



June 2013

The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

Jefferson County Tornadoes



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Cover Photo

Damage in Jefferson County following tornadoes that struck the end of May.

Photos submitted by John McKee, director Jefferson County Emergency Management. More pictures on page 6.



Wildfire Control Act Becomes Law

Gov. Dave Heineman signed LB634 into law on June 3. Now known as the **Wildfire Control Act of 2013**, the act provides for fuels reduction, training and funding for a Single Engine Aerial Tanker (SEAT) and bases for the SEAT to operate from.

The current locations for the SEAT Bases are Alliance, Chadron and Valentine, with funding for development of one or two mobile bases.

The Nebraska Forest Service is charged with the installation of and operation of the SEAT bases, as well as implementing the fuels reduction and training portions of the act.

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) will contract for the SEAT and administratively coordinate with local incident commander's and the Great Plains Dispatch Center in Rapid City, S.D. to deploy the SEAT when needed.

Annually in December, NEMA will present a report on utilization of the SEAT to the governor's office and the clerk of the Nebraska Legislature.



From left: Jerry Stilmock, a lobbyist with the Nebraska State Volunteer Firefighters; Al Berndt, NEMA assistant director; Gov. Dave Heineman, Sen. Al Davis and Scott Josiah, state forester.

Memorandum of understandings (MOU) have been developed with the Nebraska Forest Service and State Fire Marshal's office that provides for integration of state operations in the event of a large scale fire, similar to the Summer 2012 fires which were admin-

istered through the Governor's Emergency Fund.

NEMA will administratively coordinate and support these activations.

The updated: [Governor's Guide for Public Officials is available by clicking this link.](#)

Maj. Gen. Lyons Promoted, Search for New Adjutant General Begins

Gov. Dave Heineman announced that **Maj. Gen. Judd H. Lyons**, adjutant general of the Nebraska National Guard, has been named deputy director of the



Lyons

U.S. Army National Guard.

As commander in chief of the Nebraska National Guard, Heineman will select the state's next adjutant general.

"This is great news for Gen. Lyons and speaks very highly of the quality of leadership at Nebraska's National Guard," said Heineman. "I want to congratulate Gen. Lyons on this promotion. He has been an outstanding

adjutant general. The fact that this is the second consecutive Nebraska adjutant general to become the number-two person leading the Army National Guard is a high honor for the state."

Lyons, 50, is Nebraska's 32nd adjutant general. He assumed command of the Nebraska National Guard on Aug. 23, 2009 when then **Adjutant General Tim Kadavy** was promoted to this position.

As deputy director, Lyons will be responsible for assisting the director of the Army National Guard in formulating and coordinating all programs, policies and plans affecting the Army National Guard and its more than 350,000 citizen-soldiers. He will be assigned to the National Guard Headquarters in Arlington, Va.

"It has been my honor to serve here

in the Nebraska National Guard for over 33 years," Lyons. "

As adjutant general, Lyons is director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

"It has been a privilege to lead and serve with a team comprised of uniformed members, state employees, and emergency management professionals," Lyons said.

Gov. Dave Heineman intends to name a successor by the end of summer.

To be considered, applicants must have spent at least five years as an active or retired officer of the Nebraska National Guard and attained the rank of lieutenant colonel. Those seeking more information may contact **Col. Doug Wilken** with the Nebraska National Guard at 402-326-4223.



Videos of news conference exercises held during the course gave participants practice on answers questions from the media and developing on-camera skills.



From left, the Basic Public Information Officer instructors and students include: Jodie Fawl, Mike Wight, Rod Hutt, Maria Bieker, Brian Dixon, Kriston Olson, Austin Brake, Michelle Woitalevicz, Dan Guenthar, Jami Blair, Jodi Witte, Jessica Houseman, Rhonda Wollridge, Chad Bousum, Jan Fritz, Jan Zurcher, Timothy Romero, Ann Fritz and Deb Collins.

NEMA Holds Basic Public Information Officer Course

Learning to effectively communicating accurate and timely information following a disaster was the goal of a two-day Basic Public Information Officer (PIO) Course at Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), May 21-22.

Public Information Officers **Jodie Fawl** of NEMA, **Deb Collins** of the Nebraska State Patrol and **Mike Wight** of the Department of Health and Human Services taught the course which focused on writing news releases, preparing for and conducting interviews with the media, on-camera interviews, responsibilities of PIOs on the scene of an incident and how the PIO fits in the Incident Command System.

Participants learned about the Joint Information System and the Joint In-

formation Center where Public Information Officers from different agencies work together to provide one message, from many voices.

“Writing news releases, preparing talking points and doing on-camera interviews in class exercises provides great practice for an actual incident,” Fawl said. “I was pleasantly surprised at how well all the PIOs did during their on-camera work.”

A news panel featuring Shelly Kulhanek of the Lincoln Journal Star, David Jespersen of KOLN/KGIN and Dale



Instructors for the course were Deb Collins of the Nebraska State Patrol, Mike Wight of the Department of Health and Human Services and Jodie Fawl of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

Johnson of KFOR gave participants an inside look at what the media needs when covering an event and how PIOs can work with them to get accurate information out to the public.



Part of the Basic PIO Course includes a media discussion with representatives from local media. Shelly Kulhanek of the Lincoln Journal Star, David Jespersen of KOLN/KGIN and Dale Johnson of KFOR offered a discussion on similarities and differences of newspaper, television and radio.





Above: NEMA Planning Section Supervisor Dan Hiller gives an update at the annual investment justification workshop. Below: participants at the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) memorandum of understanding table discuss goals and objectives.



INVESTMENT JUSTIFICATION

The 2013 Nebraska Investment Justification Workshop was held in Lincoln June 10 at the Cornhusker Marriot.

The University of Nebraska's Public Policy Center facilitated the meeting where local, regional and state representatives involved in emergency management provided input on priorities identified for the state's Homeland Security Grant.

Representatives worked in small groups where they reviewed and revised their agency/jurisdiction investment justifications completed prior to the workshop. Goals and objectives were strengthened by making them specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time limited (SMART).

"Utilizing the state's Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Analysis (THIRA), groups prioritized investments to address gaps identified by the THIRA related to its 31 core capabilities," said **Patrick Rooney**, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) planning specialist.

Dan Hiller and **Nikki Weber** also of NEMA stressed the importance of writing investment justifications specific to the 31 core capabilities using SMART criteria which will improve the state's overall investment justification submitted for the Homeland Security Grant.



Resource Unit Leader Training



A four-day training course at NEMA, May 28-31, provided an overview of unit leader responsibilities, the planning section and the planning process for students unfamiliar with the planning process or the Incident Command System. L-968 NIMS ICS All Hazards Resource Unit Leader includes exercises, simulations and discussions. Todd Manns, far left in red, of The Blue Cell Group taught the class.



Homeland Security Policy Group

Members of the Nebraska Homeland Security Policy Group update Lt. Gov. Lavon Heidemann during the groups regular meeting at Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

News Briefs

[Incident Status Report Link](#) — Nebraska Emergency Managers can now submit incident status reports to Nebraska Emergency Management Agency online from their desktop or from their mobile phones. The form is used by county emergency managers to report damages that have occurred across the state. Emergency Managers can click the link above or click on the Emergency Managers Report link on the Quick Links list on the [NEMA's home page](#).

[Use the North Gate](#) — Visitors to Nebraska Emergency Management will need to use the North Gate to the Nebraska National Guard Base while work is being done on the East Gate.



A disaster declaration was submitted for Edger after a tornado struck the town on May 27. According to Clay County Emergency Manager Loren Uden.



Tornados and Lightning Mean a Busy Day for Jefferson County Responders

Left: Jefferson County firefighters battle a fire started by lightning at the old lumber yard in Jansen. Emergency manager John McKee submitted the pictures and noted “ At least it was across the street from the fire station. Power went out to the area due to the fire so their water pumps quit and that meant all water had to be trucked in. Right: two EF2 tornados hit the Diller/Harbine area resulting in damage there.



◀— Jack Daniel, health section administrator with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Resources, lead monthly training for NEMA staff focusing on drought.

“We’re a groundwater state,” Daniel said. “We have enough water under us to fill Lake Erie plus. We are very blessed.”

The drought last year did negatively affect the water supply.

“While things have improved we still have areas of extreme and exceptional drought.”



Thirty-two Knox County first responders and emergency managers participated in a land-based search and rescue exercise near Center on June 2.

Todd Manns, owner of the Blue Cell, a company based in Colorado, conducted the exercise, funded by Homeland Security grant funds awarded for use in the Northeast Nebraska Planning, Exercise and Training Region.

Along with search techniques, the principles of the Incident Command System and the National Incident Management System were reviewed.

The scenario for the drill was a three-year old child has been missing in a pasture near Center for five hours.



The victim, **John Bartz** of Storm Lake, Iowa, was moved into position by his grandfather, Loren Hintz, just before searchers reached his location.

“Knox County is fortunate to have a group of volunteer first responders who are dedicated to training to improve and practice their skills so they can respond to all emergencies in the county,” said Laura Hintz, director of Knox County Emergency Management.

Antelope and Knox County Search and Rescue Exercises



Nearly 35 people took part in a search and rescue exercise June 2 in Neligh. Coordinated by The Blue Cell of Colorado, local and area first responders went through a scenario to prepare for a real life rescue situation. The scenario involved a 72-year-old male with Alzheimer's missing overnight. Faythe Petersen, Region 11 Emergency Manager, served as the scenario controller and Dave Jacobsen and Bob Moore were the unified incident commanders.



Wayne County Displays Emergency Management Capabilities

By Nic Kemnitz, director
Wayne County
Emergency Management Agency

Congressman Adrian Smith visited Wayne State College, May 30 to view Wayne State College's Communications trailer and the similar trailer hosted by Wayne County's Office of Emergency Management.

The Wayne County trailer has been equipped by surplus equipment from neighboring counties so it can be staffed during disasters and assist the towns and villages in Wayne County to manage the incidents at hand and to also be on call for disasters that strike neighboring towns and counties in the State of Nebraska.

The Wayne State College Communications trailer was developed to meet the needs of data preservation, personnel notifications, public and parental notifications and communications that are necessary for the college in the event their main data and phone systems become inoperable during an emergency.

It was learned through interlocal cooperation that Wayne County and Wayne State College had similar needs

during a disaster so they began working together to be able to deploy at the same time to a scene to learn the effects that disasters and events have on an incident command structure so efficient and effective recovery can take place. For the last couple of years the two separate trailer units have worked together on actual recovery deployments and for staged events that bring about further testing of their capabilities.

Congressman Smith learned of the training and experience of the Northeast Nebraska Emergency Management Support Group that will deploy with Wayne State College Emergency Communications Support Team. The five members of the Northeast Nebraska Emergency Management Support Group are from Wayne, Thurston and Cedar counties at this time. That number is expected to grow as the Group continues to make presentations to local Emergency Managers across the state as to how they can help provide valuable support to an emergency incident.

Actual equipment demonstrations were performed that would simulate



LeRoy Janssen, of the Wayne County Emergency Management Agency and Northeast Nebraska Emergency Management Support Group Supervisor, discusses deployment capabilities with U.S. Congressman-Adrian Smith. (Photo courtesy of Clara Osten)

the check in process at a disaster. Local participants that had pre-prepared cards were checked in with those identifications and those such as Congressman Smith were made a card by swiping the information from their driver's license. This is then put in a computer system that tracks how long a person is on scene and when they leave that area. This is a valuable tool for first responders in the area of safety and wise use of their time and can be very beneficial when disasters rise to the level of reimbursement by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Northeast Nebraska Emergency Management Support Group and Wayne State College Emergency Communications Support Team comply with four target capabilities required in Presidential Directives. Those four target capabilities include Planning, Communications, Emergency Operations Center Management, and On-Site Incident Management.

Members of the Northeast Nebraska Emergency Management Support Group are LeRoy Janssen, Wayne County Deputy Emergency Manager and Group Supervisor, Tom Perez, Thurston County Emergency Manager and Assistant Group Supervisor, Nic Kemnitz, Wayne County Emergency Manager, Matt May, Deputy Thurston County Emergency Manager and Winnabago Tribe Emergency Manager, and Kevin Garvin, Cedar County Emergency Manager.



(From left,) Northeast Nebraska Emergency Management Support Group members Nic Kemnitz-Wayne County emergency management agency (EMA) and Leroy Janssen-Wayne County EMA and Group Supervisor, U.S. Congressman Adrian Smith, and Wayne State College Chief Information Officer and Emergency Communications Support Team Leader-John Dunning (Photo courtesy of Jessica Hendricks)

Gone Fishing!

Stories by Ryan Lowry,
Citizen Corps Coordinator

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Volunteers with the West Central Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), in partnership with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, assisted young anglers get fitted for life jackets at the "Fishing is Fun Expo" at Lake Ogallala on June 1st. The MRC helped 70 kids get properly fitted for a life jacket that they were then able to keep.

As we move into the warmer months and more people make their way to Nebraska's lakes and rivers, it's important to remember some water safety tips:

- Always wear a life jacket when on a boat – children should also wear life jackets when in or near bodies of water.
- Use the buddy system! If you're swimming in open water, always swim with someone nearby.
- Never dive into water unless it has recently been checked for depth and underwater objects.
- Never swim, boat, or fish below a dam. Water levels and flows can change rapidly and you may not be able to react in time to avoid danger.



West Central Medical Reserve Corps volunteers properly fit kids for life jackets. Photo courtesy of Sue Mulligan, West Central MRC Unit Coordinator.



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Lincoln County Sheriff's Posse Receives Search and Rescue Training

Last month, trainers from Scotts Bluff County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)/Search and Rescue travelled to North Platte to conduct training for the Lincoln County Sheriff's Posse.

Volunteers with the Sheriff's Posse participated in a two-day course that included training both in class and hands-on. Volunteers were taught how to conduct a basic search for a missing person including how to:

- obtain information about the missing individual,
- read a compass
- record their paces,
- look for signs and clues of activity in an area, and
- how to relay information to Incident Command.

The course concluded with an exercise where volunteers were deployed to search for two missing people in an area along the Platte River.

Lincoln County CERT recently held their first Basic Training course in North Platte. Many of the same volunteers who took the Basic Training participated in the Search and Rescue course. Lincoln County CERT is supported by Emergency Management and the Sheriff's Department.



Lincoln County search and rescue class.



Volunteers train on search and rescue techniques.



Scotts Bluff County search and rescue and Lincoln County Sheriff's posse train on search and rescue techniques. Photos courtesy of Bob Hessler, Scotts Bluff County CERT Program manager.



Above: L-339 Radiological Emergency Preparedness Core Concepts Course (RCCC) and L-340 REP Plan Review Course (RPPR) were held in Lincoln June 3-7 at the Nebraska Information and Analysis Center "Fusion Center." The course focused on the nuclear power plant off-site radiological emergency preparedness program. It addressed the REP Program history and sentinel events, federal regulatory policies, basic radiation principles, REP planning guidance (planning standards), REP demonstration guidance (exercise evaluation areas) and the REP Disaster Initiated Review (DIR) process.

Right: Mike Wight, a public information officer with the Department of Health and Human Services, answers questions during a Cooper Nuclear Station exercise at the Emergency Operation Facility/Joint Information Center in Auburn in May.



Left: NEMA staff and Emergency Support Function representatives work in the State Emergency Operation Center during a June 12 Ft. Calhoun Nuclear Station exercise. State representatives regularly exercise the plans and procedures of the state's radiological emergency response plans.

Oklahoma Requests Help

Oklahoma has been overwhelmed with unneeded donated goods and has requested help in stemming the tide. Please advise organizations or groups NOT to send additional donated goods into Oklahoma. Instead of sending goods, several more helpful options are suggested below:

- Sell collected items and donating the cash to Oklahoma's OK STRONG Disaster Relief Fund
- Donating non-food items to local thrift stores or other nonprofit organizations.
- Donating food to local food banks, which might ultimately benefit OK via the Feeding America network, IF food is needed

100% Civil Support Team

By Maj. Kevin Hynes,
Nebraska National Guard

Excerpts from a Prairie Soldier newsletter articles

For most people, scoring a 100 percent on a major examination would be cause for a celebration. For the 22 Soldiers and Airmen of the Nebraska National Guard's 72nd Civil Support Team (CST) who went 12-for-12 during their Training Proficiency Evaluation (TPE), May 16 in Lincoln, it was what they expected.

"We expected to get all goes," said **1st Lt. Sean Thurmer**, 72nd CST science officer, after the Nebraska National Guard rapid response team passed its all-important 18-month training evaluation with flying colors. "So, I don't think anyone was really excited... I think everyone was just satisfied."

According to **Capt. Jocelyn Kuta**, 72nd CST Survey Section leader, the TPE is essentially an intense evaluation each National Guard CST must successfully pass every 18 months to maintain its operational readiness status. That's important considering a CST is responsible for providing civilian first responders and incident commanders with capabilities designed to help identify and deal with hazardous materials involving chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear contaminants (CBRN).

"Basically, our mission is to help assess, identify and provide advice for the mitigation of (weapons of mass destruction) or CBRN," said Kuta.

In order to do that in a timely fashion, the CST – which is made up of full-time Army and Air National Guardsmen – are required to maintain a high level of readiness. Within 90 minutes of notification – day or night, seven-days-a-week, 365-days-a-year – the CST must be able to deploy its advanced party to begin the assessment phase of a response operation, with the remainder of the team being ready to follow the advance party within 180 minutes.

In the event a CST is called out, it will bring significant capabilities with it to the scene. Kuta said the purpose behind the May evaluation, which was conducted by a team of National Guard evaluators from U.S. Army North, was to ensure that the CST



Members of the 72nd Civil Support Team conduct emergency decontamination on a CST member who became "incapacitated" while in a contaminated area.

This is the second in a series of four articles on hazmat response capacities in Nebraska. In May, the first article featured the 72nd Civil Support Team and the Beatrice Fire. Watch for articles on the Nebraska Hazardous Incident Team and hazmat cities in upcoming newsletters.



Members of the 72nd Civil Support Team's Survey and Decontamination sections (from left) Sgt. 1st Class Robert Combs, Sgt. Ty Tucker, Tech. Sgt. Donovan Garcia, Sgt. Travis Benda (front) and Sgt. 1st Class Landen Koopman, listen to Capt. Jocelyn Kuta's briefing on the objectives of an upcoming mission.

can quickly and effectively accomplish its mission.

"Essentially, it makes sure that we're meeting all of the standards that (National Guard Bureau) has put out for us as mandatory," she said. "If we don't meet those standards, then we go into what they call 'black' and would have to wait until the next evaluation to be able to be called out again."

According to **Sgt. Ty Tucker**, a member of the survey team and the CST, remaining calm and maintaining trust in a potentially dangerous environment are the key components to performing well.

"And then you have to rely on the training," he added. "You have to trust in your equipment and the people you're with that should something go wrong, they're ready and trained to help you and get you out of that environment."

Probably the biggest key to the CST's overall success, said Thurmer, was the fact that even though much of the team was new, they'd all had significant training in their individual and collective tasks.

"It's really a small unit, so it's really easy to have effective communication," said Thurmer who is one of the more experienced officers on the CST. "Everyone knows each other and we work well with each other. There's a real sense of professionalism between the sections."



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State Homeland Security Director

Lt. Governor Lavon Heidemann

NEMA 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

The Beacon is published monthly and includes emergency management news and activities from across the state. Please forward story ideas or photos for inclusion to:

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[@NEMAtweets](https://twitter.com/NEMAtweets)

Social Media Classes Give Twitter Tips and More

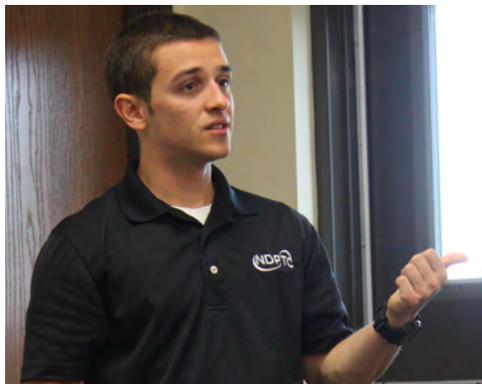
Enhancing disaster preparedness, response and recovery through social media was the topic of three workshops held in Wayne, Broken Bow and Bridgeport.

Training on use of social media was identified at the Training, Exercise and Planning Workshop as a need across the state. Directors Laura Hintz, Knox County, Alma Beland, Region 26 and Ron Lehl, Region 21 arranged to bring in the Social Media for Disaster Response and Recovery class taught by the National Disaster preparedness Training Center of the University of Hawaii.

Participants learned to follow hashtags like: #NDPTC and #SMEMchat on twitter; how to monitor Facebook interactions for better situational awareness.

Other Social Media Updates

- Richardson County Emergency Management has added a Facebook page. [Check it out here.](#)
- Check out [NEMA's list of Local Emergency Managers using Social Media here.](#) Contact: jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov to include links to other emergency management social media.
- State and local agencies, health and volunteer organizations, and news outlets in FEMA Region VII (Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri) have set up a Social Media Collaboration group. The group will work together to coordinate social media messages before, during and after a crisis. Interested in participating? Contact jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov



Top left, Chris Tarantino and, right, Scott Reuter, teach a social media class in Broken Bow.