



The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

August 2012



In This Issue

Page

- 1-2 Fire Watch Continues Throughout Nebraska
- 3 Cooper Nuclear Station Holds Evaluated Exercise
- 4 NEMA Offers Basic Academy
- 5 Second Annual CERT Conference Held in Grand Island
- 6 NEMA Moves to New Offices
- 7 Hazard Mitigation Deadline Approaches
- 7 Emergency Communication Workshop Held

Cover Photo

Back burn at Region 24 Complex fire eliminates fuel.

For more 2012 Nebraska Fire pictures visit NEMA's fire album at:

[Facebook Fire Album](#)

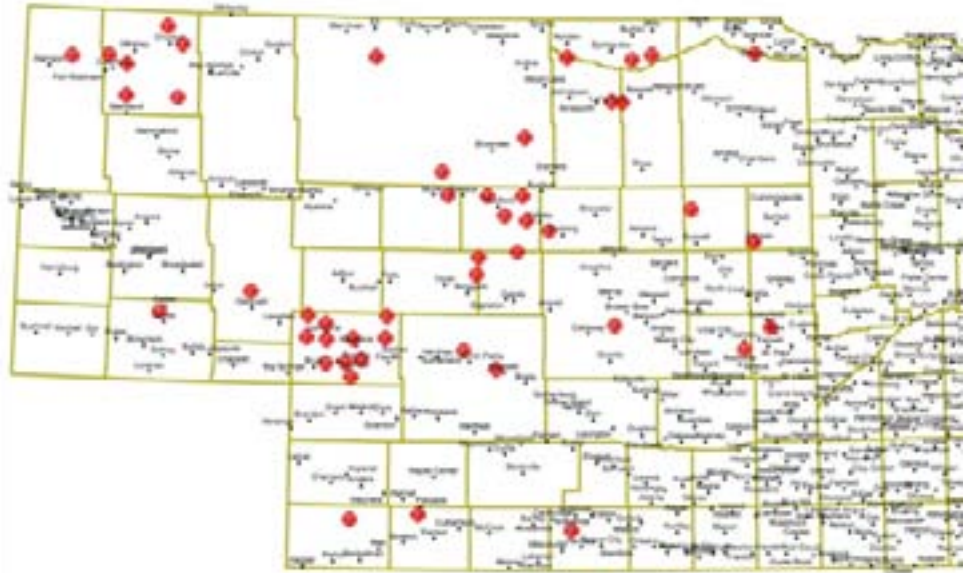
State of Nebraska Remains in Fire Watch

An active fire season — according to a wildfire report from the Nebraska Forest Service there were 131 wildfires reported in the state during June alone — the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) activated a fire watch to monitor fire conditions and activity across the state. The State Emergency Operation Center is open daily from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. with NEMA duty officers on call overnight to monitor calls from local emergency managers.

When the fires broke out in Brown County in the Niobrara River corridor, NEMA was actively monitoring the situation in terms of acreage actively burning; number of volunteer fire departments being requested for mutual aid, and the commitment of state resources, reports Al Berndt, assistant director of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

“Drought conditions mean we’re in a fire watch until fall,” Berndt said. “Gov. Heineman requested the upgraded alert level following his state of emergency declarations because of the drought.”

Four teams conducted Preliminary Damage Assessments for Boyd, Brown,



From June 19 to July 31 there were 48 wildfires in Nebraska.

Cherry and Keya Paha counties from Aug. 14-17 for the fires that burned more than 75,000 acres in north central Nebraska from July 20-29.

More than \$4 million was spent for emergency protective measures in the area. An Incident Management Team was hired because the fire situation surpassed state capabilities.

In addition to NEMA the following state agencies responded: National Guard, Department of Roads, State

Fire Marshal, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Agriculture, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Nebraska Forest Service and Nebraska State Patrol. More than 100 volunteer fire departments provided mutual aid to the Region 24 fire, including three departments from South Dakota.

For more fire pictures visit NEMA’s fire album at:

[Facebook Fire Album](#)



Lighters in Front of the Flame

Members of the Sawtooth Interagency Hotshot Crew of the United States Forest Service out of Idado light a fire to reduce unburned fuels .

Photo by John Roads caminosfire.com



Firefighters Use Foam for Structure Protection

Region 24 firefighters and private vendor Caminos Fire of Lemmon, Ariz. engage in structure protection using foam.

Photo by John Roads caminosfire.com

Plume Phase Exercise Evaluated



Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Joint Information Center (JIC) staff participate in an evaluated exercise at the Nebraska Public Power District JIC on July 31 as NEMA Assistant Director Al Berndt, right, reviews a news release in his role as the Governor's Authorized Representative.



NEMA's Bryan Cook, radiological emergency preparedness planning and training specialist, left, and Nemaha County Sheriff Brent Lotmann participate in the second day of the exercise on Aug. 1.



From left, Emergency managers Renee Critser of Nemaha County and Jim Gerweck of Richardson County speak with George Hanssen of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture at the Cooper Nuclear Station evaluated plume phase exercise in Auburn Aug. 1.



Above: Nebraska PIO Jodie Fawl, left, answers FEMA evaluator Cara Christianson Riley's question during the second day of the exercise.

Left: Technical Hazards Section Manager Jon Schwarz, left, asks Department of Health and Human Services staff (from left, Brian Miller, Dr. Robert Fairchild, Howard Shuman, and Jim Defrain) a question during day two of the exercise.



State Hazard Mitigation Officer, Sheila Hascall, discusses hazard mitigation at Basic Academy.



Public Assistance Unit Supervisor Donny Christensen provides information on public assistance.

NEMA Offers Basic Emergency Management Certification Course

Basic Academy, a week-long focus on emergency management, gave 23 participants from across the state a close up look at emergency management in Nebraska.

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency Basic Certification Course was held Aug. 13-17 in Lincoln and

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.

“Emergency management training is just one part of the Basic Certification Program,” said Dave Reisen, supervisor of the Exercise Training Section. “The academy also helps build professional relationships between emergency managers from across the state.”



August 2012 Basic Academy participants include: from left, Scott Zager, Nicholas Bentz, Julie Mayers, Dan Guenther, Stan Heyne, Sr., Dennis Ocken, Darren Lewis, Chuck Chase, Pam Reichert, Jacob Blunt, Horace (Trip) Spiller, Michelle Evert, Tyler Holmes, Brandon Loy, Eric Sergeant, Taylor Price, Eric Hunsberger, Steve Collins, Loren Uden and Kelly Alexander. Not pictured: Tom Guilford and John Bryan.

Nebraska CERT Conference

by Ryan Lowry, State Citizen Corps Coordinator

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers from across the state came together to participate in a series of trainings and exercises at the Second Annual CERT Conference in Grand Island, Aug. 17-18.

The Nebraska Citizen Corp Council, in conjunction with Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, held the conference at the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer. More than 25 volunteers attended the conference, representing Grand Island, Scottsbluff, Lincoln, Hastings, Beatrice, Wymore, Kimball, Bushnell, Mead, Hebron, Gering, Mitchell and Clay Center.

The purpose of the conference was to highlight the value of training for CERTs around the state. Unfortunately, there are not always resources, such as funding or man-power, available to participate in a full-scale exercise that simulates an actual disaster or emergency. It is also very labor-intensive to set up a full-scale exercise. However, there are many other options available for volunteers to train with their CERT. The goal for this year's conference was to show volunteers and volunteer leaders different options for training which come at little or no cost and are easy to put together.

In a table top exercise, participants were given a scenario (a tornado touches down in a small town) and were asked how they would proceed to assist first responders. Because participants were talking their way through the scenario, they were able to raise questions, discuss ideas and get feedback from others. The purpose of this exercise, beyond understanding how their CERT would respond in a disaster, was to show them that training does not always have to take place in the field or require hours of preparation. It can be as simple as gathering around a table and walking through a scenario.

Attendees split into five teams on the second day of the conference to conduct a series of 'skills tests'. These included: basic first aid, triage, basic search, communication/incident command and cribbing. Each team was given 30 minutes to complete their skills test before moving on to the next station. After, teams gathered to discuss what they did well and where they see room for improvement. Here again, the goal was to show volunteers ways to stay active with training without having to go through scarce resources to put it together.

The Nebraska Citizen Corps Council and Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

recognize all of the hard work these volunteers put in to ensure they are prepared to respond to any disaster or emergency. Our hope is that volunteers were able to return with a host of ideas to share with other CERT members in their community. Training with your team can be as simple as gathering around a table or as complex as setting up a full-scale exercise.

See more pictures on the

[NEMA Facebook page.](#)



CERT Volunteers begin their skills test in "Railroad Town" at the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer.

Photo by Wayne Svoboda



CERT Volunteers practice basic first aid.

Photo by Wayne Svoboda



Points of Contact

Tri-County/Dodge

Vacant

United Way of the Midlands Director
1805 Harney St.,
Omaha, NE 68102
402-522-7930

Southeast Region

Wayne Svoboda – Director

Volunteer Partners
215 Centennial Mall S, Ste. 340
Lincoln, NE 68508
402-441-7441

director@volunteerparkers.org

East Central Region

Tim Hofbauer – Director

City of Columbus\Platte County
Emergency Management
2610 14th St., Columbus, NE 68601
402-564-1206

pccem@megavision.com

North Central Region

Lynn Beland – Director

343 G St.,
Burwell, NE 68827
308-214-0790

beland@nctc.net

South Central Region

Jon Rosenlund - Director

City of Grand Island/Hall County
Emergency Management
100 E. First St.,
Grand Island, NE 68803
308-385-5362

jonr@grand-island.com

Panhandle Region

Jessica Davies

Wellness/Volunteer Coordinator
Panhandle Public Health District
808 Box Butte Ave.,
Hemingford, NE 69348
308-487-3600

jdavies@pphd.org



NEMA Moves to New Offices at the Joint Forces Headquarters

Clockwise from top left: moving day in the Bunker; the truck is loaded; staff offices in new facility; NEMA mail room, Nikki Weber's office, an outside view, the operations room, and NEMA staff on moving day.
NEMA phone numbers are the same and the NEMA address will remain the same until the Nebraska Military Department mail room moves.

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Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

www.nema.nebraska.gov

(402) 471-7421

Toll Free (877) 297-2368

Fax: (402) 471- 7433

Governor Dave Heineman

State Homeland Security Director

Lieutenant Governor Rick Sheehy

Director: Major 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 and includes emergency management news and activities from across the state. Forward story ideas or photos for inclusion to:

Jodie Fawl

Public Information Officer

1300 Military Road

Lincoln, NE 68508

(402) 471-7428

jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov



Nov. 10 Deadline for Hazard Mitigation Applications Approaches

Federal disasters DR-4013-NE and DR-4014-NE have been granted an extension for mitigation applications to be submitted.

Nov. 10 is the new deadline for hazard mitigation applications.

“Don’t let this opportunity pass you by,” said **Sheila Hascall**, state hazard mitigation officer. “If you haven’t had time yet to work on mitigation projects please take this opportunity to potentially get a project funded.”

First priority for funding are the jurisdictions affected by the flooding in 2011.

For more information on the priority of projects please see the Administrative plan on the NEMA website.

Contact NEMA hazard mitigation staff for applications or assistance with the development of an application:

sheila.hascall@nebraska.gov

miranda.rogers@nebraska.gov

Planning funds \$1,245,589	Initiative Project funds \$889,707	Regular Project funds \$15,658,844
Mitigation Plan Development	Emergency Generator (Critical Facility)	Wind/Tornado Safe Room (Community)
Mitigation Plan Update	Reverse 911	Wind/Tornado Safe Room (Residential)
	Tornado Siren	Property Acquisition (Buyout)
	Siren Remote	Property Relocation
		Property Elevation
		Flood Diversion



Barb Sturner of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Region VII offices gives a presentation for Public Information Officers on Aug. 22 at the Governor’s Mansion in Lincoln. The training event was sponsored by the Governor’s Communication Office, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and focused on emergency communication.