



March - April 2012

The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



In This Issue

Page		Page	
1	Governor Dave Heineman honors winners in the annual Severe Weather Poster Contest. Also see pages 3-4	8	Citizen Corps
2	A Letter from the Assistant Director	9	Hazard Mitigation Update
5-6	Nebraska Association of Emergency Management Conference	9	NEMA Training Update
7	Radiological Emergency Preparedness Activities	10	Nebraska Hazmat Symposium
		11	Model City
		11	Investment Justification workshop
		12	Severe Weather

Storm Season in Nebraska



Our yearly guest arrived early this year. Yes, spring storm season is upon us. Our first tornado watches and warnings came early -- all the way back in February. National Weather Service staff indicated it was the first February tornado recorded in Nebraska. We had tornado touchdowns during March in Lincoln and Cherry counties, and of course, our guest isn't yet prepared to leave and is planning on sticking around for April with even more watches and warnings across the state.

This year's Severe Weather Awareness Week proclamation ceremony was well attended and featured **Gov. Dave Heineman** who declared March 19-23 as the annual awareness week. The cooperation of the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management (NAEM), Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the National Weather Service saw the completion of another successful poster contest. Mark your calendars for next year's Severe Weather Awareness Week -- March 24-29.

In March, **Dave Reisen**, NEMA's exercise and training supervisor, and I attended the Northeast Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO) meetings in Norfolk. It is always good to get out into the state and meet with local directors. I was not surprised that a good portion of the meeting was occupied talking about the issues that continue to surround the training and credentialing of weather spotters. I addressed the issue at the NAEM convention in Grand Island. For the record I'd like to reiterate what we talked about:

- The legislation that went forward and enacted the changes within the Nebraska Emergency Management Act was not introduced or testified either in support of or against by NEMA.
- The law, 81-829.67, says NEMA "shall develop training, identification, and credentialing standards for a storm spotter or emergency management worker." It also states "for purposes of this section, storm spotter means an individual who performs weather spotting services as an employee or a volunteer of a local emergency management organization and who has been credentialed by NEMA under this section".

I have heard it argued "my emergency management agency" is not responsible for storm spotters, or we don't have volunteers or someone else does "storm spotting". I would strongly suggest a reading of 81-829.37 Purposes of the Emergency Management Act and the policy of the state, especially section three (3) and then refer to 81-829.39, Terms, defined, sections (4) and (5) which define what is Emergency Management and what is considered an Emergency Management worker.

In support of what I have stated above, NEMA and the National Weather Service, through **Brian Smith**, have put together a training and credentialing program that developed a system to get an individual trained, identified and credentialed as a "storm" and/or an "emergency management worker". The responsibility for alert and warning resides at the local governmental level; local emergency managers need to have a conversation with their elected officials on the following questions:

1. Will we train employees or volunteers for storm spotting and if so, how?
2. Will credentialed storm spotters be used?
3. Who activates and is the controlling authority for spotters and storm spotting?
4. What, if any, are the requirements for lighting on vehicles used by storm spotters?

Sheriff and Wayne County Emergency Manager, Leroy Janssen probably said it the most eloquently when he stated "some laws give us authority and some laws give us responsibility." Now is the time to consider this with your elected boards and make a decision on how your storm spotting and emergency management programs are going to integrate together and proceed forward in light of the state statute changes.

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

**Al Berndt, assistant director
Nebraska Emergency Management Agency**



Pictured from left, Brian Smith, National Weather Service, Matthew Guilford, first place, with Doug Ahlberg, Lancaster County Emergency Management; Kalie Glendy, second, (Custer County emergency manager Shawn Owens, not pictured) Madalyn Crouse, third with Bill McPherson, Thayer County Emergency Management, and Alice Arnold, fourth with Mark Meints, Gage County Emergency Management, Al Berndt, NEMA, and Lynn Marshall, Sarpy County Emergency Management and the then NAEM president.

Four posters were selected as winners in the annual Severe Weather Awareness Week Poster Contest sponsored by the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service.

Matthew Guilford, 10, a home schooled student from Lincoln, earned first place with his poster: "Be Weather Ready." He cautioned "stay in the house away from windows" during a lightning storm, "take shelter, lie low and cover your head" during a tornado, "go to high ground" during flooding and "stay inside and keep warm" during a blizzard.

The contest was open to fourth grade students in Nebraska. The top four finishers were recognized by Nebraska **Gov. Dave Heineman** at a proclamation signing for Severe Weather Awareness Week at the State Capitol

on March 14.

The contest is part of Nebraska-Severe Weather Awareness Week -- March 19-23 which is observed to increase awareness of and response to severe weather hazards.

Kalie Glendy, 10, of Broken Bow, student at Callaway Public School, earned second place for her tornado poster "Look Out! Here I Come." **Madalyn Crouse**, 10, of Chester, a Thayer Central student finished third. Her message was "If You See It Blowin', You Better Get Goin'." Fourth place was awarded to **Alice Arnold**, 10, of Blue Springs, a Southern Elementary School student. Her poster "Better Safe Than Sorry" outlined tornado, lightning and flooding safety practices.

Posters were judged on originality, effort and accuracy. The top prize is a \$200 gift card. Each of the winners re-

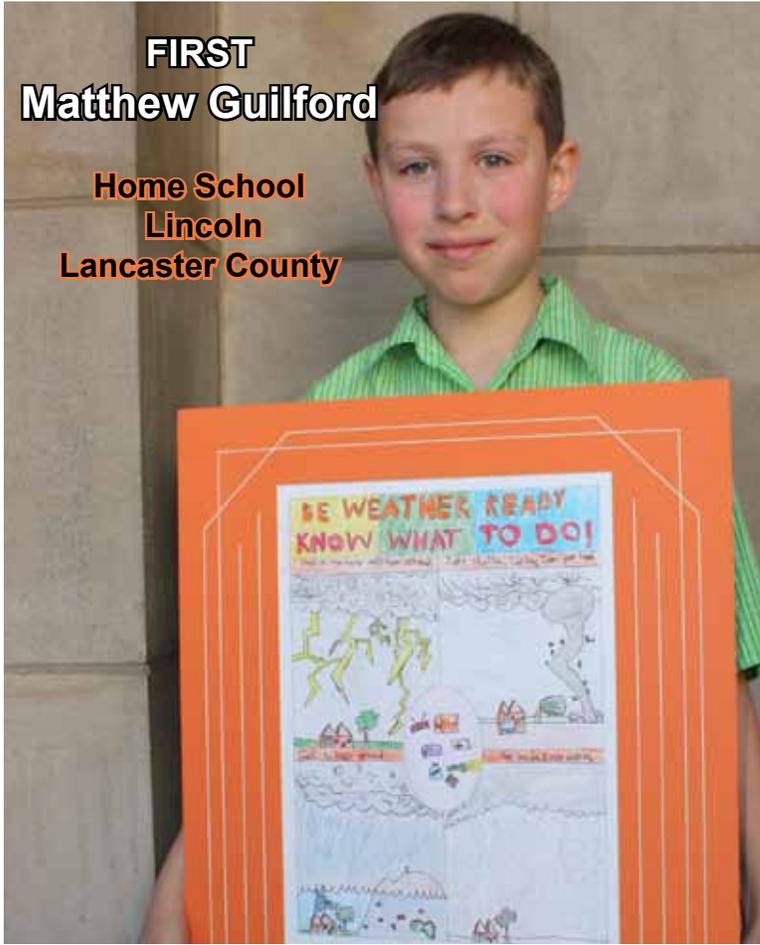
ceived a Weather Alert Radio courtesy of B.J. Fictum, Saline County Emergency Management director.

Honorable mention certificates were awarded to:

- Judith Alvarez**, Dakota City Elementary
- Austin Haussler**, Overton Public
- Claire Hookstra**, Southern Elementary, Wymore
- Alex Jarecke**, Stuart Public
- Dominic Markvicka**, St. Paul Elementary
- Nico Sepahpur**, Rousseau Elementary, Lincoln
- Sheridan Swanson**, Arthur County Elementary
- Lauren Trauernicht**, Southern Elementary, Wymore
- Kendal Wilson**, Giltner Public
- Aiden Wortman**, Hartington Public

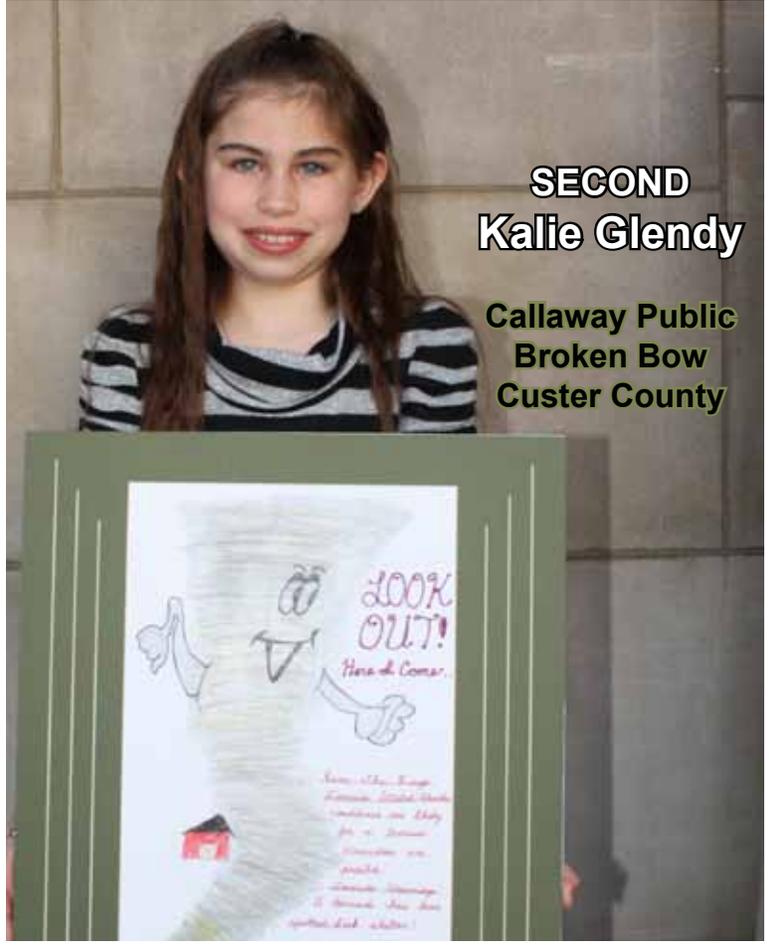
FIRST
Matthew Guilford

Home School
Lincoln
Lancaster County



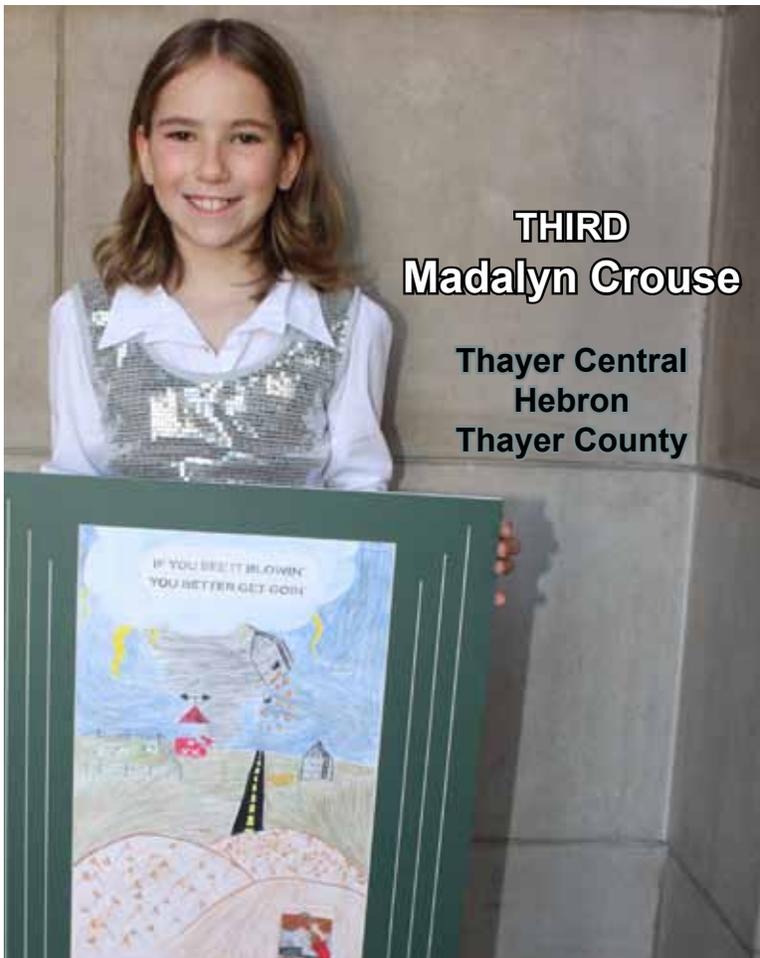
SECOND
Kalie Glendy

Callaway Public
Broken Bow
Custer County



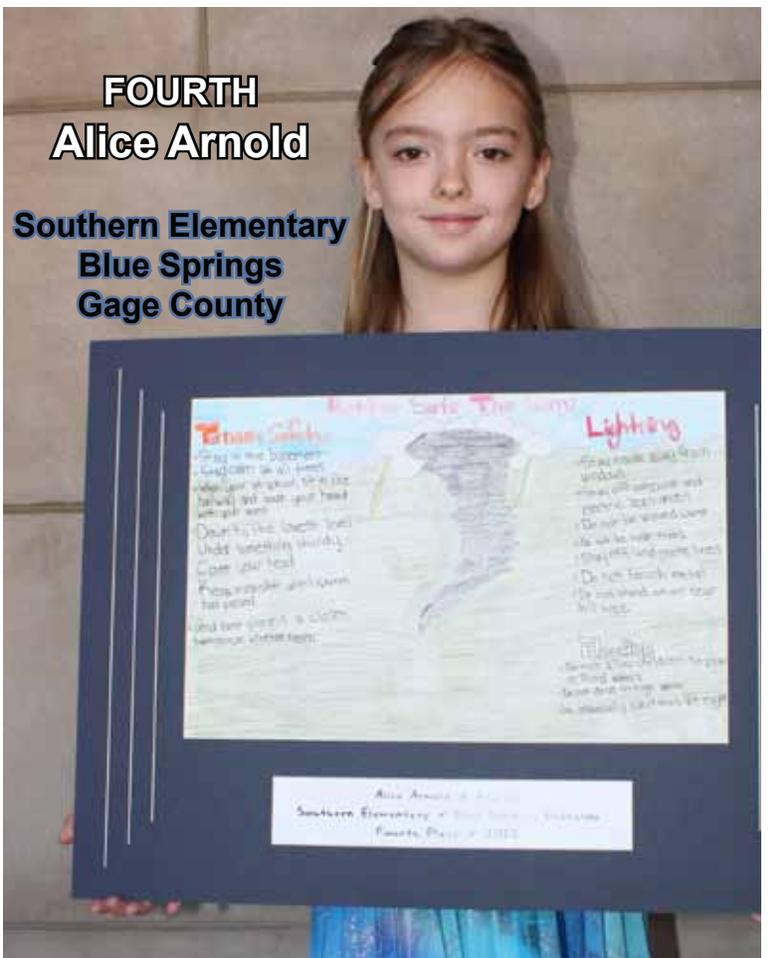
THIRD
Madalyn Crouse

Thayer Central
Hebron
Thayer County



FOURTH
Alice Arnold

Southern Elementary
Blue Springs
Gage County



Nebraska Association of Emergency Management Conference

The annual Nebraska Association of Emergency Management Conference April 12-13 in Grand Island gave emergency managers across the state the opportunity to hear speakers, visit displays and recognize their colleagues for exemplary work.



Deanna Beckman of Dakota County received the gavel as president of NAEM from outgoing president Lynn Marshall of Sarpy County, who will continue as vice president.



Pete Peterson of Grant County received the award for Emergency Manager of the Year from Laura Hintz who earned a President award for service to NAEM.



Nemaha County's Renee Critzer earned one of two awards for new Emergency Manager of the year.



Johnson County's Clint Strayhorn earned a New Emergency Manager of the year award.



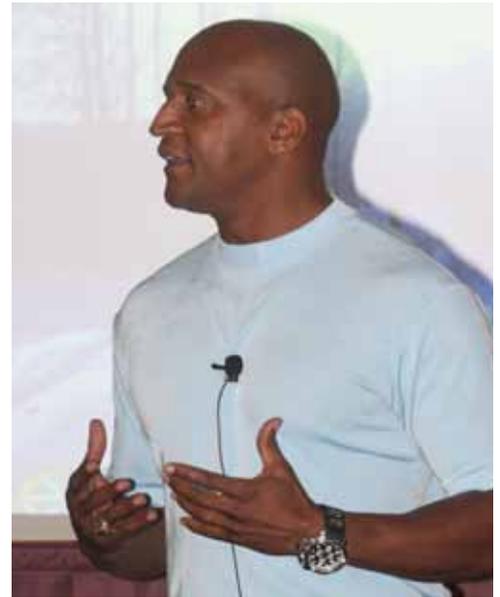
Whitney Shipley of Douglas Co. earned a President's award for service to NAEM.



Cheryl Mahacek, Boone Co. 911 director earned the Larry Nedrow Support Person of the Year Award.



NAEM pre-conference training offered by NEMA included information from Bob Wilhelm, Dan Hiller, Nikki Weber, Cindy Newsham, Alisia LaMay and Sue Krogman.



Husker champion, and motivational speaker, Aaron Davis addresses emergency managers on teamwork of a champion.



NEMA's AI Berndt gives an update at the NAEM conference.



Darrin Lewis of Buffalo County participates in a tabletop as Paul Johnson of Douglas County looks on.



A panel discussion featured Doug Fox of Region 24 as moderator, Dan Guenther of Lincoln County, Laura McDougall of Four Corners Health Department, Cindy Newsham of NEMA, Mindy Mangus of the American Red Cross, Paul Johnson of Douglas County and Vince Turpin with Benkelman Emergency Medical Services

Radiological Emergency Preparedness Activities



It's been a busy couple of months in the Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program. Including (Clockwise from above) New REP Manual training, Modular Emergency Radiological Transportation Training (MERRT) and Ingestion Pathway training.



Ft. Calhoun Nuclear Power Plant Evaluated Exercise March 27



NEMA's Al Bernt served as the governor's authorized representative at the Emergency Operations Facility in Omaha.



Amy Stroh talks with a FEMA evaluator at the Joint Information Center in Omaha.



Patrick Rooney and Ryan Lowry communicate with KFAB regarding Emergency Alert System messages.



Above: Communications Room staff at NEMA answer calls.

Left: Emergency Support Function staff work in the Operations room at the SEOC.

A Case of March AND April Madness



by Ryan Lowry
State Citizen Corps
Coordinator

Every year we gear up for March Madness – crowds of people cheering on their favorite team, watching to see who’s going to be this year’s Cinderella Story, and the inevitable heartbreak when you realize your bracket is busted and there’s no hope of winning the office pool. But what characterizes March Madness more than anything is the non-stop action that makes the month seem to fly by.



This year, Citizen Corps caught the ‘madness’ with a number of activities going on around the state and throughout the region and that activity has continued into April.

The Eastern NE/Western Iowa Medical Reserve Corps held a day-long

training at the Bellevue Fire Training Center and Bellevue West High School.

More than 80 volunteers attended and had the opportunity to get triage training and listen to speakers about Disaster Behavioral Health, cultural awareness in disaster situations, sheltering for functional needs individuals and federal disaster deployments.

Volunteers also got the chance to learn how to stage a “Points of Dispensing” (POD) area which could be used if large numbers of people needed vaccinations. Volunteers set up the POD and walked through each area to understand the role that volunteers play in the event of an emergency. The event was a huge success and was highlighted on Omaha’s local evening news stations.

At the regional level, the Federal Emergency Management Agency(FEMA) hosted a Region VII Roundtable and Youth Preparedness Workshop in Kansas City. State Citizen Corps Coordinators from Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska met with regional and national FEMA representatives to discuss best-practices at the roundtable.

A number of great ideas were shared among the coordinators and it was a good opportunity to network with FEMA and to learn more about resources available to the states. The Youth

Preparedness Workshop brought in speakers from across the country that had either started a Youth Preparedness program or integrated youth into their existing programs. It also featured break-out sessions where groups went through the steps of setting up a youth program. Again, a number of ideas were shared among the participants, and it was great to see so many who are enthusiastic about getting our youth interested in preparedness.

Finally, the Nebraska Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) hosted a booth at the 64th Annual Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians meeting in Lincoln March 29-30.

The MRC shared information about the need for volunteers from the medical profession during disasters and emergencies. This is an opportunity for the MRC to reach a large number of potential volunteers from across the state and present to them the benefits to their communities by volunteering for the MRC.

It’s been a busy start to spring for the Nebraska Citizen Corps and its partner programs. It doesn’t show signs of slowing down much either, with a number of activities planned for the coming months. Please be sure to check with your local Citizen Corps Council to see what trainings, events, or exercises are taking place near you.

Nebraska Regional Citizen Corps 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 pцем@megavision.com

North Central Region

Lynn Beland
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

Funds Availability for Hazard Mitigation

By Sheila Hascal
Hazard Mitigation Officer

The deadline for submitting projects to NEMA under disasters 4013 and 4014 is

July 12, 2012

NEMA must submit the projects the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) by Aug. 12.

There is \$17,365,177 in Federal Hazard Mitigation funds available under disaster 4013 and \$528,965 in Federal Hazard Mitigation funds available under Disaster 4014.

These funds are divided among three types. Planning (7 percent), initiative projects (5 percent) and Regular Projects (88 percent). An example of what is available under DR-4013-NE includes: \$1,215,562 set aside for Hazard Mitigation Plan development.

If you have a mitigation plan that will expire in the next year or two, consider applying for some of these funds to financially assist you in the development of the plan update.

If your community does not have,

or is not a part of a Mitigation Plan, consider applying for a grant to develop one.

Participation in a FEMA approved Mitigation Plan is required to be eligible for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds, and keeping your plan current will ensure your eligibility for HMGP funding for your projects. It is important to know your communities risks and vulnerabilities.

Regular Projects - \$15,281,355 is set aside for a variety of viable mitigation projects that meet or exceeded a Benefit Cost Ratio of 1:1.

As tornado season approaches, is your community prepared?

If residents in your community lack a safe place to go during a high wind/tornado event, consider applying for funds to assist in developing a residential or community safe room.

Any Public Power District that has historical power outages and has been considering alternative mitigation should consider submitting an application for a project, such as installation of a redundant feed, five pole dead-end structures, storm structures or even upgrading the line. Communities

considering resizing culverts or minor localized flood reduction projects are encouraged to apply for grant funds. Dry and wet flood proofing are also eligible projects for HMGP funding. Communities with at-risk structures in hazard-prone areas are eligible to apply for HMGP funds for property acquisitions (buy-outs).

Initiative Projects - \$868,258 include, but are not limited to, warning sirens, generators and reverse 911 systems. Initiative projects don't necessarily need to provide historical damage, but need to be proven cost effective and reasonable.

Mitigation's key purpose is to ensure the opportunity to take critical mitigation measures to reduce the risk of loss of life and property from future disasters. HMGP funds are to be used for projects with the purpose of reducing the impact of natural disasters on communities, so don't let them go to waste.

The mitigation staff at NEMA recognizes that the application process can be overwhelming for local jurisdictions and are available to provide technical assistance to aid in getting your applications ready for submittal.



NEMA training in April featured radio communication in the Mobile Operations Center, the Mobile Operations trailer and in the Communications Room. (Above) Patrick Rooney, Aaron Alward and Al Berndt review equipment in the Comm Room while Brent Curtis (right) demonstrates communications equipment in the MOT.



Nebraska Hazmat Symposium

March 23-24 Hastings



Equalizer Midwest of Hastings was recognized at the 2012 Hazmat Symposium. Equalizer Midwest has been a key player in training and exercising of the Hastings Fire Department and state response teams.



Ron Macaluso gives instruction during the a Hospital Radiological Emergency Response class at the Nebraska Hazmat Symposium.



Participants in the NFPA 472 Hazmat Safety Officer Class were exposed to a variety of situations in Todd Skoglund's class.



(Above and right) Don Nealy of the FBI taught Introduction to Explosives, Improvised Explosives and Current terrorism trends which included demonstrations.



Model City Exercise Simulates a Tornado in Omaha

**By Chuck Chase
Exercise Training Officer**

A model city exercise simulating a tornado in Omaha was held March 29 at the Douglas County Emergency Operating Center (EOC).

An aerial photograph depicting the affected area near S. 84th Street and I-80 was used for the exercise. Models showing appropriate vehicles, people and debris were placed on the photo to depict actual conditions found after the tornado had passed through the area. The exercise started with a list of all 911 calls and radio

communications that served as a script for the exercise.

Discussion in the exercise centered on the Incident Command System (ICS) which proved to be valuable, as much information was gleaned from the conversations that took place about how to implement ICS for this particular situation.

Interaction between the first responders, the EOC and the senior officials appeared to be orderly and beneficial.

One lesson learned was that an additional amount of time would need to

be allocated for this type of simulation. There wasn't enough time to properly carry out the simulation of ongoing events. It appeared that many participants had anticipated the hands-on simulation to take place. A follow-up functional exercise is being planned for later this year.

Comments indicated the exercise was a success. Participants indicated the exercise had enhanced their awareness of handling disasters of this magnitude as well as for the need to approach these events with a strong ICS implementation.



2012 Investment Justification Workshop

NEMA's Dan Hiller (above) and Al Berndt (right) speak to participants at the annual Investment Justification workshop which reviews how the state identifies funding priorities for the 2012 Homeland Security Grant.

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:

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:

Jodie Fawl
Public Information Officer
1300 Military Road
Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 471-7428 or
jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov



Above: A tornado in Lincoln County and (below and right) hail and flash floods in Norfolk are continuing the severe weather season in Nebraska, which started with the first tornado ever recorded during February.

