, maintaining a status-keeping system indicating current location and status of all resources and maintenance of a master list of all



Photos by Larry Fichtner

Randy Freed of the Blue Cell instructs the Resource Unit Leader course at NEMA.

available resources.

The course offers an overview of the position and how it fits in the Incident

Command System and is a requirement for those interested in filling the position on an incident management team.



Participants discuss roles and responsibilities of the resource unit leader.



Social Media During Disasters Course Held in Region 44

NEMA Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl presents a social media in disaster training course to Region 44 Community Emergency Response Team members on July 16, in Fullerton. Learning the most effective ways to manage social media to get accurate information out during and after a disaster was the focus. Fawl also touched on the broader responsibilities of the public information officer and the joint information center during and following a disaster.

10th Annual National Homeland Security Conference Offers Variety of Information Sessions

The 2016 National Homeland Security Conference in Tampa, Fla., June 28-30, brought together more than 1,000 homeland security



professionals for innovative and informative sessions covering topics in law enforcement, fire service, emergency management, counter-terrorism, grant management and many others.

Homeland Security Continued Page 8

Nebraska Receives Annual Grant Notifications

Nebraska recently received the award notifications on the fiscal year 2016 Emergency Management Performance Grant and the Homeland Security Grant Programs.

The EMPG grant increased by \$117 from the previous year to \$3,849,232.

EMPG supports emergency management programs by providing funding to states to assist state and local governments in preparing for hazards.

Nebraska sub-grants 60 percent of the award to counties to help sustain

their emergency management programs.

Nebraska will receive \$3,734,500 in fiscal year 2016, which was the same level as fiscal year 2015.

HSGP supports state and local efforts to prevent terrorism and other catastrophic events and to prepare the nation for the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to the security of the United States

80 percent of the funds are sub-granted to local units of government to assist and support the overall grant mission and objectives.

Civil Air Patrol Helps Detect Fires Early

Early detection of wildland fires is a goal of most fire fighters, and aerial detection provides the best vantage point for that detection.

The idea of aerial detection is not a new one, according to NEMA Program Specialist **Leo Larkin**, who works with the state's single engine air tanker program and other state-supported aerial suppression tactics.

"Many states employ contractors to do aerial detection and many state forestry departments have their own aerial detection aircraft for the purpose of both aerial detection of fire and natural resources driven projects," Larkin said.

Until 2014, Nebraska had the option of contractor-operated aerial detection, but since then, NEMA began requesting Civil Air Patrol flights to accomplish this mission.

South Dakota has been employing Civil Air Patrol for aerial detection missions for a number of years.

The Nebraska Wing of the CAP operates a Cessna 182 located at Chadron Airport, Larkin said. It is staffed by volunteer pilots who have a background in aviation and knowledge of the topography of the area.

Region 23 Emergency Manager **Nan Gould** said it just made sense that the

Civil Air Patrol could be a great resource for the area.

"The aerial detection flights provide an effective tool for discovering fires before they get out of hand," Gould said.

Aerial observers can spot smoldering fire before people on the ground even see any smoke, said **Seth Petersen**, fire management specialist with the Nebraska Forest Service.

"We have the opportunity to spot fires very early and get people to them as soon as possible," said Petersen.

Petersen has flown on three detection flights this year and was able to direct fire fighters to a tree that was smoldering because it had been struck by lightning. By the time the crew arrived, the fire had dropped out of the tree and into the grass. If not spotted from the air, the fire could have spread rapidly.

Services provided by Civil Air Patrol are based on requests developed by agencies such as region/local emergency managers, Nebraska State Forest representatives and volunteer fire department representatives who are interested in an aerial platform.

The normal flight plan is to fly a route known as the Pine Ridge in northwestern Nebraska.



Photo by Seth Peterson

A smoldering tree in the Pine Ridge in northwestern Nebraska is spotted from a Civil Air Patrol detection flight.

The pilots fly routes assigned after a period of lightning with no precipitation associated with a weather system, Larkin said. These periods, otherwise known as "lightning busts", are then monitored by Region 23 and the Nebraska Forest Service and the flights are approved by Civil Air Patrol National Operations Center

Recovery Section



Region VII attendees to the workshop included from left: John Cook, hazard mitigation planning specialist, NEMA; Mary Kerschner, senior hazard mitigation assistance specialist, FEMA; Casey Hartline, Kansas liaison; Mary Baker, state hazard mitigation officer, NEMA; Brian Woltz, hazard mitigation assistance acting branch chief, FEMA; Joe Chandler, hazard mitigation assistance planning chief, FEMA; and Laura Whitener, Missouri liaison. Also in attendance from Region VII but not picture was Dan Schmitz, assistant state hazard mitigation officer for Iowa.

NEMA Staff Attend Hazard Mitigation Assistance Stakeholder Workshop

State hazard mitigation officers and hazard mitigation assistance staff meet July 5-9 at the Emergency Management Institute in Emmittsburg, Md. for the first of several annual events for Hazard Mitigation assistance staff across the country this year.

Mitigation driven initiatives and topics highlighted the three-day event, which included numerous sessions and break out opportunities to learn more about various topics, including nature-based design in HMA projects, mitigation for public facilities, managing the grant processes and available grants and support systems from other federal organizations.

“This event allows us the opportunity to collaborate with other states and their mitigation staff and borrow ideas and share with the FEMA regional staff as well,” said Baker. “We were also provided time to give FEMA feedback on where we are as state with policies and procedures and what is and is not going well. The networking is the biggest benefit to us, as well as seeing what we are doing well in relation to other states and territories.”

Technical Hazards Section

Nazy Chiniforoushan Joins Technical Hazards Section

Nazy Chiniforoushan joined NEMA in July as a radiological emergency preparedness planning and training specialist. Prior to joining the technical hazards section, Chiniforoushan worked in the emergency management department for the city of Los Angeles.

Her previous experience includes: emergency planning for faith-based organizations and work with FEMA’s National Integration Technical Assistance Program. There, she researched, identified and validated supply chain resilience for six critical sectors in the Los Angeles region.

Chiniforoushan developed standard operating procedures for assistive technology and functional needs support services caches in Los Angeles.

Chiniforoushan earned a master’s degree in emergency management from Long Beach State University and a bachelor’s degree in fire prevention from California State University in Los Angeles.

She did community outreach with the L.A. Sheriff’s Department and worked with at-risk communities in the area.

She was born and raised in Iran,

and moved to the United States with her family in 2004. She lived in Los Angeles until she moved to Lincoln in July.

Chiniforoushan said she enjoys reading and spends her weekend mornings reading at a local coffee shop. She also likes the outdoors and hopes to camp as much as possible.



Nazy Chiniforoushan

Technical Hazards Section

REP Core Concepts Course Scheduled at NEMA

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency Technical Hazards Section has scheduled **AWR-312 Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) Core Concepts Course**, Sept. 6-7 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at NEMA, 2433 N.W. 24th St., in Lincoln.

The free course focuses on the emergency preparedness off-site response organizations for a radiological emergency at a commercial nuclear power plant.

It will include an overview of the REP program history and key events, federal regulatory policies, basic radiation principles, REP planning guidance (planning standards), REP demonstra-

tion guidance (exercise evaluation areas), and the REP disaster initiated review (DIR) process.

The target audience is federal, state, local, utility and tribal emergency managers and planners.

To register for the course you need a FEMA SID number and password. To get one, visit: <https://cdp.dhs.gov/FEMASID> and click “Register for FEMA SID” or click “Forgot FEMA SID?” if you have forgotten your FEMA SID.

Registering for a FEMA SID number does not register you for this class. You must apply for the class separately. [Click Here to Apply.](#)

- Enter your FEMA SID and password.

- A CDP Training Registration System (TRS) application for 16-0280 NE12RCCC will open.
- Complete the required fields.
- Click the “Review and Submit Application Now” button.
- Complete the application process by clicking the affirmation checkbox and providing your digital signature by entering your name and FEMA SID password.

Students are responsible for their own travel.

For additional information regarding the course please contact:

Cara.Christianson-Riley@fema.dhs.gov or 816-283-7923

Nebraska Team Competes in National HAZMAT Contest

Nebraska sent a team of four responders to the New Mexico Hazmat Challenge held at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in July.

For the past 20 years HAZMAT teams, old and new, have joined the challenge for a chance to network with one another, practice technical skills, and learn new HAZMAT techniques under realistic conditions in a safe environment.

Old cars, trucks, tankers and rail cars are some of the props used to mimic real-life hazardous material situations in the competition.

John Clark, McCook, Bill Pfeifer



Two members of the Nebraska team work on stopping a leak on a simulated spill.

Madison, **Bruce Okamoto**, York and **Kevin Stary**, Columbus, competed in the week-long challenge testing skills in hazardous materials response.

This is the third year Nebraska has sent a team and the second year these four individuals have attended.

The final event of the training is the ever-fun and popular obstacle course.

They finished first in the obstacle course.

“Nebraska continues to strive to become the best in the business of hazmat and these four gentleman continue to demonstrate skills above and beyond the call of duty,” said Tonya Ngotel, acting technical hazards section manager.



Kevin Stary, Bill Pfeifer, Bruce Okamoto and John Clark show off their first place obstacle course trophy outside the Los Alamos Fire station in New Mexico.

Local Emergency Management

Pilger Clerk Wins National Award

Pilger City Clerk **Kim Neiman** received the Larry R. Johnston Local Floodplain Manager of the Year Award, June 23, at the National Association of State Floodplain Managers conference in Grand Rapids, Mich.

The award is given to a local floodplain manager from around the country for outstanding individual contributions to their community.

Neiman was recognized because of her dedication to the field of floodplain management and because of the work she put in helping the Village of Pilger recover from being hit by a tornado in June 2014, said State Hazard Mitigation Officer **Mary Baker** of NEMA.

“After the tornado swept through Pilger, Kim immediately began her duties as clerk, emergency manager, volunteer firefighter and floodplain administrator despite losing both her home and office to the tornado,” Baker said.

Neiman’s house was in the direct path of the tornado and was completely destroyed. Through it all, Nieman went to work at 6 a.m. and didn’t go home until well into the evening. She knew that her community’s recovery hinged on her ability to be an effective emergency manager, floodplain administrator, and grants coordinator.

Neiman wanted to show her citizens it is possible to build a house that meets floodplain regulations but also

results in a livable, functional home. She made sure her own house was one of the first to be rebuilt, with a compliant crawl space. She invited anyone and everyone in town to come see it.

She coordinated the local declaration and the rising tide of interested visitors, media, and volunteers.

Neiman knew she had a responsibility as floodplain manager—almost every part of Pilger is located in the 1 percent annual chance floodplain. Village residents took shelter in their basements, but most would not be able to rebuild with a basement in the floodplain.

Not only would she have to deal with a barrage of rebuilding permits, she would have to deal with residents who did not understand why.

Neiman requested and helped organize multiple open houses for the community to discuss building requirements in the floodplain, the rules of flood insurance, and the benefits of reducing flood risk.

She wanted residents to fully understand the reasons behind the



Kim Neiman, Pilger City Clerk, center, receives the Larry R. Johnston Local Flood Plain Manager of the Year Award at the National Association of State Floodplain Managers Conference from Executive Director Chad Berginnis and Chair Ceil Strauss.

regulations and how they benefit the community. She helped provide authoritative sources of information to prevent the spread of rumors.

Neiman organized six workshops focused on floodplain management and safe rooms to address concerns about not being able to build a basement as a storm shelter.

“Kim has shown incredible dedication,” said NEMA Program Specialist **Brent Curtis**. “Her commitment to her community and work to help Pilger residents rebuild homes that are safe and compliant with flood plain issues is impressive.”

Director Updates

Several director changes have recently been announced among county emergency management agencies.

Roger Powel and Brandon Myers have added counties and are coordinators for new regions. Sheriff Sean Carson (not pictured) is director of Logan County Emergency Management and Justin Norris is director for Phelps County. Region 15 has been disbanded.

A complete [directors list](#) can be found on the NEMA website.



Roger Powell
Coordinator
Region 17
Furnas, Gosper
and Frontier



Brandon Myers
Coordinator
Region 51
Dundy, Hitchcock,
and Lincoln



Justin Norris
Director
Phelps County



Jon Rosenlund of Hall County will speak on sustaining a teen CERT at the National CERT Conference in Los Angeles in September.



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Governor Pete Ricketts

State Homeland Security Director

Lt. Governor Mike Foley

NEMA Director

Major General Daryl Bohac

Assistant Director

Bryan Tuma

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

The Beacon is published six times a year and includes emergency management news and activities from across the state. Please forward story ideas or photos for inclusion to:

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Tampa response agencies participated in a joint air and water rescue exercise for the National Homeland Security Conference on the Hillsborough River, which showcased specialized training and resources for a joint response on area waterways.

Homeland Security Conference ... Continued from Page 4

NEMA's Preparedness Section Manager **Nikki Weber** and Grants Unit Supervisor **Julie Mayers** attended the conference along with **Phyllis Dutton** of the Omaha Metropolitan Medical Response System.

Presentations included: port infrastructure and protection from the Tampa Bay Port Authority; lessons learned in the Colorado theater

shooting from the Aurora Police Department chief; terror attacks from the San Bernardino, Calif. police chief; commu-

nity resilience as the 15th Anniversary of 9/11 approaches, from the former commissioner of the New York City Fire Department, an update on lessons

learned from the Paris attacks from the Embassy of France Police attaché and a FEMA/DHS update on policies, guidance and grant funding from a FEMA administrator.

A highlight of the conference was an opera-

tions demonstration by local first responders of equipment purchased with Homeland Security grant funds.



Conference Focuses on Whole Community Preparedness

The Nebraska Preparedness Conference held in South Sioux City, Aug. 12-13, brought volunteers, emergency management professionals, public officials and others together to focus on whole community preparedness.

Attendees participated in a workshop on how to identify and use various community organizations to strengthen partnerships and enhance community preparedness efforts. The course highlights the importance of working with the whole community to ensure spontaneous volunteers are effectively used during and after a major disaster.



Top left: Dakota County Commissioner Scott Love addresses the conference.

Bottom left: Participants process volunteers through a volunteer reception center simulation that was part of the Managing Spontaneous Volunteers in a Disaster training that was included in the conference.