

# NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Strength.

A Review of August 2017



# The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



Prepared  
for a  
Total  
Eclipse





More than 13,000 people were at Homestead National Monument near Beatrice for the eclipse. Traffic before the eclipse was headed west in the morning in order to find the perfect viewing spot. **Photos provided by Nebraska State Patrol.**



Providing information to the public was an important part of the state's preparedness and response to the eclipse. Clockwise from top left, public information staff work in the Joint Information Center on Aug. 21; **Jeni Campana** of the Department of Transportation, updates State Emergency Operations Center staff on the day of the eclipse; and NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma updates the media at a news conference on state preparations for the eclipse.

**On the Cover**, Clockwise from left, a picture of Nebraska roads during the eclipse by **Clint Mangan** of the Nebraska Department of Transportation; **Gov. Pete Ricketts** tries on his eclipse glasses at a news conference on the eclipse, also pictured are Earl Imler, NEMA Operations Section manager and John Ricks, executive director at the Nebraska Tourism Commission; the SEOC on the day of the eclipse and the view of the eclipse through clouds outside of NEMA.



## 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.*

**Nebraska support Hurricane Harvey Response** – When a storm as devastating as Hurricane Harvey hits one of our states, American’s start working together to support one another. Even before the storm struck land in Texas, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency officials monitored the system and began preparing for activation of state assets to support Texans in their response. The impact of flooding following this hurricane was more than any one state could handle, even one as big as Texas. Through the national Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAC), a mutual aid agreement between states, Texas officials were able to make requests for resources from other states to allow a response that would not be possible without the EMAC mechanism.

Initially, Nebraska Task Force One, a national type 1 urban search and rescue team out of Lincoln Fire and Rescue, received a call to head to Houston. Then, on Monday, Aug. 28, the Nebraska National Guard was able to provide air support for rescue missions and relief efforts in Houston by sending UH 60 Blackhawks, CH-47 Chinooks and UH72 Lakota helicopter. The Nebraska National Guard also deployed a 44-person medical team on Sept. 2 to provide emergency medical assistance to the ongoing Hurricane Harvey relief operations. The deployment is primarily made up of Airmen from the Nebraska Air National Guard’s 155th Medical Group in Lincoln.

Nebraska state agency officials met in the State Emergency Operations Center at NEMA on Monday to discuss Nebraska’s support of the response to the hurricane after **Gov. Pete Ricketts** asked that state agency staff work together to support Texas. Daily conference calls are continuing as state agencies continue to developing plans on how they could support the impacted areas. We will continue to monitor EMAC requests closely and working with other Nebraska State Agencies on providing needed assistance to Texas as long as it’s needed.

**Eclipse Preparation** – While the focus in the last week has been on Hurricane Harvey, the first part of August had NEMA focused on preparation for the eclipse and the tens of thousands of people it would bring to the state. Nebraska was a prime location for viewing the country’s first coast-to-coast solar eclipse in 99 years and the concerns about traffic, wildfire and severe weather were real. All-in-all, it was a successful exercise of our plans and procedures during a real event.

**Disaster Recovery** – Meanwhile, work on the disaster declaration for storms in June continued. Applicant briefings for DR 4325 were completed and projects will be written.

**September is National Preparedness Month** – As I write this, Hurricane Irma, a category 5 hurricane is forming in the Atlantic. National Preparedness Month has begun and all this severe weather can only serve to remind us how important it is to remain prepared.



Photo by WRMcPherson



Many thanks to the photographers who contributed eclipse photos including the pictures on this page: **Bill McPherson** of Thayer County’s eclipse photo, **Russ Reno** of the Department of Health and Human Services shot of his family enjoying the eclipse, downtown Lincoln photos by **Holly West** of the Office of the Chief information Officer, a compilation eclipse photo by a Game and Parks Commission photographer. **Alma Beland** of Region 26 and sunset from the north, east and south of Joint Forces Headquarters at 1:05 p.m. by **Molly Bargmann** of NEMA.





Representatives of Nebraska State Agencies meet in the State Emergency Operations Center on Aug. 28 to discuss how Nebraska could support the Texas response to Hurricane Harvey.

## How to Help Survivors of Hurricane Harvey

When disaster strikes, Nebraskans are quick to ask: “How can I help?” NEMA offers the following advice for Nebraskans who want to support Texas residents affected by Hurricane Harvey.

“We always try to promote the message that cash is the best option,” said NEMA Assistant Director **Bryan Tuma**. “Pick a reputable organization and send funds to be used for what is needed most. Instead of sending a case of water to people in need, it is much cheaper to donate money to a charitable organization who can use the funds to purchase a pallet of water that can be sent using an already established transportation and distribution network to get the supplies to where they are needed most.”

Donating specific household items to disaster survivors can create a burden on responding agencies, as they must collect, sort, clean and distribute items. Send money instead and let volunteers continue working to provide direct services to survivors. Remember:

- Send money, not physical items.
- Money goes further to provide direct assistance to those in need.

- Donated money can be used to purchase items in the affected areas and contributes to the area’s economic recovery.
- Seek out local Citizen Corps programs to receive disaster prep training.
- Take steps now to plan ahead for a disaster. **Prepared communities = resilient communities.**

Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) has a web page with information on volunteering or donating to relief efforts for people affected by Hurricane Harvey.

It also includes a link for corporate in-kind donations. Please visit: National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) website. The Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (Texas VOAD) has a list of vetted disaster relief organizations providing services to survivors. Texas VOAD represents more than three dozen faith-based, community, nonprofit and non-governmental organizations.

The American Red Cross currently has more than 30,000 volunteers, from all over the country, working to provide shelter and comfort to people impacted by the storm.

You can help people affected

by Hurricane Harvey by visiting [redcross.org](http://redcross.org), calling 1-800-RED CROSS or texting the word HARVEY to 90999 to make a \$10 donation. Donations enable the Red Cross to prepare for, respond to and help people recover from this disaster.

Register to volunteer with a voluntary or charitable organization which are already in Texas supporting survivors. The National VOAD and Texas VOAD websites are offering links to those who wish to register to volunteer with community- and faith-based organizations working in the field.

Another important reminder for people who want to help: do not self-deploy to a disaster site and expect to volunteer. Volunteers must first contact a local disaster response organization to see if they are sending volunteers to impacted areas.

“It is important to make arrangements before arriving at a disaster to volunteer,” Tuma said. “Showing up unexpectedly may result in you being turned away by law enforcement. Volunteer safety is important and people arriving without a specified assignment, safety gear and valid identification creates problems.”

# Emergency Managers, CAP Support National Guard's Operation Drake

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and local emergency management agency staff worked as the resource tracking unit in support of the Nebraska National Guard full-scale Operation Drake exercise, Aug. 25-28, at the Mead Training Site, Camp Ashland and in Auburn.

The National Guard's Chemical Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP), the Missouri National Guard's Homeland Response Force (HRF), Missouri Task Force 1 and other state and local agencies conducted the major disaster response exercise.

The exercise, which included 675 Soldiers and Airmen from the Nebraska and Missouri National Guard, was designed to test the guard's ability to respond to a domestic emergency involving an explosion and the possible release of hazardous chemicals that would overwhelm the local civilian first responders' capabilities.

The exercise included search and extraction operations located within a rubble pile at the Mead training site as well as chemical decontami-

nation and medical triage efforts.

NEMA and local emergency manager's, as well as Civil Air Patrol cadets in the 155th Composite Squadron, rapid-tagged responders and equipment involved in the exercise. Rapid tag identifies each participant and provides a way to track their movement and accountability entering and exiting the incident site.

Using the Salamander System, the resource unit tracked the 675 participants and 163 pieces of equipment over the course of the exercise and documented more

*Continued on next page*



**Roger Conrad** of NEMA directs exercise participants through the check-in process.



**Sean Runge** of NEMA checks in Drake Exercise participant.

## Resource Unit Support for the National Guard Exercise

### Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)

Roger Conrad  
Sean Runge  
Larry Fichtner

### Lincoln/Lancaster County EMA

Mark Hosking

### University of Nebraska-Lincoln Police Department

Shannon McVaney

### Fillmore County EMA

Jim Dunker

### Cedar County EMA

Kevin Garvin

### Richardson County EMA

Tylene Windle  
Emily Scribner

### Nemaha County EMA

Renee Critser  
Brandon Ruediger

### Wayne County EMA

Nic Kemnitz

### Saunders County EMA

Terry Miller

### City of Winnebago/Winnebago Tribe EMA

Matthew May

### 155 Composite Squadron Civil Air Patrol (CAP)

Celeste Marie Burgess  
David K. Burgess  
Jessica A. Burgess  
Soni L. Cochran  
Josiah K. Franklin  
Joseph P. Graae  
Andrew Thomas Guilford  
Matthew K. Guilford  
Patrick D. Kirwan  
Joplyn Victoria Marker  
Connor Mininni-Herndon  
Frederick Montgomery  
Thomas F. Pflug  
Samuel A. Pineda  
Michael Vincent Reuss  
Harrison J. Robbins  
Eric Mitchel Sterling Robertson  
Ronald E. Robertson  
Jacob W. Rusk  
Steven R. Sutton  
Carter Gerome Weddell

### 155 Civil Engineering

MSgt. Tom Guilford  
SrA. Ryne Packett  
SSgt. Reiny Dickhaut  
SSgt. Thomas Hermansen  
SSgt. Natalie Nason  
SrA Amy Wahlmeier  
SrA Tyler Dirksen



NEMA's **Sean Runge** and University of Nebraska Police Department's **Shannon McVaney** check-out exercise participants and equipment.



Evening operations were facilitated by the NE ARG CBRNE trailer and light capabilities concluding Sunday evening at 10:30 p.m. Lincoln/Lancaster County emergency management deputy **Mark Hosking** along with NEMA's **Roger Conrad** and **Sean Runge**.



NEMA's **Larry Fichtner**, **Roger Conrad** and **Sean Runge** create rapid tag identification cards for members of the Missouri Task Force 1.



**Terry Miller**, Saunders County Emergency Management director, uses his cell phone to check-in soldiers using the Salamander tracking app.

than 36,000 participant hours and more than 9,000 equipment hours.

"There is no way we could have completed our mission tracking so many hours without the support of the local emergency managers and the Civil Air Patrol cadets," said **Sean Runge**, NEMA exercise training officer. "This was a great opportunity to bring in current users of the system and completed just-in-time training."

The team also documented remotely the hours of staff working in the Joint Operation Center at the Joint Forces Headquarters.

NEMA training and exercise unit staff have been working with the National Guard exercise design team since Dec. 2016 to prepare for the exercise.



The Missouri National Guard Homeland Response Force advanced party checks in at Auburn on Aug. 24.

# NEMA Encourages Everyone To Be Prepared Disasters Don't Plan. You Can!

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency is proud to join and promote the campaign to spread the word and encourage Nebraskans to know their risk, take action, and be prepared. Disasters don't plan. You can!

We all need to be leaders for emergency preparedness.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the [Ready Campaign](#), [PrepareAthon!](#) and The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are teaming up again to highlight the importance of preparing for disasters before they strike.

"Take time during the month of September to learn what hazards may impact you, taking action by making a kit and having a plan, and become an example where you live by sharing your actions," said NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma. "Taking preparedness actions can save lives and protect property anywhere at home, in schools, in your neighborhood, and

in the workplace."

In 2017, there have been [many weather and climate disaster events](#), each with losses exceeding \$1 billion. These events included a drought, floods, severe storms, wildfires, and a hurricane. Overall, these resulted in the deaths of over 100 individuals and had significant economic effects.

**Know your risk:** Learn what hazards pose a risk where you live and work and their potential impact on you, your loved ones, and your community. Once you understand your risk, you are better equipped to take preparations. You can learn more about hazards in your area by talking to local officials or going to [Ready.gov/Be-Informed](#). The National Weather Service has a great website explaining the basics of Disasters at [Weather-Ready Nation](#) and [eye-opening statistics](#).

**Take action:** Develop an [emergency plan](#) and practice how and where you will evacuate if instructed by your emergency management

officials. Post your plan in your home where visitors can see it. You can also take action with America's [Pre-prepareAthon!](#) by using the [hurricane, tornado, flood, winter weather](#) playbooks to conduct drills, group discussions, and exercises.

More information on preparedness can be found on the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency in the [Are You Ready](#) section.

Information on the different types of hazards is available at [Ready.gov](#) or the Spanish-language web site [Listo.gov](#).



*The FEMA App contains disaster safety tips, interactive lists for storing your emergency kit, emergency meeting location information, and other disaster-specific information. The app is free to download through your smart phone provider's app store on Android and Apple devices.*



## Nuclear Power Plant Drill Hones Coordinating Agencies' Staff Skills

Emergency Support Function representatives **Joe Francis** and **Dale Busch** from the Department of Environmental Quality and **Shuhai Zheng** of the Department of Natural Resources along with **Phyllis McCown** of NEMA receive an operational brief during the Cooper Drill Aug. 15 at the State Emergency Operations Center at NEMA. State agencies and other partners work with Nebraska Public Power staff and counties officials to coordinate a response to an incident.

**Troy Harris, Nazy Chiniforoushan** and **Dave Reisen** of NEMA work on exercise control during a Cooper Nuclear Power Station drill, Aug. 15. "Drill and exercises help prepare us for an actual event," said **Brian Folts**, technical hazards unit supervisor. "Drills and exercises increase our ability to coordinate amongst county, state and federal agencies that would respond to an actual incident."

## Disaster Assistance Work Underway for 18 Nebraska Counties

State and federal emergency management officials are coordinating with Nebraska communities to jump-start disaster assistance approved by **President Donald Trump** in the wake of severe storms and tornadoes that battered parts of the state from June 12 to June 17.

“We have hit the ground running and are reaching out to local governments to get the disaster-assistance process started,” said **Bryan Tuma**, assistant director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). “We know how important it is to help our communities financially with storm costs as soon as we can.”

The major disaster declaration, approved Aug. 1, makes financial assistance available to state, tribal and eligible local governments, as well as certain private, non-profit organizations in 18 Nebraska counties. The declaration helps to pay certain costs associated with storm-related emergency measures and permanent repairs to publicly-

owned buildings and infrastructure caused by the June 12-17 storms. Assistance to individuals and businesses is not available through this declaration.

The 18 eligible counties are: **Banner, Box Butte, Butler, Cass, Cuming, Dodge, Douglas, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Morrill, Platte, Polk, Sarpy, Saunders, Sheridan, Sioux, Thurston, and Wayne.**

Federal hazard mitigation assistance is also available statewide and helps pay for measures that will reduce or prevent future disaster damage.

NEMA officials scheduled applicant briefings where representatives from local governments learned how the program works, the types of clean-up and repair work that are eligible and the documentation needed to receive financial assistance.

Work begins now on detailed calculations to identify scopes of work and eligible costs to restore public infrastructure to its pre-storm condition.

“We are partnering with NEMA and working hard to help Nebraska communities recover, and to make sure that they are receiving all the state and federal assistance that they are eligible for,” said **Dolph Diemont**, FEMA’s federal coordinating officer.

The aid is provided under FEMA’s Public Assistance Program, which helps defray certain storm-related costs incurred by governmental entities for things such as: debris removal from public areas; emergency protective measures taken by public safety entities including police and fire departments, damage to public buildings, equipment, parks, roads, bridges and utilities.

Public Assistance money comes in the form of a grant that is awarded to the state on a cost-share basis.

The federal portion is 75 percent, the state and local governments pick up the remaining portion of the total cost. The federal money is a grant that does not need to be paid back.



*Recovery Section Manager Donny Christensen updates applicants at a Sarpy County applicants briefing. It was one of six briefings scheduled to provide information on applying for assistance for communities that incurred damage from severe storms, tornadoes and straight line winds, June 12-17.*



*Disaster Procurement Training provided by FEMA was offered in four Nebraska locations during August.*

## **Disaster Recovery Procurement Training Updates Nebraska Officials**

Reducing applicant violations of federal procurement regulations was the goal of four training sessions taught by the FEMA Procurement Disaster Assistance Team (PDAT).

Participants included state and local government personnel (clerks, treasurers, city/county attorneys), school districts, public health departments, emergency management personnel, and private non-profit entities

The PDAT attorneys within the FEMA Office of Chief Counsel

trained and advised the attendees on federal procurement requirements. They also worked with Public Assistance programs to provide guidance to recipients and sub-recipients on the federal procurement requirements and provided general guidance regarding concerns with proposed recipient or sub-recipient procurement actions.

The four-hour classes were offered in Bellevue, Columbus, North Platte and Bridgeport, Aug. 28-31.

"The information taught in these four-hour sessions is crucial for

our local entities to know and understand the rules of procurement, so that they follow the right procedures and are not at risk of losing money after their project is complete," said **Mary Baker**, NEMA state hazard mitigation officer.

Violations of the federal procurement requirements can result in reduced federal grant funding.

The training focused on the requirements set forth in uniform rules that all federal grants must adhere to for compliance. All four of the sessions were well-attended.

# Planning Presentation

NEMA's hazard mitigation and planning unit staff presented information on the local emergency operation plan as well as the hazard mitigation plans for the State of Nebraska to University of Nebraska-Lincoln students in **Dr. Zhenghong Tang's** Hazard Mitigation Planning course on Aug. 29 in the State Emergency Operations Center at NEMA. **Patrick Rooney and Mary Baker**, presented. The 17 students are studying to become community and regional planners. In addition, to the presentation, the students were given a tour of the facility to spark interest in the field of emergency management.



Heavy rain and flooding created a challenge for the City of Seward's water department, Aug. 20 as a water main break left the town without water just as citizens were preparing for eclipse viewing. The flooding was a result of a thunderstorm with heavy wind and rain.

# ICYMI | SOCIAL MEDIA

In case you missed it

Not sure who to follow on Twitter? [Check out the lists NEMA curates or follows.](#)

Check out the following video message from Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac on the Nebraska National Guard's ongoing Hurricane Harvey relief operations.



<https://www.facebook.com/NebraskaNationalGuard/>



Nebraska Task Force One (@NE\_TF1) in action rescuing people after #Harvey. So far, our search & rescue teams have rescued 3800+ survivors.



12:50 PM - 31 Aug 2017

Sarpy County EMA @SarpyEMA · 17h

The Tri-County CERT is out in force for tonight's monthly training.

@Tri\_County\_CERT @NE\_CCP @neiaedcross @NEMAtweets @femaregion7 #Sarpy



Other links of note:

**Nebraska National Guard**  
<https://www.facebook.com/NebraskaNationalGuard>

<https://twitter.com/nenationalguard>

**Nebraska Task Force One**  
<https://www.facebook.com/NebraskaTF1/>  
<https://www.instagram.com/netf1/>  
[https://twitter.com/NE\\_TF1](https://twitter.com/NE_TF1)

# Historical Marker Installed at Verdel Landing in Knox County

A historical marker was installed at the Verdel Landing commemorating the 2011 Missouri River Flooding. A red marker was placed on the pole to the right of the sign stamped "2011 Flood" to indicate the high-water level during the flood of that year.

The Nebraska Silver Jackets, a program of state and federal agencies that develops strategies for reducing risks of floods and other natural disasters, gave the historical marker sign to Knox County for placement in its flood disaster area.

The sign reads: "June 30, 2011. On this day, the Missouri River reached a crest of 29.12 feet at Verdel Landing. The entire area was inundated, including the homes. Homes were destroyed, some rebuilt, and some replaced at higher elevations to meet floodplain regulations. The 2011 flood broke records for the location."

**Liz Doerr, (pictured at left)** the Knox County Zoning and Floodplain administrator, along with **Laura Hintz**, Knox County Emergency Management director, applied for the free historical marker. Shortly after the flood, **Kevin Barta**, Knox County Highway superintendent erected several of the red markers, stamped 2011 Flood, at various locations along the river in the area as a reference mark to show the flood level.

Doerr said that all the homes in the area were impacted in some way by the flood. There were some that were not substantially damaged and were allowed to be repaired. Those homes that were substantially damaged were allowed to be rebuilt or replaced if they could meet the requirements of the floodplain regulations. Many of the homes were replaced at higher elevations than required in order to further protect them in the event of another flood.

To learn more about the Missouri River's flood history and how you can protect your family, visit [floods.nebraska.gov](http://floods.nebraska.gov).

For more information on the Floodplain Regulations, contact Liz Doerr, Knox Co. Zoning and Floodplain Administrator, at 402-288-5618.



**NEBRASKA**  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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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 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](mailto:jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov).

[www.nema.nebraska.gov](http://www.nema.nebraska.gov)

