



May 2013

The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



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Cover Photos

(Above) Nebraska Association of Emergency Management conference attendees participate in a tabletop exercise at their annual conference.

(Right) NAEM representative Laura Hintz presents Tim Hofbauer of Platte County with the Outstanding Emergency Manager Professional of the Year Award.





Region 23 Emergency Manager Nan Gould and Region 24 Emergency Manager Doug Fox gave a presentation on lessons learned during 2012 wildfires that struck their regions.



Shawn Owens of Custer County scans the credentials of Whitney Shipley of Douglas County.

Emergency Managers Hold Annual Meeting

Despite tornado warnings, severe thunderstorms, winter storm warnings, ice warnings and a fire occurring in various locations across the state in the days leading up to the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management (NAEM) Conference in Grand Island, the state's emergency managers were able to gather April 10-12 for their annual meeting.

The conference gives emergency managers an opportunity to hear from subject matter experts and visit with vendors who offer the latest in equipment and materials of interest to attendees.

The theme of the conference was "What's in your Tool Box" and NAEM President **Lynn Marshall** of Sarpy County said "Our hope was that participants were taking something worthwhile home with them to be able to do their job a little easier and fill their toolboxes."

Next year's conference is scheduled for April 2-4, 2014 at the Holiday Inn Midtown in Grand Island. Look for details on the NAEM website at www.naem.us.

Conference Pictures
Continued on pages 3 and 4.



Paul Johnson, Douglas County Director, gives a presentation on emergency notification during a hazmat incident.



Mark Meints of Gage County, Cindy Newsham, of NEMA, Ryan Lowry of Citizen Corps and Denny Cunningham, assistant vice president for incident management at Wells Fargo, participate in a panel discussion on resource acquisition in a complex incident.



Pat Brady, assistant director for hazmat at Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad, and Dr. Glenn Millner, founding partner and senior toxicologist with the center for Toxicology and Environmental health give a presentations on Hazmat Rail Expertise.



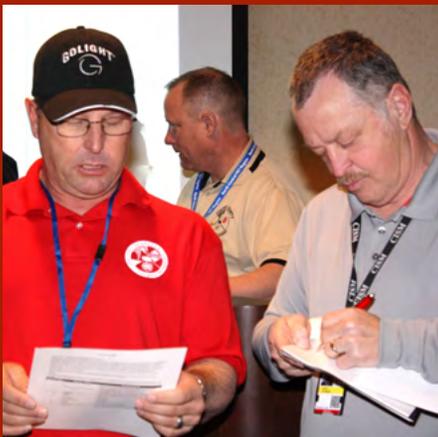
Kirt Smith of Hamilton County talks about the role of social media in situational awareness.



Todd Manns of The Blue Cell talks about resource management in a complex incident. He also led a table top exercise.



Nebraska Emergency Management Agency presenters included (clockwise from left) Sue Krogman, Al Berndt and Dave Reisen.



Above left: (left to right) Doug Marris of Cherry County, Shawn Owens of Custer County and Leroy Janssen of Wayne County participate in the tabletop exercise.

Center: MSgt. Drew Young checks in for the NAEM tabletop exercise. Also pictured, from left, Tim Hofbauer of Platte County, Brenden Ourth of Midwest Card and I.D. Solutions and Deanna Beckman of Dakota County.

Right: Region 15 deputies, from left, Kyle Clapp of Hitchcock County, Art Johnsen of Phelps County and Sheriff Dan Rupp of Frontier County discuss tactics in the tabletop exercise.



Loren Hintz, left, receives the President's Award from Vice President Jan Zurcher of Region 44. Hintz was recognized for his contributions to NAEM.



Jan Zurcher, left, presents Travis Boyll with an award of appreciation for Kevin Christensen and Nebraska Machinery.



Steve Eddy, left, and Michael Moritz, right, of the Hastings National Weather Service office present York County Director Gary Petersen with a Storm Ready road sign for York County.



Laura Hintz, left, presents Michael Moritz, a meteorologist with the Hastings National Weather Service office with the Outstanding Emergency Management Support Professional Award.



From left, Lynn Marshall, NAEM president and Sarpy County emergency manager, presents Laura Hintz, Knox County director with the conference door prize, a 32-inch television.



Loren Uden, Clay County director, and Cindy Newsham, administrative assistant at the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency received 10 year pins and jackets.



Nebraska Association of Emergency Management officers and board include, from left, Paul Johnson, Douglas County director and Southeast Region representative; Dan Guenther Lincoln County director and West Central Representative; Tim Hofbauer, Platte County director and vice president; Lynn Marshall, Sarpy County Emergency Manager and president, Doug Fox, Region 24 director and treasurer; Michelle Woitelewicz, Howard County director and Central Region representative; Laura Hintz, Knox County director and Northeast Region representative; Nan Gould, Region 23 director and Panhandle Region representative; and Darrin Lewis, Buffalo County director and NAEM secretary. Not pictured is NEMA Assistant Director Al Berndt who serves as the NEMA liaison to NAEM.



GOVERNOR DAVE HEINEMAN
WWW.GOVERNOR.NEBRASKA.GOV

The Drought May Continue

By Governor Dave Heineman
April 5, 2013

Dear Fellow Nebraskans:

I want to share an update on the expected weather conditions we are facing as a state, in particular so our farmers and ranchers can make the best decisions for their businesses and families in the upcoming seasons.

In 2012, Nebraska experienced record-setting heat and dryness. We would like a return to normal weather pattern in 2013, but as spring approaches, it is apparent that conditions have not improved. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, most of Nebraska remains in the “exceptional” drought category.

Unfortunately, we are actually in a worse situation this spring compared to last year. After a fairly wet four previous years, that included major flooding in 2011, dryness was just beginning to creep into the Panhandle and northeast Nebraska in April 2012. While conditions deteriorated quickly, we had entered the 2012 growing season with full reservoirs, good stream flows, moisture in the soil and good pasture conditions. All of these items are lacking as we approach this growing season.

The consequences of another season of drought will likely be felt most intensely by our agricultural community. That is why the University of Nebraska Extension staff members have been especially focused on giving our farmers and ranchers the information they need to make drought management decisions that are right for their particular operation.

Over the winter months, Extension staff has hosted webinars and seminars. They have been interviewed for countless news articles about drought mitigation options. This has included information on pasture stocking rates, alternative forage uses, deficit irrigation, crop seeding rates and growing forages under a pivot, among others. Many Nebraska farmers and ranchers are utilizing these resources and developing a feasible plan to manage their operations through another dry year.

Besides agriculture, our public water system supply managers also need to be planning ahead to prepare for potential low water supplies. State officials have communicated with appropriate county, city, and Natural Resources District officials regarding preparations for another dry season. Water systems that were impacted in 2012 may have the greatest likelihood to see impacts again this season.

Officials also are planning ahead for another potentially challenging year for wildfires. Recently, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and the Nebraska Forest Service conducted wildland fire training in Lincoln for Nebraska Army National Guard aviation personnel, equipping these individuals with basic training for wildland fire suppression.

There is a wealth of information available for all Nebraskans, urban and rural alike, to help deal with drought-related challenges. Much of it can be found by visiting the University of Nebraska Extension site at <http://droughtresources.unl.edu>. There also is information available at www.droughtcentral.nebraska.gov.

Each of us can do our part to manage low water resources in the face of the ongoing drought. Every little bit can help as we work to conserve water resources for public drinking supplies, for fighting fires, and for agriculture.

NEMA Teams Work at Wildfire Academy

Ten Nebraska Emergency Management Agency staff members provided support to the Sixth Annual Wildland Fire Academy at Fort Robinson State Park near Crawford from April 13-21.

Each year, the academy provides high-quality fire and incident management training using the expertise of a cadre of instructors from the Nebraska Forest Service, the U.S. Forest Service and the Nebraska State Fire Marshal's Training Division to ensure the fire training needs of western Nebraska and the surrounding region are met.

NEMA sent two teams to the academy. Team one included: **Dave Reisen, Leo Larkin, Sheila Hascall, Chuck Chase and Bob Eastwood.** Team two included: **Earl Imler, Alisia LaMay, Brent Curtis, Bob Wilhelm and Roger Conrad.** The academy is coordinated by the Nebraska Forest Service Training Coordinator, **Casey McCoy.**

NEMA sent two teams out to also receive training, but not in the classroom. The NEMA staff worked the Wildland Fire Academy as an incident management team (IMT) to complete

portions of their individual position task books. Members of an IMT must complete a variety of specified tasks and have them signed by a qualified member of an IMT before they are qualified to serve on an IMT.

"The Nebraska Wildland Fire Academy provided NEMA staff an opportunity to work within the incident management team structure in front of an evaluator/mentor in a controlled setting, thus allowing for tasks to be demonstrated without the stress of a fire or disaster looming overhead," said Reisen. "This was a sort of dress rehearsal for a predicted potentially active 2013 fire season."

The academy continues to grow each year, both in numbers of students and in classes offered. More than 250 students from seven states and 43 federal and state agencies, fire departments and other local agencies attended the nine-day event.

The academy takes place through inter-agency cooperation from: Nebraska Forest Service, USDA Forest Service, Pine Ridge Ranger District, Nebraska



NEMA's Mobile Operations Trailer (MOT) was used as a communications and logistics asset for the academy.

Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division, Fort Robinson State Park, Crawford Fire Department, Chadron Fire Department, Gering Fire Department, Harrison Fire Department, National Weather Service, City of Crawford, Pine Ridge Job Corps and the University of Nebraska.

The academy offered a variety of courses including instruction in basic and advanced fire fighting, the incident management system, fireline safety and wildfire behavior.

More Pictures on Page 6



The NEMA Away Team II poses with Nebraska Forest Service Training Coordinator Casey McCoy pictured from left are Alisia LaMay, McCoy, Roger Conrad, Bob Wilhelm, Earl Imler and Brent Curtis.



Bob Eastwood and Leo Larkin set up a mobile repeater to boost radio signal as part of the academy communication system.



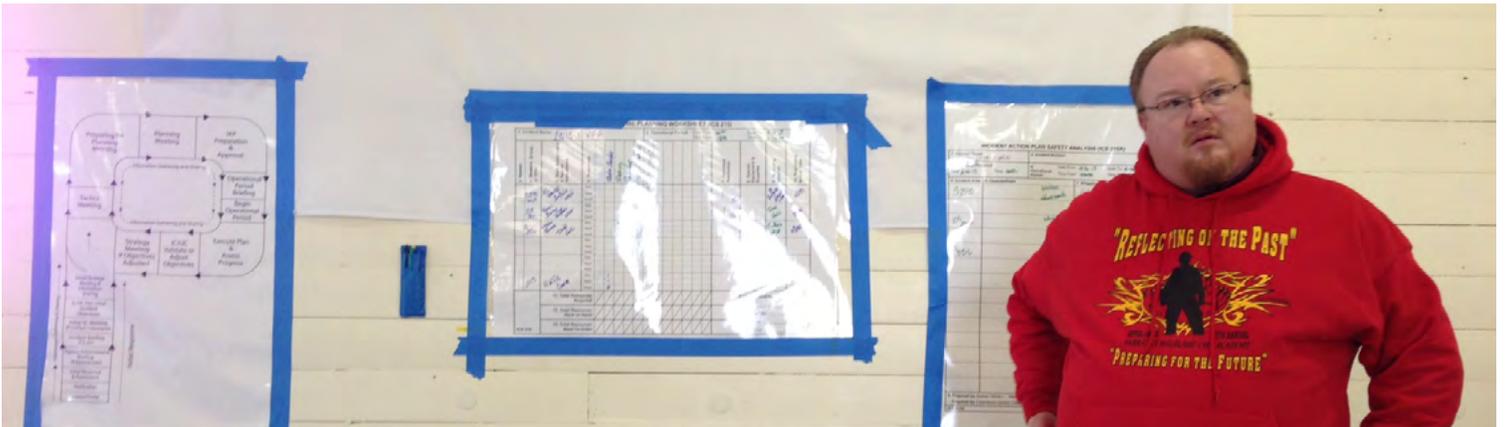
Extreme winter weather in April greeted NEMA teams and wildfire academy participants.



NEMA staff participate in a transition meeting of the Incident Management Teams at the Nebraska Wildfire Academy 2013 at Fort Robinson.



Roger Conrad from NEMA was assisted by Hunter Maglitto from the Minatare Melbeta Fire Department with the tracking and certification of students during the academy.



As planning section chief Dave Reisen of NEMA conducted both the planning and tactics meetings.

Citizen Corps Partners with Angels Theater Co.

By Ryan Lowry,
Citizen Corps Coordinator

The Nebraska Citizen Corps had the opportunity recently to partner with the Lincoln arts community. The Angels Theater Co. and the Lied Center produced "What the Wind Taught Me", a play about a family who experiences a tornado that goes through their town. While the play touched on a number of themes, the message of 'being prepared' resonated throughout.

Volunteers with Nebraska Citizen Corps and partner programs facilitated audience discussions following each performance. These discussions focused on some of the themes found in the play: family preparedness, safety during and after a storm, and emotional needs of disaster victims. Audience members were encouraged to think about what it means to be prepared, physically and emotionally, for disasters like a tornado. As we approach



The cast of "What the Wind Taught Me," from left, Nick Kortá, Jeff Luby, Melissa Lewis, Carter Yost, Sasha Dobson, Madeleine Miller and Ian McKercher.

that time of year when we begin to see more severe weather, facilitators asked the audiences to think about what is in their kits at home. Do they need to stock up on batteries, water, or food? Are there extra blankets and pillows that can be used to protect them from debris? And for those who haven't put

a kit together, facilitators stressed the importance of having one.

This was a great opportunity to reach out to the public to discuss how to be better prepared as we move into severe weather season.

For more information contact ryan.lowry@nebraska.gov



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Points of Contact

Simulated Chemical Release Lets Guard, Beatrice Fire and Hazmat Teams Practice Response

The Beatrice Fire and Hazmat Teams assisted the Nebraska National Guard's 72nd Civil Support Team's (CST) annual certification in April by taking part in a simulated chemical release at the old Beatrice Hospital.

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency has response agreements in place with 10 local teams, including Beatrice, which will respond to a large release or industrial accident.

A state response could also include members of the Nebraska Hazardous Incident Team (NHIT) made up of the State Patrol, Fire Marshal and the Department of Environmental Quality.

The 72nd CST consists of members of both the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard.

Hazmat teams across the state continue to train and exercise for a



worst case scenario, in order to be prepared for large events such as the one that happened in West Texas just this month.

Emergency plans are in place and are revised annually and exercised

regularly by the first responders.

For more information on the Nebraska Hazmat Response teams select the Hazmat resource link on the bottom of the NEMA home page or click:

[Hazmat Resources.](#)



Update on LB 634—the Wildfire Control Act

LB634, the Wildfire Control Act, is still alive in the Nebraska Legislature and has been designated a priority bill by Sen. Al Davis.

Sen. Davis represents Legislative District 43 which includes several counties affected by wildfires during the summer of 2012. The bill itself would establish and fund programs within the Nebraska Forest Service dealing with wildfire training and prevention as well as establish a state aerial suppression program within the state.

Respective of whether the bill passes or not, NEMA and the Nebraska Forest Service are working in coordination along with the State Fire Marshal's Office to review and institute changes in wild land fire response across the state.

If and when LB634 passes, those changes and programs would be integrated into the current aerial or "yellow book" program and the Governor's Guide to Local Elected Officials as it deals with wild land fire.

According to Al Berndt, NEMA assistant director, changes are being made as a result of the 2012 fire season in the state and to more effectively use aerial assets when they are needed. When a local incident commander requests assets and support from the state, the correct assessment of the situation at the local level needs to be given to the state to facilitate an

effective response back to the incident commander.

"Part of this integration will be the importance of evaluating activities taking place on the ground by the local incident commander," Berndt said. "When an incident commander requests the aerial suppression certain information must be relayed before the plane can be deployed."

Information will need to include the location and general size of the fire, the latitude and longitude for the load to be dropped, the name of the person who will be the ground coordinator for the plane, radio frequencies to be used for ground to air coordination, local weather conditions and fire behavior.

"Having this information prior to making the request will make for a quicker deployment," Berndt said. "In general, we want the process of requesting state support for wildfires to be done in an organized and consistent manner. Once the determination that the fire is beyond the ability for local resources to suppress, there are steps for bringing in outside resources beyond the aerial suppression program."

"The main point for all local officials to be aware of is that in order for a request to be made and for assistance to be given a declaration of emergency signed by the chief elected official must be submitted."

The declaration of emergency must:

- Detail that the local requesting county/fire district is signifying the need for assistance and that the incident is beyond the scope of their capacity and capabilities.
- Show that the fire districts involved will integrate into the Unified Command/Multi-Agency Coordination System.
- Acknowledge compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and adherence to the Incident Command System (ICS).
- Agree that for response costs to be eligible for reimbursement, they must be tracked per attachment two of the Governor's Emergency Fund/Guidelines for Public officials, pages 12-15. [Excel versions of these worksheets are located here.](#)

Part of the planning process for wildfire response is to develop objectives and priorities.

"For instance in a wildfire our first priority is to provided for the safety of firefighters and the public," Berndt said. "We use risk management processes established by the ICS structure."

Berndt said objectives would include full fire suppression; expenditures commensurate with values at risk and return of the incident scene to the local commander or fire chief when the perimeter of the fire is fully contained and there has been no substantial growth to the fire for 48 hours.

Training Opportunities

Check out NEMA's

[Training Calendar](#)

For Upcoming Classes



If you would like to include a course on the calendar, please send the information to:

dave.reisen@nebraska.gov



www.nema.nebraska.gov

(402) 471-7421

Toll Free (877) 297-2368

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Governor Dave Heineman

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)



NEMA Program Specialist Alisia LaMay gives Nebraska Department of Roads Staff a tour of NEMA's new facilities.

Legislative Update: LB434

LB 434, passed 43-0 in the Nebraska Unicameral. It calls for state officials to work with local emergency management agencies on setting up the registries, which would be voluntary and shielded from public records requests.

The registries would help ensure that people with particular needs get help in cases of flood, fire, tornado or other disasters.

Those included in the registries could be people with medical needs, people who require special supervision, people who do not know English, children, the elderly and people without transportation.

The law allows for information about individuals with functional needs to remain exempt from the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

NEMA Conducts Successful Interoperability Test

Bob Eastwood of NEMA called the first test of the new State Radio System, SRS, that is used by Nebraska state and local agencies.

Check-ins were completed by Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) troopers, all eight NSP dispatch centers, NSP Air One, the NSP Mobile Command Post, the Nebraska Department of Roads mobile command post, NDOR employees throughout the state, staff from the State Fire Marshal's office, NEMA and the Office of the Chief Information



NEMA Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl talks about being prepared for bad weather with a Weatherfest attendee in Lincoln April 6.

Officer.

The State's new system is a VHF digital P-25 trunked system with approximately 52 towers throughout the State.

Exercise of different agencies talking to each other on the SRS including State Patrol dispatch centers and state patrol officers.

"Everything went according to plan on one channel and then we moved to another channel and repeated the test," Eastwood said. "It worked out perfectly."