



July 2012

The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



Fires in North Central Nebraska

Drought Conditions Provide Prime Environment for Fires

“Coordination and good communications will be the key to a successful day,” said Incident Commander Mark Hatcher at a morning briefing Monday (July 23).

Hatcher leads the Rocky Mountain Incident Management Team B which arrived to assist state and local fire-fighters in three counties to suppress the Fairfield Creek and Wentworth fires in north central Nebraska.

Approximately 50,000 acres were mapped by infrared flight as of 6 a.m. Active burning has been observed on the east and west flanks. Crews were able to burn out pockets of fuel on the northeast corner to reinforce dozer lines. Firefighters will work on lines in all areas of the fire in anticipation of the expected dry, hot, windy weather.

The weather outlook shows hotter weather with dry winds gusting up to 25 miles per hour near the fire area. A heat advisory is in effect until 9 p.m. on Tuesday and a Red Flag Warning is in effect for winds and low relative humidity.

Four Divisions have been established for managing the fire:

- Division C (northwest): Springview Fire District, Keya Paha County
- Division E (northeast): Springview Fire District, Keya Paha County
- Division H (southeast): Ainsworth Fire District, Brown County
- Division A (southwest) Cherry County Fire District

Air Operations: Aircraft will be available as needed.

Road blocks will be in place on Highway 12. Motorists are asked to find alternate travel routes.

Voluntary evacuations are still in place for Meadville.

Niobrara River is closed for recreational use between the county Line and Brewer bridges.

Dry lightening storms were responsible for the start of many fires reports NEMA Assistant Director **Al Berndt**

“We will be in a fire watch until the fall,” he said.



Photos by Laura Vroman of the Valentine Midland News

Clockwise from top: the town of Norden, after the triangle area is the Dance Hall, along with all the burned area around Norden; the fire after National Guard Helicopters dumped a load of water with a “Bambi bucket”. Bottom Left: the Dance Hall and Fairgrounds in Norden; is the reservoir between Norden and Springview where national Guard crews are collecting water; the Norden Dance Hall and Fairgrounds.

FIRE STATS AT A GLANCE:

Start Date: July 20, 2012

Containment: none reported

Cause: Lightning

Acreage: 50,000

Personnel: 150

Crews: 3 ordered

Cooperating Agencies: Brown, Keya

Paha and Cherry Counties, State of Nebraska

Aviation: (3) Type (1) National Guard Black Hawks, and 1 Type 2

Engines: 30

Injuries: 3 (minor)

Structures destroyed: 10 and associated outbuildings



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On this page: Above: A Northern Natural Gas employee extinguishes a propane fire in seconds: Left, Norfolk firefighters discover that use of a fogline that takes more time to put the fire out.

Bye Bye BUNKER



The days are numbered for the “Bunker” as the State Emergency Operations Center and the offices of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. The agency move is scheduled to begin on July 27 and hopefully NEMA and its staff will be settled in by the first part of August. While the physical location for the agency will change, including the public assistance section, the current mailing address and phone numbers for staff members will not.

As we get ready to leave, it seems appropriate to reflect on the space NEMA has called home. Situated in a flood plain 20-feet underground, the 8,500-square-foot facility, was first occupied on Jan. 31, 1963. The concrete box of heavy construction at 1300 Military Road in Lincoln, is being replaced by new offices in the Joint Forces Headquarters Building on the Nebraska National Guard Airbase. NEMA staff members are busy filling boxes in preparation for the move at the end of July. Constructed for \$388,000 as a protected location where state government could operate during an emergency, the “underground capitol” was supplied with food, water, bunk rooms and two generators.

In our excitement to move to the new facility, staff will always have fond memories of the Bunker— it has served NEMA and the citizens of the state well as an integral part of our emergency response system.

It should be noted, as the drought continues to bear with us across the state, that state and local emergency managers will continue to see more pressure placed upon us. We well know the demands that have already appeared from increased wild land fire response for our fire departments along with aerial suppression of wild land fire. Now would be a good time to pull out the Governor’s Guide to local elected officials and review requests for state support. Also in this issue will be the new guidelines that will be added for hazardous material response. For both wild land fire and hazardous material response there are responsibilities for local emergency managers to fulfill when requesting state support. The drought is now showing local water systems that are under stress. This would be a good opportunity to meet with water operators to review their emergency operations plans and your agencies abilities to support should they need to be enacted.

It continues to be a privilege to work with and support each of you in your roles as local emergency managers. In the very new future as soon as we are in the new building I hope everyone will have occasion to visit and appreciate the new NEMA facility.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Al Berndt".

Al Berndt, Assistant Director



LEPC Holds Annual Workshops

Local Emergency Planning Committee LEOP workshops in Norfolk and York during June and July focused on emergency planning and response.

In both workshops, pipeline preparedness was an important topic. In Norfolk a live burn showed the most effective way to control, manage and monitor a pipeline emergency.

Scene safety was the focus in York according to **Gary Petersen**, emergency manager for Seward and York counties.

“The public should be aware that there are hazardous materials out there,” he said, “whether they are in local pipelines, on the railroad tracks or onboard trucks rolling along the

highways of Nebraska.”

Presenters noted that 99 percent of pipeline incidents are third-party related, for example somebody digs in the wrong place and ruptures a line.

Public safety was at the top of the list for topics discussed.

Norfolk Fire Department Chief **Scott Cordes** said preventative measures for all types of hazards are important.

“We will continue to train for events we hope will never, ever happen,” he said.

Leo Larkin, a planning specialist with NEMA, discussed Local Emergency Operation Plans which are maintained and reviewed every five years for com-

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Ryan Lowry of NEMA discusses Citizen Corps and Medical Reserve Corps.



Tonya Ngotel of NEMA welcomes participants to the LEPC Workshop in Norfolk on June 28.

Integrated Public Alert and Warning System Will Save Time When Time Matters Most

by Alisia LaMay,
NEMA Planning Specialist

On June 26, 2006, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13407 (Public Alert and Warning System) stating:

"It is the policy of the United States to have an effective, reliable, integrated, flexible, and comprehensive system to alert and warn the American people....and to ensure under all conditions the President can communicate with the American people."

In response to this order, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has established the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, (IPAWS) which uses the current alert and warning infrastructure to save time when time matters the most. Protecting life and property is the priority with IPAWS.

This is not a mandatory system and it does not replace existing alert methods, it adds new capabilities to a number of already operational systems. Some of the added capabilities with IPAWS are listed beginning below.

- IPAWS will allow the President of the United States to speak to the American people under all emergency circumstances, including situations of war, terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other hazards.
- IPAWS will enable federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local alert and warning emergency communication officials to access multiple broadcast and other communications pathways for the purpose of creating and activating alert and warning messages related to any hazard impacting public safety and well-being.

- IPAWS will reach the American public before, during and after a disaster through as many means as possible.
- IPAWS will diversify and modernize the Emergency Alert System.
- IPAWS will create an interoperability framework by establishing or adopting standards such as the Common Alerting Protocol.
- IPAWS will enable alert and warning to those with disabilities and to those without an understanding of the English language.
- IPAWS will partner with NOAA to enable seamless integration of message transmission through national networks,

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency has filed the application to acquire a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), which is the first step in getting IPAWS access to the state and shortly thereafter, all of the counties as well.

Nebraska uses Paraclete software, which is IPAWS compatible and free under our current contract with Interop Solutions.

NEMA will be testing its use upon approval of its MOA application. After NEMA receives approval and has tested and implemented the program, it will then demonstrate and test for all interested Nebraska counties.

If a county is interested in using the IPAWS program at that time, NEMA will open it up for applications for use. NEMA is in the beginning stages of the IPAWS addition and will provide more information when it becomes available. Until then, questions or concerns, can be directed to NEMA at 402-471-7421.

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munities across the state.

"Read and use your plan," Larkin said. "It is not a door stop."

Exercise and Training Supervisor Dave Reisen, discussed his program.

"What do we exercise?" he asked. "We exercise the plan. Test the plan, test the participants to be better prepared."

NEMA's **Tonya Ngotel**, SERC coordinator, said this was first time the LEPC conference was set as mini workshops instead of one large conference.

"We were able to expand our audience as a result," Ngotel said. "Evaluations were positive with participants reporting they especially liked the hands on experience."



Norfolk Fire Department Chief Scott Cordes addresses workshop participants.



Dave Reisen of NEMA talks about exercise and training.



Mark Lohnes of the Department of Environmental Quality speaks in Norfolk.

Panhandle Region Holds Exercise

*Submitted by Jerry Bretthauer,
Region 22 Director*

The Panhandle Region held a full scale exercise in mid-June to evaluate emergency response procedures, identify areas for improvement and achieve collaboration.

Participants included: Panhandle Region Medical Response System, the Regional West Medical Center, Region 22 Volunteer Reception Center and the Special Needs Population access for Regions 21, 22, and 23.

The exercise focused on incident management, communications, volunteer management and donations as well as citizen protection evacuation and shelter in place.

Region 23 reviewed and assessed its Emergency Operation Center activation and staffing procedures as well as tested communication with emergency management staff and partners.

Region 22 tested its volunteer reception Center in Scotts Bluff County Health Department.

According to Jerry Bretthauer, director, the objectives were to:

- Set up a volunteer reception center when asked to do so by the Region 22 emergency management director



- Determined if the volunteers understand their job functions and how to organize the Volunteer Reception Center to process spontaneous volunteers in response to a disaster

- Ascertained if the Volunteer Reception Center personnel had the ability to process spontaneous volunteers with various backgrounds and personnel job choices.



Register Now for Second Annual Nebraska CERT Conference

by Ryan Lowry, State Citizen Corps Coordinator

- The Nebraska Citizen Corps announces the Second Annual Nebraska CERT Conference. This conference will bring CERT volunteers from across Nebraska to the city of Grand Island where they will receive training and participate in a series of exercises that will put their skills to the test!
- This year, our focus will be on the importance of training and exercising with your CERT. Attendees will participate in a table-top exercise as well as several small-scale functional exercises geared to engage CERT members in tasks they would find themselves performing during a disaster or emergency. We will also bring in speakers who will talk about the importance of exercising as a team, and ways to train even if your organization has limited funds.
- The conference will take place in Grand Island, at the Stuhr Museum, August 17-18.



Registration for the conference is open through July 31 for those needing a hotel room. However, CERT members may register up until the day of the conference if no lodging is required. If you would like to register for the conference, please fill out the form at: https://unl.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eeWH35JbejYtCok.

For more information or to register, contact ryan.lowry@nebraska.gov



Hall County CERT members participate in an exercise at the Stuhr Museum in Grand Island this spring.



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@volunteerpartners.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

The Beacon

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 in The Beacon to:

Jodie Fawl

Public Information Officer

1300 Military Road

Lincoln, NE 68508

(402) 471-7428

jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov



Changes Made to Governor's Guide

Effective Aug. 1, the Governor's Guide has been revised. Statute, 81-829.42 (6) will allow the Adjutant General to make expenditures of up to \$10,000 per event without a state of emergency proclamation issued by the governor when aerial fire suppression or hazardous material (HazMat) response is immediately required.

Like the successful Aerial Suppression Program, the incident commander (IC) has the responsibility of keeping track of the on-going cost of a HazMat Team's response before the accumulating cost nears \$10,000.

The IC will make the decision to either release the HazMat team or secure a local disaster declaration, notify their local emergency manager and NEMA of that Declaration and request a state declaration. It is important for the IC to be aware that if there is a local declaration and a request for a state declaration, there is no guarantee of a state declaration. **It is the responsibility of the IC to manage the time and cost the HazMat team on scene.**

Any costs exceeding \$10,000 incurred prior to a governor declaration will be the responsibility of the requesting department.

Costs exceeding \$10,000 will be the responsibility of the local jurisdiction unless all three of the following conditions have been met:

- NEMA has been advised of the need for the HazMat team to remain at the scene;
- A local declaration of emergency has been declared; and,
- The Governor's Office approves continued funding of the response by issuing a Proclamation of a State Declaration of Emergency.

The notification of the governor's approval can be made verbally with the paperwork to follow but the approval for continued use of the Governor's Emergency Fund must be made before the threshold is met in order for it to be paid by the Governor's Emergency Fund.

Like the "Yellow Book" for the Aerial Suppression Program, NEMA has developed a plan to ensure proper activation and documentation of the Hazmat Team process. The plan, a check in/checkout form and the Governor's Guide to Public Officials are available on the NEMA Website:

[Hazardous Materials Assistance](#)

[Check in/Checkout Form](#)

[Governor's Guide to Public Officials](#)

Incident Commander Responsibilities

After requesting a HazMat team, the local incident commander or designee must:

1. Advise NEMA of the request.
2. Advise local emergency manager that a HazMat team was requested
3. Request that the local EM complete and send an Incident Status Report (ISR) to NEMA.
4. Complete a check-in sheet which includes the HazMat team's time of arrival on scene, personnel by name and vehicles by type.
5. Request an approximate cost per hour from the HazMat team leader and keep track of the dollars obligated.

The ICs responsibilities for demobilization include:

1. Complete the check out portion of the check in/checkout form including time of demobilization.
2. Record the time of departure of each element including personnel names and vehicles
3. Receive, review and approve the HazMat team's bill and mail it to Nebraska Emergency Management Agency c/o the Response and Recovery Section Manager along with a copy of the check in/checkout form.

If NEMA does not receive all the required documentation, then NEMA will not be able to reimburse the HazMat team. Payment will become the responsibility of the requesting local jurisdiction.



Emergency Management Profession

Basic Academy

August 13 - August 17, 2012

Lincoln, Nebraska

PROFESSIONALISM AND PRIDE

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency presents the Basic Academy, reinforcing the concept of professionalism and pride, not only for jurisdictional Emergency Managers, but also for those tasked with emergency management within a state agency. The five-day Basic Academy will focus on essential knowledge and skills needed to become a successful Emergency Management Professional.

REGISTER NOW

Basic Academy will be held at the Platte Room of the Lincoln Heights Hotel, 1301 W. Bond Circle, Lincoln NE. Lodging will be provided by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency for those traveling over sixty miles.

IS-1, IS-100, and IS-700 are prerequisites to attend the Basic Academy. These courses may be downloaded and completed through the Emergency Management Institute website at <http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp>

Space is limited, applications will be accepted in the order they are received, all applications must be submitted by July 30, 2012.

Subjects covered include:

- The EM Profession
- Homeland Security Grants
- Mitigation
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Emergency Management Handbook
- Individual Assistance
- Public Assistance
- Local and State Emergency

“Nebraska is ahead of the game by providing the Basic Academy. Structured much like FEMA’s Emergency Management Institute classes, this course is not only useful for someone new to emergency management, it is great for someone new to Nebraska, like I was. Every emergency manager and agency representative active in the EOC should complete this course.”

-Jon Rosenlund
City of Grand Island/Hall County
Emergency Management

“A great learning experience and a good overview of Emergency Management.”

- Paul Johnson
Douglas County
Emergency Management



Nebraska Emergency Management Agency
1300 Military Road
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

Course Contact:
Chuck Chase
(402) 471 - 7178
chuck.chase@nebraska.gov