



The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



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Weber Honored as Supervisor of the Year for the Nebraska Military Department

Left: Gov. Dave Heineman recognizes Nikki Weber as supervisor of the year for the Nebraska Military Department at a ceremony at the State Capitol. Weber's family helped honor her at the Capitol festivities.

Top right: Pictured from left are Weber's in-laws, Bruce and Beth Weber, her husband, Matt Weber, Nikki Weber, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac and Weber's parents, Bev and Warren Piper.

Bottom right: Adjutant General Bohac, Weber, Preparedness Section Supervisor Mardell Hergenrader and NEMA Assistant Director Al Berndt recognize Weber at the yearly Employee Recognition Luncheon at the Joint Force Headquarters.

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President Approves Federal Disaster Declaration for October Blizzard, Floods and Tornadoes in Nebraska

Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman received notification Tuesday, Nov. 26 from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials that President Barack Obama approved a request for a presidential disaster declaration for parts of Nebraska impacted by severe storms, winter storms, tornadoes and flooding that occurred in nine Nebraska counties, Oct. 2-6.

The president, through FEMA, issued a public assistance declaration that provides assistance for emergency work and the repair or replacement of disaster-damaged facilities in the following counties:

Adams, Dawes, Dixon, Howard, Sheridan, Sherman, Sioux, Thurston and Wayne counties.

The declaration includes federal funding on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties in the state.

“Nebraskans appreciate approval of public assistance funding for the October 2013 storms,” said Gov. Dave Heineman. “This will assist in the recovery process following storms that caused millions of dollars in damage in the state.”

The disaster declaration allows federal emergency funding to provide assistance to state and local governmental agencies and some nonprofit



organizations.

“This will help our local communities recover some of the costs associated with responding to the emergency situations and rebuilding public infrastructure damaged by this disaster,” said Al Berndt, assistant director of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. “NEMA will work closely with local governments to help speed up the recovery process.”

NEMA’s preliminary damage esti-

mates to public infrastructure exceed \$3 million, with the most severe impacts to electrical infrastructure, roads and bridges, along with extensive tree damage in the panhandle.

Eligible costs include removal of storm debris, emergency protective measures and repair or replacement of disaster-damaged roads, bridges, public buildings, critical facilities, such as water, sewer and power systems, and other public facilities.

Weber Honored as Supervisor of the Year for the Nebraska Military Department

Nikki Weber, was named Nebraska Military Department/NEMA’s 2013 Supervisor of the Year.

She was honored both at a Military Department years of service luncheon at the Joint Force Headquarters and at the annual Employee and Supervisor/Manager of the Year Celebration at the Nebraska State Capitol during Employee Recognition Month the last week of October.

According to the nomination mate-

rial, Weber was “selected for the award as a result of her consistent high performance as a supervisor who is able to bring out the best in the individuals she manages.

“Weber is a thoughtful leader and is considered a go-to source within NEMA for the citizens of Nebraska. Nikki has a consistently positive attitude, a willingness to take on difficult challenges with professionalism and poise, and a command presence that

transmits confidence but not arrogance.

“Nikki has stepped up to fill in for her own supervisor at different times through the last year, and she has done so in a way that the local entities the agency serves have not experienced an interruption of operations.

“Nikki is an excellent manager and demonstrates the highest values of the Nebraska Military Department/NEMA. She is highly deserving of this honor.”



Jayne Scofield, Nebraska's chief information officer, briefs other essential support function coordinators on the communication annex of the state emergency operations plan. Essential Support Function (ESF) coordinators met Oct. 22 at the Center for People in Need to update one another on changes to the State Emergency Operations Plan. ESFs provide structure for coordinating response to an incident. Coordinators staff the State Emergency Operations Center during an emergency and represent various agencies.

Multi-year Training Plan Developed at Annual Workshop

The annual Training and Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW) was held Oct. 24 and included participants representing the eight planning exercise and training regions and several state agencies.

The purpose of the TEPW is to develop the multi-year training and exercise plan for the state.

The participants provided input to the priorities established at the Threat and Hazardous Identification Risk Assessment. They began laying out and de-conflicting a plan for exercises and training events across the state for the coming years.

Participants Identify Risks and Hazards, Plan for State Preparedness Report

NEMA hosted the 2013 Threat/Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and State Preparedness Report (SPR) Workshop Oct. 23 in Lincoln.

Representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the American Red Cross, several state agencies, local health departments and emergency managers from around the

state were included in the meeting.

"The meeting was held to complete the THIRA and the SPR, which are required for the state to be eligible for homeland security grant funding through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security," said Logan Lueking, a planning specialist with NEMA.

"We were glad to see all the involvement from multiple levels of government in the process."

The THIRA and SPR are part of an effort to determine the state's emergency management capabilities and level of preparedness. The information gathered will be compiled, along with information from the rest of the states, to determine the nation's level of preparedness as a whole. That national preparedness report will be presented to Congress next year.



NEMA hosted a homeland security strategy meeting facilitated by the Nebraska Public Policy Center at the Center for People in Need on Oct. 23. State agency and local emergency manager participants updated the Nebraska Homeland Security Strategy.



Cathy Zapotocny of the National Weather Service presents information on cloud spotting at Basic Academy.



Casey McCoy of the Nebraska Forest Service discusses wild-fires.



NEMA Exercise Training Officer Chuck Chase (standing) introduces a panel of experts on emergency management. Seated from left are: Pat Gerdes, Region 15 Emergency Management director; Russ Wren, Department of Health and Human Services Emergency Response/Strategic National Stockpile Coordinator; Michelle Woitalewicz, Howard County Emergency Management Director; Nik Kemnitz, Wayne County Emergency Management Director; and Doug Ahlberg, Lancaster County Emergency Management Director.



NEMA Program Specialist Alisia LaMay discusses planning at Basic Academy.

Academy Teaches Basics of Emergency Management

The essentials of emergency management and fundamental elements of planning, responding, recovering and mitigating disasters were covered in a week-long class at Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Oct. 28-Nov. 1.

The NEMA Basic Certification Course or “Basic Academy” included sessions on the history of emergency man-

agement, local and state emergency operations plans and the National Incident Management System.

Coursework also included weather spotting, individual and public assistance, hazard mitigation, grant management, public information and social media.

Guest speakers featured in this

year's academy included: **Jerry McNinch** an intelligence officer with the Department of Homeland Security who discussed the capabilities of the Nebraska Information Analysis Center (NIAC); **Casey McCoy** of the Nebraska Forrest Service talked about wildfires; and **Dr. Dennis Hughes**, the Nebraska state veterinarian of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture who discussed foreign animal disease response.

"The success of this year's academy was due in part to the wide variety of disciplines represented by the participating students," said **Chuck Chase**, exercise training officer and coordinator of the course this year. "We had students from tribal nations, state agencies, the military, and all the way to local responders. The diversity of knowledge greatly enhanced the learning environment of the course."



Basic Academy participants work on exercise design.



Basic Academy Graduates 2013

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency Basic Certification Course

Seated, from left: Troy Paisley, Nebraska National Guard (NENG); Brett Petit, NENG; Brian Dixon, Richardson County Emergency Management; Deb Robinson, NEMA; Randy Teboe, Ponca Tribe of Nebraska; Zygmunt "Ziggy" Orłowski, Ponca Tribe of Nebraska;

Middle row, from left: Dennis Carroll, NENG; Denise Wally, Ponca Tribe of Nebraska; Craig Strong, NENG; Tammy Dugger, Lincoln County Emergency Management, Tylene Windle, Richardson County Emergency Management; Thomas "T.J." Kripal, Nebraska Air National Guard; Joseph Grubs, Jefferson County Ambulance; Cathy Sigler, Hamilton County Ambulance, Dawna Whitcom, Adams County Emergency Management;

Back row, from left: Ryan Lowry, NEMA; Larry "Rudy" Mattson, Region 15 Emergency Management; Tim Maloney, Cass County Emergency Management, Joel Haman, Three Rivers Public Health Department; Craig Palik, Nebraska Department of Insurance; Brian Daake, Beatrice Fire/Emergency Medical Services; Roger Conrad, NEMA; and Cody Mulloy, NEMA.

Brandon Burton Joins Nebraska Emergency Management Agency as Exercise Training Officer

Brandon Burton has joined NEMA as an exercise training officer (ETO).

Burton was a pre-mobilization training assistance element executive officer with the Nebraska National Guard.

He returned Oct. 10 from Helmand Province Afghanistan where he served for 10 months as operations officer for an agricultural development team. It was



Burton

his second deployment to Afghanistan.

Burton's military career has focused on operations and training.

He is an engineering officer currently serving as a captain in the Nebraska Army National Guard.

Burton has a bachelor of arts in psychology from Doane College.

He has three children

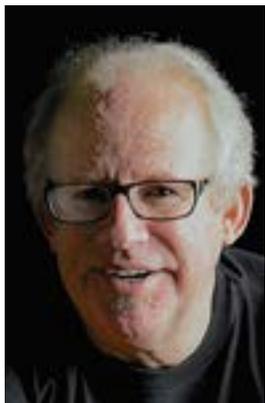
Jude, 6, Millie, 5, and Tessa, 3.

Bill Pook Completes Master Exercise Practitioner Program

Region 5/6 Director **Bill Pook** recently completed the Master Exercise Practitioner Program (MEPP).

He attended the FEMA EMI classes on campus at Cal State. The program was sponsored by California Emergency Management Agency.

The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) created the Master Exercise Practitioner Program (MEPP) in 1999 to recognize those individuals who



Pook

have completed prescribed training and demonstrated, through hands-on application, a high degree of professionalism and capability in the arena of emergency management exercises.

The MEPP mission is to improve the capabilities of emergency management exercise personnel in exercise program management and in every phase of the overall exercise process.

The MEPP goal is to increase the capabilities of MEPP candidates in mastery of the essentials of exercise program management and the overall exercise process in accordance with the policy, doctrine, practices, and tools in the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP).

As of Sept. 1, 2013, 2,175 individuals have completed EMI's Master Exercise Practitioner Program. EMI has empowered these graduates to place "MEP" after their names in recognition of this accomplishment.

There are two Emergency Management MEPP graduates in Nebraska. **Whitney Shipley** of Douglas County Emergency Management has also completed the program.

James Dunker Named Fillmore County Director

James Dunker was named Fillmore County Emergency Manager in October.

Previously, Dunker worked in Denver operations for Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) with the Federal Emergency Manager Agency (FEMA).

Seven years prior to that, he worked at the Mount Weather Emergency Operations Center, a civilian command facility in Virginia which is used as the center of operations for FEMA.

When Dunker retired from the U.S. Air Force, Dunker said he always planned to return home to Nebraska to be near his family.

He and his wife, Kim, who is also from Nebraska, live in Geneva.

Their daughter and a grandson live in Elmwood, and a son and daughter-in-law and two grandsons live in Geneva.

"In the short amount of time I've been with the organization, everyone has been very helpful to me," Dunker said. "I look forward to meeting other local emergency managers throughout Nebraska."



Dunker

Bayard High School Has State's First Teen CERT Team

Twenty-eight students from Bayard High School participated in Nebraska's first school-based teen CERT program.

Bob Hessler, Robin Darnall, and Katie Fiscus conducted the training, which took place this fall. On Nov. 7, the teens participated in a final training drill, simulating a response to a

natural disaster. Following the drill, the students were awarded certificates of recognition during a ceremony at Bayard High School. Ryan Lowry, the state citizen corps program coordinator, was on hand to observe.

The Bayard High School Teen CERT Team was trained to respond to

multiple situations and emergencies, including extinguishing small fires, administering first-aid, and assisting first responders.

The program was made possible through a grant from the Scottbluff Elks Lodge, which provided the equipment for the team.





www.nema.nebraska.gov

(402) 471-7421

Toll Free (877) 297-2368

Fax: (402) 471- 7433

Governor Dave Heineman

State Homeland Security Director
Lt. Governor Lavon Heidemann

NEMA Director
Major General Daryl Bohac

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:

Jodie Fawl

Public Information Officer

2433 N.W. 24th St.

Lincoln NE 68524

402-471-7428

jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov



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The State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) holds quarterly meeting at NEMA

Governor Appoints New SERC Member, Re-appoints 3

State Emergency Response Commission Coordinator **Tonya Ngotel** would like to extend a welcome to **Ben Salo** from Union Pacific Railroad as a new member of the commission.

Salo is replacing **Mark Maday** and will fill the transportation seat.

“Thank you, Mark, for your years of service to SERC,” Ngotel said.

In addition, **Gov. Dave Heineman** has reappointed **Sherry Blaha**, **John Grimes** and **Larry Johnson**. They are appointed until Sept. 13, 2017.

“All four members will be required to sit through the legislative review,” Ngotel said. “Please continue to offer your guidance and support. Hope to see you all at the Jan. 7 meeting.”

Executive Order to impact LEPCs

A new presidential executive order on “Improving Chemical Facility Safety and Security” will impact Local Emergency Planning Commissions (LEPCs) across Nebraska.

In response to the devastating explosion in West Texas, an executive order to improve the safety and security of chemicals nationwide was signed by President Barack Obama.

The order directed the federal government to:

- improve operational coordination with state and local partners;
- enhance federal agency coordination and information sharing with respect to chemical safety and security;
- modernize chemical policies, regulations and standards; and
- work with stakeholders to identify best practices.

The Nebraska State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) along with representatives of from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, the State Fire Marshal’s Office and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency have met with federal coun-

terparts to discuss how the executive order will affect the LEPCs, first responders and the current planning efforts in place.

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is considering making changes to the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards data, which under current standards are not accessible to LEPC members.

The Environmental Protection Agency has updated its strategic plan to include more outreach to LEPCs. U.S. Department of Transportation and Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration are looking at areas of improvement in inspections of facilities that hold ammonium nitrate.

The Jan. 7, 2014 SERC meeting will include an overview of the executive order and how it affects the LEPC population within the state. The SERC meeting will be held at NET, 1800 N. 33rd St. at 1 p.m. Questions should be directed to SERC Coordinator Tonya Ngotel at tonya.ngotel@nebraska.gov or (402) 471-7176.