

October 2013



The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



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Gov. Dave Heineman issued emergency declarations to allow funding for the state's emergency response for September flooding and October severe weather

Above: Oct. 4 Tornado at Wayne Photo ©Scott Blair, used by permission.

Right: flooding in North Platte.





Mobile operations centers for NEMA and Wayne Emergency Management were set up outside the Wayne Fire Station.



All but one building at the Wayne Airport was completely destroyed including a brand new hanger dedicated just one month earlier.

EF4 Tornado Causes Millions in Damage at Wayne

Wayne and the surrounding rural community began cleaning up after an EF4 tornado tore through the east side of town Oct. 4.

Fifteen people were injured, one critically. The tornado destroyed rural homes, businesses on the east side of Wayne and the city's softball complex.

A team of six Nebraska Emergency Management Agency staff arrived in

Wayne, Oct. 5 to provide support to the local response. NEMA staff did preliminary damage assessments and worked with local emergency managers on providing assets in the recovery.

NEMA worked with other state agencies including the Nebraska State Patrol, which set up road closures immediately and took aerial photographs of the damage; and the State

Fire Marshal's Office which arrived on scene the night of the tornado. The Nebraska Hazardous Incident Team and the Norfolk Fire Department's hazmat team controlled a leaking propane line and assessed damage on above ground fuel tanks. The fire marshal's office conducted building assessments, checking for immediate life safety hazards and verifying that there were no



Mark and Connie Hanson's residence on Highway 15 south of Wayne sustained damage in the Oct. 4 tornado.



Damage at the Wayne Airport



Tree damage and debris.

dangers posed by electrical, natural gas and propane.

A team of three National Weather Service meteorologists arrived Oct. 5 to assess information on the tornado.

According to **Brian Smith** of the Valley/Omaha NWS Office, the tornado was an EF4 tornado (wind speeds 166 to 200 mph).

"It was a very strong tornado, a significant tornado," Smith said. "Damage began six miles south, southwest

of Wayne."

Wayne Mayor Ken Chamberlin said damage to the community was in the millions of dollars.

"The rebuilding process will be lengthy," Chamberlin said. "It's really heart wrenching to see all the damage, but I have all confidence in this community. We have had a ton of volunteers. It's been phenomenal."

FEMA Region VII deployed a state liaison to the State Emergency Opera-

tion Center to work with state offices on the preliminary assessment of individual and public needs.

Dr. Jason Karsky, who teaches Emergency Management at Wayne State College, conducted an analysis that revealed the Wayne area tornado rated as a Disaster Category 3 (DC 3) on a scale of 1 to 10.

The tornado ripped through rural areas south of Wayne before making its way through the eastern portion of



Aerial shot from the Nebraska State Patrol of damage to businesses on the east side of Wayne.



Above: Damage at the Summer Sports Complex in Wayne; Right: Terry Hanson, Great Dane Trailer plant manager, presents a check for \$25,000 to from left, Rob Sweetland, Wayne High School softball coach; Dallas Dorey, Wayne Softball Association president; Mayor Ken Chamberlain; Alex Koch, recreational director for city as well as disaster volunteer coordinator; and Steve Lutt, Wayne Baseball Association president.



the community.

“What the research really reveals is that Wayne dodged a bullet,” Karsky said. “I don’t want to think about what life would be like right now if the tornado ripped through the heart of the city.”

Gov. David Heineman issued an emergency declaration for parts of Nebraska hammered by severe weather the first week of October.

Heineman, **Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac**, NEMA director, and **Al Berndt**, NEMA assistant director, toured the damage in Wayne on May 6 and met with city and county officials and members of incident command responding to the disaster.



Nebraska Public Power District employees work to rebuild the power lines to Grossenberg Inc, a John Deere dealership on the east side of Wayne, and on out to the Wayne Airport.



Wayne Mayor Ken Chamberlin, Gov. Dave Heineman and NEMA’s Al Berndt discuss recovery efforts in Wayne.



Gov. Dave Heineman speaks with Incident Commandor Phil Monahan following a tour of the disaster area.



Blizzard Downs Trees, Kills Cattle in Panhandle

An early October blizzard, part of the same storm system that caused tornadoes in eastern Nebraska, dumped snow in northwest Nebraska killing livestock and damaging trees during the first weekend of October.

Lt. Gov. Lavon Heidemann and **NEMA Assistant Director Al Berndt** were in the northern Panhandle Oct. 8 to work with local officials on recovery issues.

“The damage suffered in our communities as a result of the severe winter storm and tornadoes is extensive,” said **Gov. Dave Heineman**. “Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and other state agencies are working diligently to assess the situation and support local efforts.”

Local ranchers throughout the area suffered heavy cattle loss due to the freezing conditions of the severe storm.

NEMA staff worked with Region 23 Emergency Management staff to assess damage and document the losses.

Nan Gould, Region 23 emergency management coordinator, estimates 1,000 head of cattle lost in Dawes and Sioux counties. Gould received reports of nine horses lost and there were local reports of 40 goats lost as well.

According to **Donny Christensen**, public assistance unit supervisor, a large number of trees were affected in Chadron and Crawford and the clean up

is going to take some time.

The State Emergency Operations Center was operational and closely coordinating with local emergency responders during the weekend of the storm. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality worked with NEMA on the response.

Heavy tree damage was noted along the Highway 20 corridor from Rushville to Harrison, especially in the communities of Chadron and Crawford.

Gov. Heineman issued an emergency declaration that encompasses the tornadoes and severe storms that have caused broad damage throughout the state.

“Ultimately there will be state-level assistance available,” Berndt said, due to the governor’s disaster declaration. That assistance will help cities and counties affected by the storm off-set clean up and repair costs to publically-owned infrastructure.

The state, with assistance from federal officials, plans to conduct a preliminary damage assessment to see if there is enough damage to receive federal assistance for all the storms in Nebraska, Berndt said.

The same storm system that caused the blizzard in western Nebraska created flooding conditions in central Nebraska and spawned tornadoes that did extensive damage at Wayne and Macy.



What a Difference a day makes



The South Platte River at Ogallala on Sept. 18 and then on Sept. 19 after water began rising.

Heavy Rains in Colorado Send Flood Waters East

In river beds filled with trees and growth after years of dry summers, September 2013 saw the South Platte River bursting its banks.

Flooding occurred along the South Platte, North Platte and Platte rivers following record rains in Colorado that required



Keith County officials, Nebraska Department of Roads and NEMA staff met in daily conference calls in flood conditions.



Flood water from the South Platte spilled into a Nebraska field north of Julesburg, Colo., Sept. 18

an emergency management response from both local and state emergency managers.

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency deployed a team first to Ogallala and later to North Platte to work with local emergency managers in Deuel, Keith, Lincoln and Dawson Counties.

“Our team is composed of emergency response professionals and a public information officer,” said Earl Imler, response and recovery manager for NEMA. “They will begin to assess the situation in preparation for any flooding that could occur along the South Platte River, and continued to provide updates to the local media on the situation.”

Four Nebraska National Guardsmen in two Humvees also responded to the area to support local emergency operations.

The Nebraska State Patrol set up its mobile operations center at North Platte to respond to the flooding, and flew daily observation flights along the river.

NEMA and public health officials warned people in the South Platte River area to stay out of flood waters and to be aware of possible lane closures due to the flooding and heavy equipment on roads.

After devastating parts of Colorado, the flood waters entered Nebraska on the South Platte River. Large debris,



NEMA's Dave Reisen meets with Dawson County officials in Gothenburg regarding areas of concern for Platte River Flooding.

such as trees, animal carcasses, bacteria, raw sewage and other harmful material were a concern as it crossed the state.

Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) monitored each of the 10 state bridges in the area as the water moved through.

“District 6 NDOR staff worked around the clock watching for debris which could undermine the integrity of the structures if not removed,” said Tom Sands, operations manager of the Nebraska Department of Roads. “Large equipment used to clear debris caused lane closures.”

Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality urged people to avoid contact with floodwaters because of possible contamination.

Teams of American Red Cross disaster action workers from North Platte, Kearney, Grand Island, Lincoln and Omaha were available to help residents forced out of their homes due to flooding from the South Platte River.

The Red Cross worked closely with emergency management to determine if and where shelters were needed.

“I really want to give kudos to the people of Big Springs who were ready for that water two days in advance,” said **Ron Leal, Region 21 (Deuel County) emergency manager**. “We did get a little water in the Total Truck Stop and they had it cleaned up within 12 hours. Representatives from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, the Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were on scene and they worked great with us. We had no structural damage. People really came together.”

Keith County Emergency Manager Pete Petersen reported people really came together in response there as well.



NEMA's Leo Larkin photographs flooding as documentation of damage south of Brule.



“With due diligence and the help from many state agencies, we had time throughout Keith County to prepare for the high water,” Peterson said. “Local people, local government and citizens, spent many hours working to protect critical infrastructure and to alert and notify anyone with interests along the river. Based on reports received, we have had very little damage to public and private property.”

Lincoln County Emergency Management Director Dan Guenther reported roads and home damage as a result of the floods.

“There is property damage and loss,” Guenther said. “No communities have reported problems with their drinking water system, but people living in rural areas and operating private wells had their water tested as a

precaution.”

Brian Wolddt, director of Dawson County Emergency Management said “The water came up, stayed in the banks and came back down. We really didn’t have any issues with flooding

except for in a few low-lying areas.”

Jon Rosenlund of Hall County Emergency Management said “we saw flooding and water running into pastures and areas immediately adjacent to the river, but nothing that caused anyone any great concern.”

RIGHT: Region 21 Emergency Management set up its mobile operations Center at Big Springs.

BELOW: NEMA’s mobile operation center and the Nebraska Department of Roads Incident Management Team set up at the Department of Roads yard just north of the South Platte River in Ogallala, and later a NDOR facilities in North Platte along side the Nebraska State Patrol mobile operations center.



Knox Co. Damage from Oct. 4

Photos submitted by

Laura Hintz, Knox Co. Emergency Management Director



An antique airplane in a hanger that was destroyed at the Creighton airport.



A storage shed with another plane and a couple of RVs was damaged.



This building ended up about three city blocks away from its original location.



Antique tractors were also damaged.

Saunders County Emergency Manager Helps Save Life on Trip

Terry Miller, Saunders County Emergency Management director, used his Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training to help save the life of a stranger at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.

Returning from an Emergency Management Institute training class, in August, Miller was making his way through the airport to his gate when he was approached by a woman he didn't know.

"I was walking to my gate when a lady came up to me and asked where the airport's AEDs were kept," said Miller. "The woman said a man at a

nearby gate was experiencing some form of medical emergency."

Miller went to help the man while the woman kept looking for the automated external defibrillator.

"When I got there, there was already another guy there helping him, who said he was a doctor," Miller said. "I told him I was an EMT and asked if he wanted help."

The doctor examined the man while



Terry Miller

Miller took his vital signs. The woman returned with the AED and told them the paramedics had been called.

"The man lost consciousness and went into respiratory arrest," Miller said. He then used the AED to administer a shock and eventually they were able to revive the man.

"He was awake and talking when the paramedics arrived," Miller said. "I wish I'd found out his name, just so I could check and see how he was doing," he said.

Miller said the incident was a good example of why it's important to have AEDs available in public places.

Otoe Co. Damage from Oct. 4

Photos submitted by
Greg Goebel, Otoe Co. Emergency Management Director





Northeast Nebraska All-Hazard Support Group Aids in Communication at Missouri River Outdoor Expo

***Story and photos submitted
by LeRoy Janssen, Wayne County Sheriff***

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission requested assistance from the Northeast Nebraska All-Hazard Support Group at the Missouri River Outdoor Expo at Ponca State Park Sept. 20-22.

With an expectation of 25,000 to 30,000 participants per day, the Game and Parks Commission noted communications difficulties in previous years throughout the rugged terrain.

The group responded to the request to provide an effective solution to local responder units that had been unable to effectively communicate with the Game and Parks radio system.

The Dixon County Emergency Management Agency requested the Northeast Planning, Exercising and Training Region's portable 85' antenna tower and one portable 30' area lighting tower, to assist the support group with the park's communications issues.

After placing the two towers in strategic locations, a network of radio relays and a radio frequency plan were developed to accomplish the requested task. Wayne County's emergency operations mobile trailer was also deployed to the scene for a station to work from.

Local emergency medical and law enforcement responders used the system to mitigate and respond to three reports of missing children, a potential outside threat that became unrelated to the event, several hundred bee sting incidents, a sprained ankle, a fall, including a bump to the head, and a hand injury at the shooting range.

Jeff Jones, a Nebraska Game and Parks Commission law enforcement officer, and a member of the Missouri River Outdoor Expo Board, expressed his appreciation of the support group

being able to provide the communications solutions that he had requested during prior planning for the annual event. He also indicated that next year is the tenth anniversary of the event and was confident that the group will be requested again to a potentially larger crowd because of the tenure of the event.

The Northeast Nebraska All-Hazard Support Group was composed of emergency management members from Dixon, Cedar, Thurston and Wayne Counties and a Wayne Police Department dispatcher.

The Wayne dispatcher was Lee Wrede, Dixon County EMA was represented by Shea Scollard and Lynn Eifert, Cedar County was represented by Kevin Garvin and Bob Hamilton, Thurston County and Winnebago was represented by Matthew May and Wayne County was represented by Nicholas Kemnitz and Group Supervisor LeRoy Janssen.

"Thanks for keeping the event safe, guys," was added by the Office of the Game and Parks Commission.



Missouri River Outdoor Expo Board Member Jeff Jones poses with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission radio system and in the background are the Northeast Nebraska All-Hazard Support Group members from left to right are Matthew May, Bob Hamilton, Nicholas Kemnitz, LeRoy Janssen, Kevin Garvin, Shea Scollard and Lee Wrede. Not pictured is Lynn Eifert.



Preparedness Day at Hill Top Mall sponsored by Old Navy

*Pictures Submitted by
Darrin Lewis, Buffalo County Director*

Buffalo County Emergency Management Agency brought out its Mobile Response Unit during Preparedness Month in Kearney to give area residents an idea of the county's response capabilities at an event sponsored by Old Navy.

"We had four different types of Emergency Preparedness kits laid out on the tables to show people how to make a kit for homes and vehicles and the different things they could put in them," said Darrin Lewis, emergency management director for Buffalo County. "We also had emergency preparedness pamphlets on all kinds of disasters for all kinds of people, from children adults, elderly, functional needs populations, and even pets."





Region 11 Update

*Story and photos submitted
by Faythe Petersen, Director of
Region 11 Emergency Management*

The Norfolk Fire Division and Region 11 Emergency Management offered a 40-hour Hazmat Refresher course in August.

The course was held at the Lifelong Learning Center and the Northeast Training Facility in Norfolk.

The class was taught by Bill Pfeifer and Matthew May and was supported by Homeland Security Grant dollars. All students were hazmat ops trained fire fighters from the Norfolk Fire Division.

The students trained in classroom and hands on sessions of decontamination, sampling, air monitoring and patching, plugging, damming and diking. The five day course culminated in a full scale exercise.



Hello!

Debra Robinson has joined the technical hazards unit of NEMA as a radiological emergency planning specialist. Her primary responsibility will be working with the Ft. Calhoun Nuclear Station.

Robinson has a bachelor's degree in education and recreation from Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa, and a certificate as a homeland security specialist from Park College in Tyson's Corner, Va. Robinson was working in Virginia prior to joining NEMA.

Her experience includes work as a contractor with Science Applications International Corp. (SAIC), where she worked as a subject matter expert in Counter-Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) and training, and as a training and exercise specialist.

In her work, she developed and trained first responders at the Pentagon for the Pentagon Force Protection Agency (PFPA) and the Air Force District of Washington at Joint Base Andrews. She also oversaw the Medical Reserve Corps Program for the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

Robinson said working in Nebraska gives her the chance to be nearer to her family in Iowa.



Debra Robinson

Goodbye!

NEMA staff bid farewell to **Bryan Cook, Bob Wilhelm, Sheila Hascall** and **Miranda Rogers** during October and sent best wishes in their new endeavors.

Information on the departing staff members replacements will be included in future issues of *The Beacon*.



From left, Al Berndt, presents Bryan Cook, with a certificate of appreciation as he leaves NEMA.



From left, Bob Wilhelm listens, as Al Berndt reads a certificate of appreciation for his contributions to NEMA.



Haz-mat Challenge

Members of four local hazardous materials response teams and two state agencies came together at the Omaha Public Safety Training Center to compete in the first Nebraska Hazmat Challenge on Sept. 19-20.

The individual participants were competing for a chance to represent the State of Nebraska at the national competition to be held in Los Alamos, New Mexico in July 2014.

The competition was comprised of stations and activities that challenged knowledge and response skills commonly employed during a hazmat incident. Station activities included skills like patching and plugging, diking, damming and diverting, liquid transfer, over packing, presumptive identification using the Hazmat ID and event modeling using CAMEO software. A motor skills obstacle course was also included in the competition. The event was sponsored by the NEMA and hosted by the Omaha Public Safety Center.





Cooper Nuclear Station Tabletop

A hostile-action-based tabletop exercise was held Oct. 15 at the Cooper Nuclear Station's emergency operation facility in Auburn.

Dan Hiller, NEMA planning unit supervisor, facilitated the exercise, which included discussion on communication in the event of a hostile-action-based event at the station.

"We discussed notification procedures and plans and how we notify one another," said **Cody Mulloy**, NEMA planning specialist. "It was very productive. We addressed some issues and were able to work on communications and alert notification concerns."



Above: Dan Whitney (Larry the Cable Guy) found a few fans at NEMA when he recently toured the State Emergency Operations Center with Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac. Whitney was at the Joint Force Headquarters to deliver donated Nebraska football tickets to the National Guard.

Left: Gov. Dave Heineman recognized NEMA's Karen Heath for her work on the 2013 Nebraska State Employee Charitable Giving Campaign.

Nebraska Be Prepared Awards Recognize Great Volunteers

Nebraska's sixth annual Be Prepared Awards were presented during September's National Preparedness Month, to recognize volunteers and community organizations for excellence in emergency preparedness and disaster response.

The awards honor Nebraskans who volunteer their time and energy to support preparedness in Nebraska communities.

The awards were presented by **Lt. Gov. Lavon Heidemann** who serves as Nebraska's director of homeland security, and are sponsored by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency in partnership with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.

"The people and groups we are honoring have spent countless hours preparing themselves and others to respond to any crisis," said Heidemann. "They provide educational training and support to community volunteers so they are ready to respond in the event of an emergency. I'm proud to honor our state's emergency volunteers. They are true heroes."

The **Citizen Corps Council of the Year award** was presented to **Hall County Citizen Corps** of Grand Island. Citizen Corps groups increase the preparedness of citizens to respond in emergencies, and the number of volunteers who are trained to support first responders.

In addition to offering a number of training opportunities for volunteers, the Hall County Citizen Corps works with local government and non-government agencies to ensure citizens are prepared to respond to all types of disasters.

From staffing first aid stations at the county and state fairs, to providing preparedness education at community events, Hall County Citizen Corps volunteers are willing to give their time to ensure the safety of their community members.

In addition to the numerous hands-on activities, Hall County Citizen Corps and Hall County Emergency Management have been an integral part of setting up the 'Be Ready Nebraska' website. Similar to FEMA's Ready.gov website, Be Ready Nebraska offers a number of resources for citizens to better prepare themselves for a disaster or emergency.

Be Ready Nebraska also provides links to local volunteer organizations and train-

ing opportunities, so that all Nebraskans have access to resources in their area.

Elaine Frasier and the Citizens of Dundy County received the 2013 **Local Hero Award**, which recognizes extraordinary service and leadership in helping residents in an emergency situation.

The Dundy County community showed outstanding volunteerism and community preparedness efforts during the 2011 Amtrak derailment that happened near Benkelman. Several of the leaders of that response volunteered their time sitting on a community preparedness committee, which develops and reviews preparedness plans, as well as other preparedness activities, such as conducting exercises and emergency planning.

The community as a whole showed exceptional volunteerism and cooperation as they came together to respond to this accident which included nearly 300 victims. School buses and their drivers were on scene shortly after first responders, to transport train passengers. Local farmers brought ATVs and pickups to haul luggage.

Classrooms emptied to assist victims into the school gym which was used as a temporary shelter. Food and water came in by pickup. Nurses, law enforcement, EMS, and fire personnel showed up ready to help. Businesses allowed their employees to help in the response and sheltering of victims. It was estimated 500 volunteers spent 5,000 volunteer hours responding to the emergency.

The **Excellence in Community Preparedness award** was presented to **Denise Kollath** of Columbus, for creating a stronger community through preparedness planning projects and disaster preparation to enhance community readiness and resilience.

Kollath was instrumental in creating the Columbus Area Disaster Volunteer Registry. The registry is a partnership with the Columbus Area United Way, Platte County Emergency Management, Red Cross, and East Central District Health Department. Instead of each agency competing and maintaining their own volunteer database, the organizations came together to create one database that can be shared. This database is maintained and managed by Kollath at the United Way.

She also wrote the Disaster Volunteer Reception Center Plan that organizations would use to manage the influx of volunteers if they were needed during a disaster. She has organized training and exercise events to keep the volunteers interested and organized and to test the plan. The group has been activated numerous times during disasters in the past, including the floods in Platte and Colfax counties.

The **Citizen Corps Partner Program of the Year** was presented to **Central Nebraska Medical Reserve Corps** of Hastings, for the outstanding work they do to educate their community about disaster preparedness, as well as their collaboration with Citizen Corps to train volunteers to be prepared to respond to emergencies.

Ron Pughes, the unit coordinator, is based out of Hastings and covers a region of 23 counties throughout the central part of the state. The Central Nebraska Medical Reserve Corps has undertaken several new initiatives over the last two years to build their volunteer base and contribute to the overall preparedness and response abilities of a largely rural area of the state.

They now have a strong core group of MRC volunteers who actively participate in area trainings and exercises. As they continue to train together, local emergency management has begun to take notice. The Central Nebraska MRC is developing strong relationships with local emergency management and response agencies to train together. These relationships have also led to opportunities for MRC volunteers to participate in upcoming response exercises.

In addition to building a stronger volunteer base and strengthening the ties between the MRC and response agencies, the Central Nebraska MRC recently received their EMS basic service non-transport license. After countless hours and more than a year of work preparing for the license, the Central Nebraska MRC now has the ability to recruit to a new base of EMS volunteers within their 23 county region. It will also allow them to better respond to emergencies in the rural areas where the resources are limited.

The Citizen Corps Volunteer of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



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Governor Dave Heineman

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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:

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BE PREPARED AWARDS CONTINUED

Year award was presented to **Patti Motl** of Omaha. Motl has been a member of the Eastern Nebraska/Western Iowa Medical Reserve Corps since July 2009. In that time, she has demonstrated a strong commitment to the Medical Reserve Corps' mission of engaging volunteers to strengthen public health, emergency response and community resilience.

In addition to working full-time as a pediatric nurse at Children's Hospital and Medical Center in Omaha, where she helps coordinate emergency preparedness activities, she has contributed over 180 hours to assist at disaster preparedness drills and community health activities in the Omaha area. Among those activities are H1N1 vaccination clinics, vaccinating Omaha police and firefighters for tetanus during the 2011 floods, performing triage during the Offutt disaster exercise, assisting at health fairs and providing first aid at the numerous community events.

Motl has completed all required MRC courses and has done additional National Incident Management Service coursework. She regularly attends Omaha's MRC annual training and other training events offered, including Basic and Advanced Disaster Life Support. Patti is always willing to assist where needed, whether it is serving as a MRC field leader or helping clean up after an activity. She follows the chain of command and makes suggestions to improve events or processes. Last year, she received the Presidential Volunteer Service Award. Motl is undertaking a new initiative by contributing her skills to a weekly free clinic for the uninsured.

LincUP of North Platte received the **Excellence in Risk Communication award**, which recognizes a community and industry partnership that demonstrates superior efforts in raising awareness of risks and hazards.

Union Pacific Railroad sponsors a community advisory panel in Lincoln County called LincUP, which was developed in 1999. LincUP is one of three community advisory panels that Union Pacific Railroad sponsors nationally.

The Mission of the LincUP Community Advisory Panel is to provide an open dialogue on health, safety and environmental issues between representatives of

the community and Union Pacific Railroad that promotes awareness and understanding for mutual benefit.

LincUP membership includes leadership and safety representatives of Union Pacific Railroad, retired UP employees, Lincoln County emergency response agencies and representatives from the law enforcement, health, faith and business community.

LincUP meets monthly for educational presentations regarding safety and emergency preparedness topics by area agencies, businesses or the Union Pacific railroad. Members discuss their own capabilities and gaps in emergency preparedness, emergency response, and collaboration in times of disaster. LincUP also promotes community outreach activities. LincUP is an integral part of fostering communication and cooperation among local citizens, businesses, government agencies, emergency response agencies and Union Pacific Railroad.

Larry (Rudy) Mattson of Funk was recognized with the **Excellence in Preparedness Education and Outreach award**, which recognizes an individual who has demonstrated commitment and dedication to the safety of the public by volunteering to train, educate, and promote preparedness.

Mattson volunteers for the Southwest Nebraska Community Emergency Response Team to train and educate volunteers, and helps to cross-train them with other disaster response organizations, such as the Red Cross. He serves on the Phelps County Community Organizations Active in Disaster group to represent the CERT program, and has been very active with that group since 2006, and has been an instructor for CERT for about five years.

Mattson, who has been a volunteer firefighter/EMT for more than 25 years, is the current fire chief for the Funk Fire Department. He has also served on the safety committee, fire brigade, and EMS response at the Becton Dickinson plant. He continues to actively seek preparedness education opportunities. He recently attended the CERT Conference in Beatrice, and is planning to attend the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency's Basic Academy this fall.