



November 2012

The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



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Cover Photo

NEMA Assistant Director Al Berndt addresses agency staff at a monthly training session.



NEMA's Jon Schwarz (third from left) was recognized for 15 years of Service to NEMA by (from left) Assistant Director Al Berndt, Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons and Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy during the 2012 State Employee Appreciation luncheon at the Joint Forces Headquarters.

Luncheon Honors State Employees

Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy and Maj. General Judd Lyons thanked state employees for their service to Nebraska during the annual State Employee Appreciation Luncheon held Oct. 30 at the Joint Forces headquarters on the National Guard Airbase in Lincoln.

Brig. Gen. Daryl Bohac was mas-

ter of ceremonies for the event that included recognition of the 2012 award recipients for supervisor and employee of the year honorees.

NEMA's Jon Schwarz, technical hazards section manager, was recognized for 15 years of service to NEMA during the event.



IPAWS

Saving time when time matters most is what the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System is all about.

IPAWS is not a mandatory system nor does it replace existing alert methods. It adds capabilities to the current system.

It will allow the President of the United States to speak to the American people under all emergency circumstances.

AND, it will reach the American public before, during and after a disaster through many

On June 26, 2006, George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13407 (Public Alert and Warning System) of the United States 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, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has established the IPAWS Program.

Integrated Public Alert and Warning System

means. It will diversify and modernize the Emergency Alert System (EAS). 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 currently uses IPAWS-compatible Paraclete software.

"We are in the process of fully testing its use in a FEMA-controlled lab," said Alisia LaMay, a planning specialist for the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. "After testing is complete and NEMA re-

ceives approval, we will begin to implement the program. We will then demonstrate and test the program for all interested Nebraska counties as well as upgrade all Paraclete boxes to 8.0 in preparation."

NEMA has applied for a Memorandum of Agreement, the first step in getting IPAWS access to the state and then to all of the counties. **Local county license holders will apply for IPAWS approval through NEMA.**

The application process includes an initial application and documentation of an IPAWS Communication Plan and Standard Operation Procedures.

An important point to consider while writing guidelines is that NEMA will not be sending out the messages. Messages will be submitted at a county level to the IPAWS Alert Aggregator, and then sent securely to the public communication pathways.

If interested in using the IPAWS program, call Alisia LaMay at 402-471-7425 to get started on the application process.

State Emergency Communications Committee Holds Quarterly Meeting

Members of Nebraska's State Emergency Communications Committee met, Nov. 1 at the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency's new offices.

Representatives from emergency management and the broadcast industry are members of the committee.

NEMA's Bob Eastwood represents the agency on the committee.

"We discussed previous and upcoming monthly Emergency Alert System tests and scheduled the monthly EAS tests for 2013," Eastwood said.

The EAS tests were scheduled for the third Tuesday of the month. During Odd months the messages are scheduled at 10 a.m. and during the even months the tests are scheduled for 11 p.m.

The EAS system went digital about six months ago, Eastwood said. The committee discussed the ups and downs of that transition.

EAS is a national public warning system that requires broadcasters, cable television systems, wireless cable systems, satellite digital audio radio service providers and direct broadcast satellite providers to provide the communications capability to the President to address the American public during a national emergency. The system also



Members of the State Emergency Communications Committee met Nov. 1 at NEMA.

is used by state and local authorities to deliver important emergency information, such as AMBER alerts and weather information targeted to specific areas.

In another agenda item, the committee considered the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) which is a planned multi-agency emergency population warning system

in the United States. IPAWS is designed to provide rapid, reliable and effective communication to the public in case of major emergencies such as natural disasters and terrorist attacks.

Jim Skinner an engineer with KPTM was re-elected chairman of the group for the next two years.

The group also toured NEMA's new facilities.



Roger Conrad (standing), an exercise training officer with NEMA, addresses Department of Environmental Quality staff on credentialing standards for staff working in the State Emergency Operations Center.

Visit

www.bereadynebraska.com

Emergency Planning for:

- Family
- Pet Owner
- Agriculture
- Senior Citizen
- Functional Need
- Business
- School
- Health Care Facility

Emergencies and disasters can strike at unexpected moments and it's important to take the time now to do some simple things to prepare for emergency situations and keep your family safe during disasters.

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 to:

Jodie Fawl
Public Information Officer
2433 N.W. 24th St.
Lincoln NE 68524
402-471-7428
jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov



Emergency Preparedness Meets the Arts!

by Ryan Lowry, State Citizen Corps Coordinator

This spring, the Lincoln based Angels Theatre Co. will be performing *What the Wind Taught Me*, a play written by **Becky Key Boesen** after she had visited Joplin, Mo. to assist with recovery efforts following the May 2011 tornado.

The play revolves around a boy and his family who try to deal with the devastation of a tornado in their town. The Lied Center in Lincoln will host the performances in March, and later in the year the play will go on tour throughout Nebraska.

I had the opportunity to meet with the playwright earlier this month. She hopes to be able to bring families to each performance so that children and their parents have an opportunity to get a better understanding of what to expect during a major disaster, and also how to work together as a family to be better prepared for such events. To help facilitate a conversation with children and their families, there will be a discussion following each performance. These discussions

will be led by emergency preparedness professionals who will emphasize the importance of family preparedness.

This play comes at a perfect time, as it comes just ahead of Severe Weather Awareness Week. The play will run at the Lied Center March 15, 16, 20, 21, 22 and 23, with two special performances just for Lincoln Public Schools students.

If you are interested in being a part of the discussion following any of the performances, please contact me at the email listed below. Nebraska Citizen Corps, emergency management professionals, counselors, volunteers and others are all welcome and encouraged to share in these discussions. The goal is to make sure that children leave with useful information that will help them deal with the difficulties following a disaster, but also to leave with tips to help them and their families be better prepared before a major event takes place.

For more information contact ryan.lowry@nebraska.gov



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