



January 2014

# The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



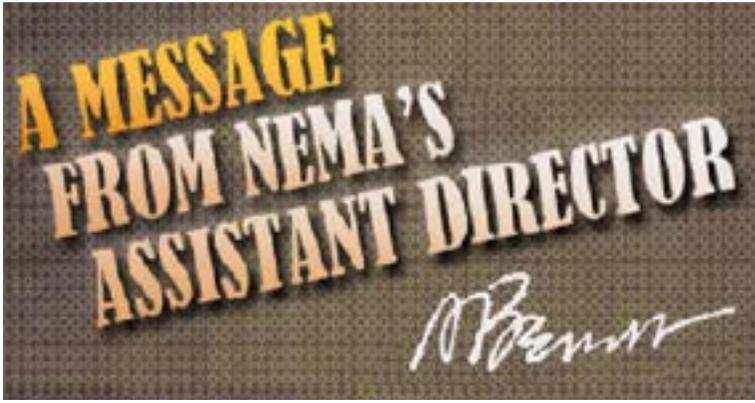
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**COVER PHOTOS** Above: Sue Krogman, IT/Commo unit supervisor presents Bob Eastwood with a cake in honor of his retirement after 24 years with NEMA. Below he completes his last National Warning System (NAWAS) test.





January 16, 2014

I wanted to take a few moments to brief the emergency management community in Nebraska about things occurring within the agency as we move into 2014. As I write this article the wind is howling outside the building and already we have experienced our first wildfire of the year, with the fire along the interstate in Hamilton County two days ago. Hopefully it is not a sign of things to come as we go into spring and summer this year.

This is also the time the Unicameral comes back into the short 60-day session. Within the agency, we are watching several bills of interest to emergency management and I will give a short synopsis of each one of them. The committee hearings are starting next week and should progress rather quickly as they move through the session.

- **LB666** is a bill introduced by **Sen. Bob Krist**, District 10, providing a change in funding source and amount for the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) and requiring that the Military Department "shall" contract with CAP for certain purposes. This bill will be heard by the Appropriations Committee.
- **LB399** is a bill introduced by **Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh**, District 18, to permit a rotating or flashing amber light on a motor vehicle operated on behalf of a public safety or crime prevention organization under terms and conditions as determined by the police department, sheriff or other applicable law enforcement agency. This bill is assigned to the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee.
- **LB772** is a bill introduced by **Senators Al Davis**, District 43, **Mark Christensen-44**, **Tanya Cook-13**, **Sue Crawford-45**, **Annette Dubas-43**, **Jerry Johnson-23**, **Rick Kolowski-31**, **Krist**, **Jim Scheer-19**, **Ken Schilz-47**, **Les Seiler-33**, **Kate Sullivan-41** and **Norman Wallman-30**. This bill would increase the expenditure amount under the Nebraska Emergency Management Act the Adjutant General can expend on emergency aerial and hazmat response per incident from \$10,000.00 to \$25,000. The bill is assigned to the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee and the committee hearing on the bill will be Wednesday, Jan. 22.
- **LB820** is a bill introduced by Senators Davis, Dubas, **Thomas Hansen-42**, Kolowski, Schilz, Sullivan and Wallman. This bill will allow the Governor to execute a compact on behalf of the state to join an interstate compact for the prevention and control of forest fires. The bill also provides employment status for certain volunteer firefighters for workers' compensation. The bill is assigned to the Business and Labor Committee.

This week on the federal level, we are seeing the passage of the FY2014 Budget Bill, and all grants dealing with both emergency management and homeland security will be funded. I am awaiting final figures allocated to the individual grants, but it appears that the EMPG will be funded at a comparable level to what it was in FY2013. The HSGP appears to be receiving approximately \$120 million in additional funds allocated to the program, nationwide. Within each of the programs there will be new program and reporting requirements, both programmatically and administratively, associated with the grants. One of the new requirements will be the establishment of a Senior Advisory Committee encompassing the "whole community" concept within DHS/FEMA. By the end of January, Nebraska, as a state, will have established the committee, and the charter for the committee, and they will be playing an integral part in program development, implementation and reporting. As we receive the final guidance and start rolling out programs, it will be important at both the county and regional level to continue to participate in the overall state emergency management and homeland security programs.

Best regards,  
Al Berndt

## Bob Eastwood Retires from NEMA, Heads to FEMA

The voice of the National Warning System (NAWAS) test in Nebraska has retired. For nearly 24 years, since April 2, 1990, **Bob Eastwood** checked in with representatives across the state on the NAWAS call at 10:30 a.m. every Tuesday.

Radio checks were just a part of Eastwood's duties for the agency, but he definitely was the agency's radio and communications guy. His official title was communications coordinator.

While technically retired from the State of Nebraska, Eastwood is not officially retired. He will begin work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency as a telecommunications specialist at Region VII in Kansas City at the end of January. He will work with the disaster emergency communication division.

"For the next few years, I'll be concentrating on my job at FEMA, which will include working with some of the same people I'm currently working with," Eastwood said.

In the years Eastwood has worked at, first the State Civil Defence Agency



Assistant Director Al Berndt, left, recognizes Bob Eastwood with a certificate at an agency luncheon.

and later, NEMA, he said the biggest changes came in radio equipment.

"Coordination of radio usage has increased greatly," Eastwood said. "Previously, the Nebraska Department of Roads and the Nebraska State Patrol had their own radio systems and would

never talk to each other. Now they do."

Eastwood said highlights of his career with NEMA include:

- Working with the State Amber Alert Committee since its inception.
- Working on the Radio Broadcast Committee for the Emergency Broadcast System, now the Emergency Alert System, for all 23 years with the agency.
- Getting the D-Star Ham Radio System up and running in six counties
- Working with the State Radio System since 1992.

He was with the agency for a month or two when he was deployed in response to floods at Platte Center.

"I got initiated early to setting up portable, on-the-fly, communication," Eastwood said. "I set up repeaters for the town and for the National Guard."

It was fitting that his last deployment, in September 2013, was for flooding along the South Platte.

Eastwood said he worked for four governors: **Kay Orr, Ben Nelson, Mike Johanns** and **Dave Heineman**; five adjutant generals: **Stanley Heng, Roger Lempke, Tim Kadavy, Judd Lyons** and **Daryl Bohac** and four assistant direc-



Bob Eastwood poses with radio equipment at the bunker, circa 1991.



In this composite photo illustration, Bob Eastwood displays both sides of the coin he received from Adjutant General Daryl Bohac.

Adjutant General Daryl Bohac, right, congratulates Bob Eastwood on his retirement from NEMA after nearly 24 years.

tors **Rick Semm, Bill Whitney, Fran Laden and Al Berndt.**

Moving to the new facilities at the Joint Force Headquarters and switching from the Emergency Broadcast System to the Emergency Alert System were the two things that Eastwood said were the most positive remembrances of his time at NEMA.

The busiest time at NEMA during his tenure was flooding in 2011 when the State Emergency Operations Center was full of emergency support function representatives, joint information center staff, federal agency and public call center representatives.

Throughout his work in the bunker, the new facilities and various deploy-

ments for disaster, Eastwood said he has enjoyed his time at NEMA.

"The staff at NEMA has always been great to work with," Eastwood said. "I will especially miss working with the locals. I have gotten along great with them. Another group of people I've enjoyed working with is all the HAM radio guys."



Assistant Director Al Berndt, left, Communications Coordinator Bob Eastwood, second from right, and Jon Schwarz, far right, recognize HAM Radio Operators for their commitment and service to NEMA and the citizens of Nebraska for many years as communications reservists during state radiological emergency preparedness exercises. They are: (left from Berndt) Kent Kennedy, Myron Coleman, Keith Simonson and Roger Hansen.



In 1996, Jim Gerweck, second from right, was elected president elect of the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management. Also pictured, from left, are Rick Klauz, Dawson County, Bob Rose, Clay County, Norm Hoeft, Butler County and Mel Plumer, Region 21.



Jim Gerweck addresses Nebraska Association of Emergency Management conference participants in 2009. Also pictured, from left, are Darrin Lewis, Buffalo County, Paul Johnson, Douglas County, Pat Gerdes, Region 15 and Brian Woldt, Dawson County.

# Richardson County's Jim Gerweck Retires

After more than 30 years, **Jim Gerweck**, is retiring from Richardson County Emergency Management.

He started there as a deputy in 1983, when it was called civil defense. Later, when he became the director, he earned a "couple of hundred dollars a year" in the part-time, mostly volunteer job. He became full-time director in January 1993.

"It's not a job you take for the money," Gerweck said. "You have to care about it. I've enjoyed the job and representing the people of Richardson County. I'll miss it. There is great reward in it. I can lock the doors, turn out the lights and know I did what I could."

Gerweck was active in the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management

and was honored in 2010 as a lifetime member for his work.

During his time with the agency he's seen a lot of positive changes.

"Things have advanced in technology and notification," Gerweck said.

There are a lot more resources for information.

"It was a pleasure to help people make it a better, safer place, Gerweck said. "People think because you have the title of emergency manager that means you can fix everything. There is no magic wand. You can influence but you can't control everything. The best you can do is mitigate, but you're not going to stop the Missouri River from flooding.

"Since 1983, there hasn't been any

time I haven't been on call. There's been planning and preparing 24/7 for 30 years."

His best advice for new local emergency managers:

- **Keep your county board up-to-date.** "If they are behind you, then you have a team. That is key. We had the best county board supporting us in Richardson County."
- **Keep the public informed.** "Then they will buy in to what you're doing."

He's looking forward to spending time driving his Mustang convertible skiing, enjoying life and doing ham radio work.

"I know that the other people coming on are dedicated and well trained."

## Brian Dixon Named Richardson Director

**Brian Dixon**, who has been serving as deputy director since May 2013, was named director of Richardson County Emergency Management.

Previously, Dixon worked as a paramedic specializing in disaster response in both Omaha and Portland, Ore.

"My background in public safety will serve me well as an emergency manager," Dixon said. "I have first-hand disaster experience because I've been the guy at the scene."

As deputy he's focused on learning the job.

Building and maintaining working relationships with community stakeholders will be a priority, Dixon said.

"The biggest thing I look forward to is taking a county with a rich history of emergency management and running with that while promoting new technology in a rural setting."

Dixon has already created a Facebook page and Twitter account for Richardson County Emergency Management.



# Chase County Director Paul Kunneman Retires



**Paul Kunneman**, director of the Chase County Emergency Management Agency, is retiring after 25 years on the job.

"When I took it over, I was supervisor at a nursing home in Imperial, and for 16 years I worked two jobs," Kunneman said.

He's faced storm disasters, train derailments, chemical spills and wildfires. He started as the director of civil defense.

Kunneman said he's seen a lot of changes in the past 25 years.

"The biggest change came after Sept. 11," he said. "We moved more toward homeland security. Before that it was fairly simple; we took care of local stuff and chased storms."

Kunneman is proud of the implementation of storm chasers in Chase County. He has worked with about 10 spotters throughout the county to keep the community safe.

He says the storm chasing is what he will miss the most.

"I've been pretty close to them," he said. "It's exciting."

What he says he won't miss most is the paperwork.

Kunneman said he has enjoyed working with the variety of people in the county who have made his job easier. He mentioned specifically the sheriff's office, police, EMT, ambulance, the safety team in the schools and hospital staff.

He said he worked successfully with the county board over the years.

"I'll miss the people the most," Kunneman said.

This summer, Kunneman plans to spend time fishing.

"My wife and I are planning on doing some travelling with our fifth wheel," he said. "We want to see some of the country and the rest of Nebraska."

That was something that was hard to do as director of emergency management for Chase County.

"It was a 24/7 kind of deal," he said.

## Duane Dreiling Named Chase Director

The Chase County Commissioners have named Duane Dreiling as Chase County Emergency Management director.

Dreiling will serve as part-time director. He has served as a storm chaser for the county for 17 years and has worked as deputy director for the last seven years. Dreiling grew up in Imperial and has a wife and two sons, ages 17 and 12.

He said he has worked with high-winds, flooding and drought during his time with Chase County, and expects to see a lot more activity in the years to come.

Retiring director, Paul Kunneman, said there will be a lot for the new director to learn as he assumes the role. "I'll be happy to serve in an advisory role and offer any help Duane needs."



# 2014 Nebraska Severe Weather Awareness Poster Contest

The springtime severe weather season is quickly approaching and that means it's time for the 2014 Nebraska Severe Weather Awareness Poster Contest.

The contest, sponsored by the **Nebraska Association of Emergency Management (NAEM)**, **National Weather Service (NWS)** and **Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)**, is part of the annual Severe Weather Awareness Week effort of emergency management directors/coordinators across the state.

The poster contest is open to all fourth-grade students in Nebraska public and private schools, as well as home-schooled fourth-grade students. Teachers are encouraged to have students participate while teaching them about hazards of severe weather in Nebraska.

While not specifically designed to promote tornado awareness, tornadoes are the most common theme chosen for posters. Lightning and flooding, which are also products of severe thunderstorms, are also good topic choices.

The first-place winner in the state contest wins a \$125 gift card. The second-place winner receives a \$100 gift card and the third-place winner receives a \$75 Gift Card provided by NAEM. The fourth place poster winner will receive a \$50 gift card sponsored by NWS.

All four winners will also receive a NOAA All-Hazards Weather Alert Radio from the Saline County Emergency Management Agency.

Winners will be featured in an issue of the NEMA newsletter, *The Beacon*.

## Nebraska Severe Weather Awareness Poster Contest Rules

1. Poster artists must be a fourth-grade pupil in any Nebraska private, public or home school.
2. Entries must be related to the theme of severe weather safety and will be judged on originality, effort and accuracy. **All entries must be on an 11" x 17" sheet of white paper providing a 1 inch border to allow for matting the winning posters.** Any medium may be used (crayon, paint, markers, etc.). Only one entry is allowed per pupil and no joint entries (posters by more than one person) will be accepted.
3. Each school is encouraged to conduct the contest. **All entries must be received by the local emergency management director/coordinator or postmarked on or before Feb. 21, 2014.** A list of directors/coordinators can be found at [www.naem.us](http://www.naem.us) or [www.nema.nebraska.gov](http://www.nema.nebraska.gov)
4. Each entry **must include** student name, age, complete home address, home telephone number, name of school, location of school and school phone number on the back side of the entry.
5. Teachers are encouraged to contact the local emergency management director to assist in the selection of the **top three** entries from their school. If the local director is unavailable or unknown, please contact Mark Meints, poster contest chairman, (402) 223-1305.
6. First, second, third and fourth place winners will be chosen. All winners will be notified by telephone or mail. The four winners and their parents will be invited to the State Capitol on Thursday, March 13, 2014 at 10 a.m. for the presentation of their awards from NAEM and NWS and be recognized by **Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman**.
7. Any questions regarding the 2014 Severe Weather Poster Contest should be directed to the local emergency management director/coordinator or to **Mark Meints** at (402) 223-1305, email [gageco-ema@diodecom.net](mailto:gageco-ema@diodecom.net)

Contest rules and other information can also be obtained at the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management website at [www.naem.us](http://www.naem.us). **Poster Judging will be February 28** by the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management and representatives from the National Weather Service and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

# Hazard Mitigation Grant Funding Available

The application process is now open to apply for Hazard Mitigation Grant funding made available state-wide through the latest presidentially declared disaster DR4156.

A variety of projects and initiatives can be submitted under the HMGP- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Projects and plan applications may be submitted to the **State Hazard Mitigation Officer, Mary Baker**.

Planning funds are available for drafting new hazard mitigation plans or updating current plans that may be expiring within the next year to 18 months.

Initiative projects, such as warning systems, generators for critical infra-structures or reverse 911 systems, may be submitted under the current disaster funding. Regular projects may be considered, which may include but are not limited to: watershed improvement, property acquisitions or buy outs or wind/tornado safe room projects, both public and residential.

**For more information please contact: [mary.baker@nebraska.gov](mailto:mary.baker@nebraska.gov) or call (402) 471-7185**



By Darryl Madden, Director  
FEMA Ready Campaign

For many, the [New Year](#) is a time for setting goals and making new resolutions for the year to come. If you are anything like me, each year you find yourself resolving to achieve a

healthier lifestyle - eating right, exercising more, losing a few pounds.

Setting personal health goals in the New Year is great, but improving overall well-being involves taking actions to be prepared. Knowing what to do in an emergency is vital to the health and safety of you and your loved ones.

This year, the Ready Campaign is challenging you to be Prepared in 2014. Start the New Year by connecting with family and friends on the importance of preparedness. Not only can the information shared potentially save a life, connecting with those you love has an added benefit. People who have strong social connections tend to be healthier and more resilient.

I know the hardest part of keeping a resolution is sustaining it after those first few weeks of the year, but you don't have to do it all at once.

First, start by simply having the conversation: who to call, where to meet and what to pack in an emergency.

Build your family's emergency supply kit by picking up [recommended emergency items](#) over the first month or two of the year.

Create a preparedness checklist. This should include things such as emergency phone numbers and copies of important documents, and information on how to register for programs such as the [American Red Cross Safe and Well website](#).

Set reminders throughout the year to talk about and update your family emergency communication plan. If you have children, include them in conversations and planning activities. The Ready Campaign has [age-appropriate tools and resources](#) you can use to introduce disaster preparedness to them. And you can learn more about [talking with kids](#) after disasters so you're ready to help them through tough situations.

Have pets? Make sure they are a part of your planning process. Create a [pet go-bag](#) to help keep them safe during an emergency. Find helpful [tips from FEMA](#) on how to plan for your furry friends.

[Older adults](#) often have special needs in a disaster and may depend on medications or other special requirements. If older adults are a part of your social connection, be sure to include them in your preparedness planning efforts.

Emergencies can and will happen, but being ready can minimize the impact they have on the overall well-being of you and your family.

This year, make disaster preparedness part of your New Year's resolution. Join the [Resolve To Be Ready Thunderclap](#) to promote a message of preparedness to your social connections.

Don't forget to use the hashtag #Prepared2014 whenever you discuss family preparedness on Twitter.

## Storms Spotter Talks

The National Weather Service offices in Nebraska are beginning to list storm spotter trainings. Check out the links below for the North Platte and Omaha/Valley schedules. Watch the [NEMA Training Calendar](#) under Other Courses and Events for links to additional storm spotter training as the lists become available.

[North Platte 2014 Storm Spotter Training Schedule](#)

[Omaha/Valley 2014 Severe Storm Spotter Training](#)



[www.nema.nebraska.gov](http://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:

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

## 2014 Standardized LEOP Available on NEMA Website

Eighteen counties are due for the five-year revision of their LEOP this year. The 2014 standardized LEOP is now available for download from NEMA's website at: <http://www.nema.ne.gov/preparedness/index.html>. Each county's emergency management director will be receiving a letter from a NEMA planner who will be working with them to complete the revision.

If you're a director with a LEOP, or LEOPs, due for revision, you're encouraged to get started as soon as possible and contact your assigned planner at NEMA for help with any questions or problems. Counties not due for a 5-year revision are expected to do an annual review of their LEOP and make any updates as necessary.

## REGISTER NOW FOR AN ICS-300 AND ICS-400 NEAR YOU

There are a variety of opportunities to take the Incident Command System (ICS) 300-400 and Advance Planning Concepts courses in 2014.

These may be the only opportunities for these classes this year, so if you're interested in taking the courses, sign up now. These courses are offered on weekdays, weekends or a combination of both, all across the state.

ICS 300-400 at Ft. Robinson offers rooms for as little as \$25 a night (there may be other charges-see brochure: <http://nfs.unl.edu/documents/fireprotection/2013NWFA.pdf>). The rest of these courses are completely free, and some include lunch. More information, including flyers, are on the training calendar on NEMA's web page: <http://www.nema.ne.gov/preparedness/training-calendar.html>. Feel free to copy and use the flyers as you see fit.

ICS-400	Jan 18-19	Cambridge
ICS-300	Jan 23-24	South Sioux City
ICS-300-400	Jan 27-31	Grand Island
ICS 300	Feb 6-7	La Vista
APC	Feb 18-19	Columbus
APC	Feb 20-21	McCook
ICS-300	Feb 27-March 1	Fremont
ICS-300	Feb 28-March 2	Broken Bow
ICS 400	Mar 6-7	La Vista
ICS-300	Mar 21-23	North Platte
ICS-400	Apr 5-6	North Platte
ICS-400	Apr 12-13	Broken Bow
ICS-300-400	Apr 28-May 2	Wildfire Academy, Ft. Robinson
ICS-300	May 2-4	Bassett
ICS-300-400	May 5-9	Lincoln
ICS-400	May 17-18	Bassett

Low registration numbers will force a class cancellation. Please promote these courses among your constituents.