

November 2011



# The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



## In This Issue

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| 2 | Mardell Hergenrader Honored                         | 5 | State Preparedness Report Meeting                            |
| 2 | Cindy Newsham, Deb Kai Earn Years of Service Awards | 3 | Joint Information Center Staff Participate in Media Training |
| 3 | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Update                 | 6 | NEMA Hosts PSIC Grant Working Session                        |
| 3 | Nebraska Flood Recovery Information                 | 7 | Training Exercise and Planning Workshop Held                 |
| 4 | Basic Academy Held in Kearney                       | 7 | Training Opportunities Offered                               |



## Hergenrader Recognized as Supervisor of the Year for Nebraska Military Department

Mardell Hergenrader was recognized as the 2011 supervisor of the year for the Nebraska Military Department during Employee Recognition Month

in October. Hergenrader and other honorees received awards from Gov. Dave Heineman in a ceremony at the Capitol on Oct. 27.



NEMA Assistant Director Al Berndt, Maj.Gen. Judd Lyons and Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy, recognized Mardell Hergenrader at a State Employee Appreciation Luncheon for the Military Department.

In addition, Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy, Major General Judd Lyons and NEMA Assistant Director Al Berndt recognized her at a state employee appreciation luncheon for the Military Department which also included years of service recognition award for Military Department staff.

Hergenrader has managed the grants division for the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency from its inception and has continued to grow as her division has grown in staff, cope and responsibility.

“Mardell has developed an outstanding professional rapport with both her team, and all staff within the agency,” said Berndt. “She is known as someone who gets things done.”

Berndt said Hergenrader seeks out training opportunities for both herself, and her staff and has worked to develop all the people on her team.

“She sets high performance standards for both herself and her team and consistently achieves them,” Berndt said. “She truly demonstrate the highest values of the Nebraska Military Department and is very deserving of this recognition.”

Hergenrader joined the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency in March 1989 as a secretary.

## Newsham, Kai Honored for Years of Service

Cindy Newsham, administrative assistant III for Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) was recognized at a state employee appreciation luncheon for the Military Department for her 25 years of service with the state.

Deb Kai, business manager III was recognized for 10 years of service to NEMA.



Kai

“Cindy and Deb are valuable NEMA staff members who go above and beyond in their daily work to contribute to the success of the agency,” said Al Berndt, NEMA assistant director.



NEMA Assistant Director Al Berndt, Maj.Gen. Judd Lyons and Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy, recognized Cindy Newsham at a state employee appreciation luncheon for her 25 years of service to the State of Nebraska.

# US Army Corps Commits to Flexible Water Releases

Omaha, Neb.— The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently concluded eight open house sessions and public meetings in cities throughout the region to listen to the concerns of citizens as part of the Annual Operating Plan development.

“The past two weeks have been incredibly beneficial, and we have listened intently to the people we serve,” said **Brig. Gen. John McMahon**, northwestern division commander. “The top priority of the Northwestern Division is to responsibly prepare for the 2012 runoff season.”

The Corps will change its approach to Missouri River Mainstem operations as a result of the public meetings. First, the Corps will assume a more flexible posture as water is evacuated through the system for the remainder of the fall and early winter.

“We will get as much water out of the system as possible as weather permits and the repair work allows,” said Jody Farhat, chief of the water management division.

Second, the Corps will take an aggressive stance with winter and spring releases. Third, the Corps will communicate more frequently and more broadly as the 2012 season unfolds. Farhat will conduct bi-monthly conference calls. During those calls, the dialogue will continue with federal, state, county and local officials, Tribes, emergency management officials, independent experts and the press to discuss conditions on the ground and current Corps’ reservoir release plans and forecasts. Audio files of the conference calls will be widely available.

A primary concern raised in the public meetings was the Corps’ strategy to only evacuate water from the reservoir system back to the designed amount of flood control storage.

“We set the target in late July as an initial first step to safely draw down historic releases in time for people to get back into their homes, farms and businesses, and for the Corps and state agencies to begin making repairs as quickly as possible,” said McMahon.



The reservoir system was designed with 16.3 million acre feet of flood control storage, which equates to approximately 22 percent of the storage in the reservoir system. Given record runoff, the Corps has initiated a technical analysis to determine how much more reservoir space might be reserved for flood control purposes.

“The ongoing independent external review will yield additional insights into how we might manage the system better, both near and long term,” McMahon said. “It is important that we take a holistic approach to operating the reservoir system, an approach that is based on science and engineering, good data and considers the fragility of the system and the ongoing efforts to make critical repairs to get ready for 2012.”

Comments on the draft plan were taken during the series of public meetings. Written and email comments will be accepted through November 25, 2011. Email comments should be sent to: [Missouri.Water.Management@nwd02.usace.army.mil](mailto:Missouri.Water.Management@nwd02.usace.army.mil).

View daily and forecasted reservoir and river information on the Water Management section of the Northwestern Division homepage at <http://www.nwd-mr.usace.army.mil/rcc>.

The final version of the Annual Operating Plan is expected to be complete by the end of December.

# Disaster Recovery

“We have transitioned from response to recovery on this year’s disasters,” said Earl Imler, response and recovery supervisor at the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

All applicant briefings are completed on disasters [4013](#) (flooding) in 16 counties and [4014](#) severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds and flooding in 12 counties.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has completed the majority of its kick-off meetings, Imler said.

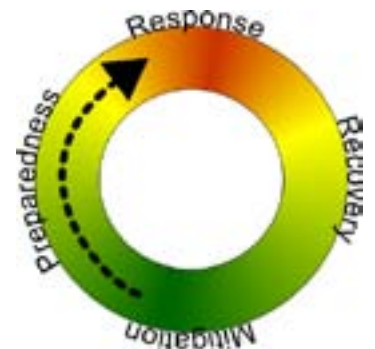
“Projects are being formulated,” Imler said. “We are discussing applicable mitigation projects. We are also addressing whether we can leave flood control measures in place for next spring.”

Gathering information on 4013 has been a longer process and that process will continue into winter, he said.

In addition, NEMA continues to work on 14 other open disasters. The large number of disasters is one of the reason NEMA added two full time staff in Hazard Mitigation and public assistance, Imler said.

“We’re moving along and everything is progressing as it should,” Imler said.

Public assistance estimates for damage from flooding are in excess of \$150 million. Individual assistance has exceeded \$3.7 million and small business assistance has exceeded \$3.6 million.





# NEMA Offers Basic Academy

Basic Academy, a week-long focus on emergency management, was presented in Kearney the week of Oct. 24-29. It included sessions on the history of emergency management, local and state emergency operation plans and National Incident Management System.

Coursework also included weather spotting, individual and public assistance hazard mitigation grant management, an emergency managers panel discussion and public information officer awareness.

Emergency management work is just one part of the Basic Certification Program as the academy is designed to build professional relationships between emergency managers from across the state.



Graduates of the Fall 2011 Emergency Management Basic Academy are: front from left, Juan Jimenez, Shea Scollard, Mary Baker, Molly Sumpler, Tim Stutzman, Justin Norris; back row, Chad Boshart, Alison Fiociello, Donny Christensen, Sandy Weyers, Ron Leal, and Eric Van Horn. Not pictured: Mikki Nienhueser



Dave Reisen discusses operation and management of an Emergency Operation Center.



Eric Plautz of Douglas County, Jim Gerwick of Richardson County and Clint Strayhorn of Johnson County give an emergency managers panel discussion



Nikki Weber discusses grant programs through NEMA.



NEMA 's Aaron Alward talks about Emergency Operation Centers.



Timely and accurate information is a must says Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl.



## ***State Preparedness Meeting Held in Lincoln***

Members of the state planning team, representatives from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Public Policy Center, local emergency managers and first responders met on Nov. 9 in Lincoln to complete the State Preparedness Report.

The report is required in order for the state to be eligible to receive homeland security grant funds.

The state planning team consists of representatives from state agencies as well as the American Red Cross.



## **Media Training**

Mark Becker (above, left) of Nebraska Public Power delivers a workshop on communicating with the Media. NEMA Joint Information Center staff, Jodie Fawl and Angela Hammond attended the training and took a tour of Cooper Nuclear Station led by Chuck Comstock (above, right).





Lt. Frank Peck of the Nebraska State Patrol demonstrates a PSIC-funded communication tower featuring real-time video to the NEMA Ops Room.

## NEMA Hosts PSIC Grant Working Session

NEMA hosted a working session and site visit related to the Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) grant, Nov. 17.

PSIC is an \$8.5 million grant, funded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and jointly administered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The federal representatives were **Daniel Meyerson** of NTIA and **Jennifer Salerno**, a Booz/Allen/Hamilton

Associate responsible for the National Environmental Policy Act/Environmental requirements associated with the grant.

They were accompanied by FEMA's Program Analyst **Corey Walz**. The visit included reviews of PSIC related grant files, overview and status updates on PSIC grant projects, spending status on each of the projects, Nebraska's conformance with NEPA/environmental regulations and implementation status

of the Strategic Technology Reserve.

**Lt. Frank Peck**, commander of the Nebraska State Patrol air wing, demonstrated the PSIC funded GTA 24 antenna by providing real time video to the NEMA operations room of the PSIC-funded communications tower in Sidney.

**Alisia Lamay** and **Chad Boshart** demonstrated the Paraclete system while communicating with Loup and Phelps counties diverse systems.



Alisia Lamay, right, discusses the Paraclete system as part of a working session with federal representatives on Nov. 17.

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## Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

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**Governor Dave Heineman**

**State Homeland Security Director  
Lieutenant Governor Rick Sheehy**

**Director:**

**Brigadier General Judd Lyons**

**Assistant Director:  
Al Berndt**

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* is published monthly to share news about the agency and emergency management activities throughout the state. Forward story ideas or photos for inclusion in *The Beacon* to:

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# The Beacon — November 2011 Annual Training, Exercise and Planning Workshop held Nov. 2 in North Platte

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) staff, state agency staff and representatives from all eight of the Planning Exercise and Training Regions met Nov. 2 in North Platte to establish a multiyear training and exercise plan for the state of Nebraska as a requirement of the Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP).

"Basically, the TEPW is a completion of the previous year's state strategy and target capabilities to make sure progress is being made toward

regional directives," said Dave Reisen, exercise and training supervisor.

The product that comes out of the workshop is the state's multi-year training plan.

"We had a contractor who facilitated the workshop through the regional exercise support funding," said Reisen. "The format was greatly enhanced."

Participants completed a survey prior to the workshop.

Once the multi-year training document has been finalized it will be posted on the NEMA website sometime during December, Reisen said.

## Training Calendar

Course	Date	Location	Contact	More Info
ICS 300	Dec. 5-7	Lincoln	Dave Reisen 402-471-7177 <a href="mailto:dave.reisen@nebraska.gov">dave.reisen@nebraska.gov</a>	<a href="#">Flyer</a>
Advanced Planning Concepts	Dec. 8-9	Omaha	Dave Reisen 402-471-7177 <a href="mailto:dave.reisen@nebraska.gov">dave.reisen@nebraska.gov</a>	<a href="#">Flyer</a>
Risk Communications	Jan. 10, 2012	Mid-Plains Course Community College North Platte	Jon Schwarz 402-471-7420 <a href="mailto:jon.schwarz@nebraska.gov">jon.schwarz@nebraska.gov</a>	<a href="#">Flyer</a>
Modular Emergency Response Radiological Transportation Training (MERRTT)	Feb. 8, 2012	Omaha Public Safety Training Facility 11616 Rainwood Road	Jon Schwarz 402-471-7420 <a href="mailto:jon.schwarz@nebraska.gov">jon.schwarz@nebraska.gov</a>	<a href="#">Flyer</a> <a href="#">Brochure</a>
Modular Emergency Response Radiological Transportation Training (MERRTT)	Feb. 9, 2012	Omaha Public Safety Training Facility 11616 Rainwood Road	Jon Schwarz 402-471-7420 <a href="mailto:jon.schwarz@nebraska.gov">jon.schwarz@nebraska.gov</a>	<a href="#">Flyer</a> <a href="#">Brochure</a>
Modular Emergency Response Radiological Transportation Training (MERRTT)	Feb. 10, 2012	Omaha Public Safety Training Facility 11616 Rainwood Road	Jon Schwarz 402-471-7420 <a href="mailto:jon.schwarz@nebraska.gov">jon.schwarz@nebraska.gov</a>	<a href="#">Flyer</a> <a href="#">Brochure</a>

Visit the NEMA Website at: <http://www.nema.nebraska.gov/preparedness/training-calendar.html> for other training opportunities