



The Beacon

October 2014

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency



ReadyCampus

A ReadyCampus event, Oct. 14, promoted disaster preparedness for University of Nebraska-Lincoln students. Nebraska Emergency Management Agency was represented at the event by Citizen Corps Planning Specialist Ryan Lowry (pictured above, left), and Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl.

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[Check Out NEMA's New Agency Video on YouTube](#)

**National Emergency
Management Association
Annual Conference 2014
Atlanta, Georgia**



**A Message from
Bryan Tuma
NEMA Assistant Director**

For the past few months, I have been trying to meet emergency managers and our partners in emergency response across the state of Nebraska as I settle into my position as assistant director. Earlier this month, I got the opportunity to meet my counterparts from other states at the National Emergency Management Association’s annual conference in Atlanta. During the conference we got a briefing from FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate about the current state of emergency management programs and activities at the federal level.

We learned that there is a lot of activity related to legislative proposals in Congress, but nothing that appears to significantly modify current programs or methods of operations. It looks like funding levels for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) should remain constant. Given the trend of more disasters, more severe weather and more devastating events, Congress will be questioning the cost/benefit of the traditional approach to hazard mitigation moving to a process of hardening, improving or relocating infrastructure so that dollars expended will significantly reduce the need for repeating mitigation activities in problematic areas. Insurability requirements will also likely be imposed on infrastructure, and this will drive a lot of mitigation activities.

We can also expect the preliminary damage assessment (PDA) process for future disasters to receive greater scrutiny as FEMA’s inspector general has noted a propensity for inaccurate or inflated damage estimates. In many cases, the actual costs of repairs were only a third of the PDA estimates. With that in mind, we need to expect substantial modifications to the current PDA process.

Overall, the conference was an excellent opportunity to get updated nationally and discover how it may impact the citizens of Nebraska.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Buma". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish that extends to the right.



Craig Fugate, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management agency talks with emergency managers from all states at the National Emergency Management Association Annual Conference in Atlanta. Jeffrey Stern, state coordinator for the Virginia Department of Emergency Management tweeted the picture, Oct. 10, with the following question “The most prepared room in USA right now?”



Participants in a training exercise wrap up their discussion on the emergency response that would be needed in the event of an Ebola case in Lancaster County.

Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department Sponsors Ebola Preparedness Exercise

More than 90 representatives from 40 community agencies participated Oct. 28 in a training exercise to practice emergency response in the event of a potential or identified case of Ebola, or any other serious infectious disease, in the community.

The training, sponsored by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD), involved hospital infection control professionals and emergency preparedness coordinators, as well as local public health and state public safety agencies and community Healthcare Coalition members.

NEMA's **Dan Hiller, Dave Reisen** and **Alisia LaMay** were among the participants.

The exercise used three scenarios to allow participants to simulate how agencies would communicate and coordinate efforts to ensure that all safety and clinical procedures were followed to treat patients and to ensure the safety of healthcare and emergency response workers and the public.

"While the risk to the general public of exposure to Ebola is highly unlikely, it's important to provide the most accurate information about the virus to healthcare and emergency workers,

as well as to the public," said **Tim Timmons**, LLCHD's communicable disease program supervisor.

Health Director **Judy Halstead** said this type of exercise is not new to the agencies involved.

"To be thoroughly prepared for an emergency in our community, the medical community, local government agencies and others have been involved in routine training for more

than a decade," she said. "This training has included our response to serious infectious diseases. Working together on a regular basis helps ensure that when we need to come together to plan for potential emergencies in our community, we are well prepared and ready to take action."

More information about Ebola is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at cdc.gov.



Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska State Patrol and Nebraska Military Department Staff participate in a training exercise to practice emergency response in the event of an Ebola case in the community.

ReadyCampus Event at UNL Encourages Preparedness



A ReadyCampus event, Oct. 14, promoted disaster preparedness for University of Nebraska-Lincoln students.

The theme for the event focused on pet and animal preparedness, and students were

able to interact and watch a search and rescue demonstration using specially-trained dogs.

Six ReadyCampus events have been held at universities in Kansas, Nebraska and

Missouri during the last year.

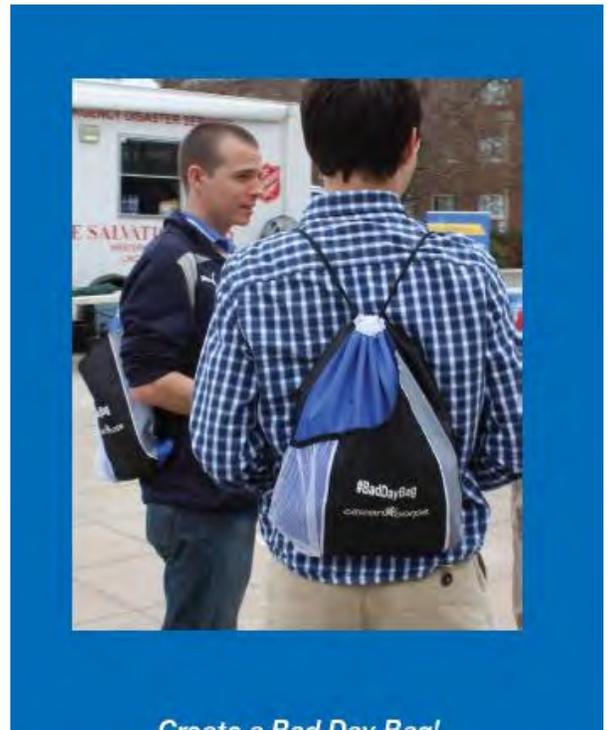
Bad Day Bags, flashlights and water bottles were distributed by Citizen Corps to promote preparedness.



UNL students learn about pet preparedness after receiving Bad Day Bags.



Jancy, NEMA Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl's dog, rests from her duties promoting pet preparedness at the UNL ReadyCampus event.



Create a Bad Day Bag!

Nebraska Citizen Corps promotes preparedness in all situations. Creating a Bad Day Bag is just one way to be prepared for a disaster or emergency. A Bad Day Bag can be kept in your office, car, dorm room, or anywhere you might need to grab it and go. You can include items that will be useful such as:

- ☆ A flashlight and extra batteries
- ☆ Hand sanitizer
- ☆ A first aid kit
- ☆ Cell phone charger
- ☆ Emergency contact information
- ☆ water bottle



Follow @NE_CCP on twitter and use #BadDayBag to share with us what's in your kit.

Workshops Focus on What's Ahead

The annual Threat/Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), State Preparedness Report (SPR) and Training and Exercise and Planning (TEPW) workshops were held Oct. 21-22 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Innovation Campus.

The workshops give the state's emergency managers an opportunity to complete work required for eligibility for homeland security grant funding and develop a multi-year training and exercise plan for the state.

"We are consistently pleased with the great participation in these workshops from a variety of representative local, state and federal entities," said NEMA Preparedness Section Manager Nikki Weber.



Avoiding Second Disaster Addressed at Training

It is not unusual for communities recovering from disasters to receive so much help from well-meaning individuals that donations and volunteer management often becomes more difficult than managing the recovery.

A Local Volunteer and Donations Management course presented by Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, partnering with FEMA, was presented at Northeast Community College in Norfolk on Oct. 27-28.

"I am here to learn how to avoid the 'second disaster'," said **Michelle Evert**. The second disaster is a term often used to describe poor donation and volunteer management.

Evert and **Mark Arps** of Colfax County Emergency Management requested the course to provide information on managing those resources.

"This course created a great opportunity for the whole community – local, state and federal partners – to gain and share knowledge," said **Janet Morris** of FEMA, who provided instructors and materials for the course. "Sharing experiences allows us to generate sparks of awareness to enhance our preparedness, response and recovery efforts."

Dante Gimiecki, the state volunteer coordinator for Missouri State Emergency Management Agency, was one of the instructors.

"I am very impressed with the number of key players who attended this course," said Gimiecki. "I wish I could get this kind of participation from our local emergency managers [in Missouri]. The extraordinary participation in this course by local emergency managers, along with key partner organizations, such as the American Red Cross, the United Way and Volunteer Partners, is one of the most impressive displays of collaboration and a whole community best practice that I have ever witnessed. Nebraska should be very proud of this level of emergency management professionalism," said Gimiecki.

Becky Peterson said the course provided information that will continue to help with the Nebraska long-term



NEMA's Chuck Chase and Dante Gimiecki, the state volunteer coordinator for Missouri State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) address participants at the Local Volunteer and Donations Management Course in Norfolk, Oct. 27-28.

recovery team in Pilger.

Peterson was thrown into managing volunteers and donations in Pilger, following the tornado that struck last June.

"I would have been overwhelmed without the help of **Brent Curtis**, from NEMA, who was instrumental in helping me to get a handle on this management," said Peterson. "Day-to-day, things changed, and Brent was there to get answers to our needs and help us move forward in getting Pilger cleaned up."

Denise Kollath of Columbus United Way and Connect Columbus said the course helped her to understand the role of the United Way and the volunteer center in the event of a local emergency.

"It also helped me to understand the importance of proper messaging and communication to partner agencies, donors, volunteers and the community as a whole," she said.

After the Wayne tornado in 2013, **Nic Kemnitz**, emergency manager for Wayne County, developed a presentation about the work that is done following a disaster.

"This course demonstrated that the local, state and federal agencies all need to communicate and work together, along with our state volunteer organizations active in disasters,

in planning, exercising and training for managing volunteers and donations in future disasters," Kemnitz said.

One of the benefits of this training according to **Teri Roberts**, the director of emergency management programs for Volunteer Partners, is that it brings together professionals with extensive knowledge and experience.

"There is nothing more important to successful disaster response and recovery than good training," said **Rich Bradley**, a FEMA voluntary agency liaison, who helped teach the course. "The local volunteer and donations course offered to emergency managers and voluntary agencies in Norfolk has been a great experience for all who attended."

Chris Van Alstyne, federal coordinating officer from FEMA Region VII was complimentary of the class offered in Norfolk.

"I'm absolutely in awe of the great energy and cross talk occurring at the L288 course here in Norfolk!" Van Alstyne wrote. "The course is packed. Although the course ends at noon we'll probably have to blow an air horn to finish all of the discussions and push folks out. We have to thank Brent Curtis, Janet Morris, Kristy Ray, Kathy Fitzgerald and others for getting nationally acclaimed instructors and the right audience here."

Employee Recognition Month

2014 Years of Service Ceremony



Amy Stroh, center, staff assistant II with Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, was recognized for 40 years of service to NEMA at the annual Years of Service recognition, Oct. 21, at the State Capitol. Honoring her were, from left, Bryan Tuma, NEMA assistant director; Lt. Gov. John Nelson; Phyllis McCown, administration unit supervisor for NEMA; and Deputy Adjutant Gen. Rich Dahlman.



Terri Kattes, administrative assistant II, was unable to attend the ceremony; however, she has served for 35 years with the State of Nebraska.



Dan Hiller, planning unit supervisor, second from right, was recognized for 25 years of service. Honoring him were, from left, Tuma, Lt. Gov. Nelson; and Gen. Dahlman.



Jackie Maly, federal aid administrator II, second from right, was recognized for 25 years of service. Honoring her were, from left, Tuma, Lt. Gov. Nelson; and Gen. Dahlman.



Tonya Ngotel, State Emergency Response Commission coordinator, second from right, was recognized for 10 years of service. Honoring her were, from left, Gen. Dahlman, Tuma and Lt. Gov. Nelson.



Patrick Rooney, planning specialist, second from right, was recognized for 10 years of service. Honoring him were, from left, Tuma, Lt. Gov. Nelson; and Gen. Dahlman.



Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drill -- Oct. 16

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency staff were among the millions of people worldwide who participated in the annual Great Shakeout Earthquake Drill on Oct. 16. The drill was designed to help community members practice what to do in the event of an earthquake.

No Nebraska community is immune from natural hazards, and earthquakes are just one of the many natural hazards Nebraskans could face.

"While rarer in Nebraska than in some places, earthquakes are still a potential risk, and it is one of the contingencies we plan for here at Nebraska Emergency Management Agency," said **Bryan Tuma**, NEMA assistant director. "For the Great Shake-Out on Oct. 16, we asked Nebraskans

to take a minute out of their day to drop, cover and hold on, as a practice for what you would do during an actual earthquake.

"Even if earthquakes are rare in our state, they do happen where you or your family travels, so please plan accordingly and be safe," Tuma said.

The Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drill is an annual opportunity for people in homes, schools and organizations to practice what to do during earthquakes, and to improve preparedness.

According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the two largest earthquakes to strike Nebraska occurred March 28, 1964, near Merriam and Nov. 15, 1877, in eastern Nebraska. Both were 5.1 magnitude earthquakes and while classified as a

moderate event they caused considerable damage. The 1964 earthquake was felt in Montana, South Dakota and Wyoming, and the 1877 earthquake was felt in parts of Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Drop, Cover and Hold On is the established protocol to follow to reduce injury and death during earthquakes.

"We want all Nebraskans to know that they should drop to the ground, take cover by getting under a sturdy desk or table and hold on until the shaking stops," Tuma said. "If it's not possible to get to the floor to safely take cover, find an inside corner of the room near you that is away from windows and objects that could fall on you."



Governor Presents 2014 Be Prepared Awards

Volunteers & Communities Recognized for Emergency Preparedness

Gov. Dave Heineman announced the recipients of this year's 'Be Prepared' awards, recognizing volunteers and community organizations for excellence in emergency preparedness and disaster response. The governor was joined by **Lt. Gov. John Nelson**, who serves as Homeland Security Director of the State, Nebraska National Guard **Deputy Adjutant General Brig. Gen. Richard Dahlman** and Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) **Assistant Director Bryan Tuma** to present seven emergency preparedness awards.

Presented during Nebraska Preparedness Month, the 'Be Prepared' awards program is in its seventh year of honoring Nebraskans who volunteer their time and energy to support preparedness in Nebraska communities. The awards are sponsored by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, in partnership with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.

"Preparing yourself and others to respond to any crisis is an important task, and those being honored today

understand that investment," said Gov. Heineman. "The award winners 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 Beaver Crossing and Cordova Fire Departments were presented with an Excellence in Community Preparedness Award, for creating a stronger community, through preparedness planning and disaster preparation, to enhance community readiness and resilience. The Beaver Crossing and Cordova Fire Departments were instrumental in making sure residents in and around their communities were prepared and informed during the severe weather and tornadoes that took place on May 11.

Both fire departments used their volunteer storm spotters to monitor the weather throughout the storms and activate the sirens for Beaver Crossing and Cordova. Throughout the evening, these storm spotters



Ron Pughes of Edgar receives an award from **Lt. Gov. John Nelson** and **Gov. Dave Heineman**.

continued to relay information about the weather which was used by the National Weather Service and media outlets to alert residents of the impending tornadoes. Their efforts made a difference in making sure their communities were well-informed and safe as the storms passed through.

Ron Pughes of Edgar was presented with an Excellence in Community Preparedness Award, for creating a stronger community, through preparedness planning and disaster preparation, to enhance community readiness and resilience.

Pughes, unit coordinator for the Central Nebraska Medical Reserve Corps, has made it his mission to have a prepared and resilient region in central Nebraska. In order to build partnerships and strengthen resilience, Pughes regularly trains volunteers on activation and deployment protocols. He invites community partners, such as emergency management personnel, to observe and participate in exercises that demonstrate their level of preparedness.

Pughes has coordinated additional volunteer opportunities by providing medical first aid at various community events. In addition to providing a needed service, volunteers have the



The Beaver Crossing Fire Department earned the Excellence in Community Preparedness award. Pictured, from left, are Deputy Adjutant General Brig. Gen. Richard Dahlman, Lt. Gov. John Nelson, Jerry Zieg, Scott Petersen, Gov. Dave Heineman and NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma.

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opportunity to interact with community members to promote preparedness.

Nicholas Kemnitz, Wayne County emergency manager, received the 2014 Local Hero Award, which recognizes extraordinary service and leadership in helping residents in an emergency situation.

Kemnitz has faced numerous challenges over the past year. In October 2013, a tornado touched down in Wayne and caused damage to a number of businesses and the airport. Working closely with other response agencies, Kemnitz was able to manage the incident effectively. Earlier this summer, severe weather and tornadoes came through northeast Nebraska again, this time causing extensive damage to a large area including the towns of Pilger and Wakefield. Kemnitz drew on his recent experience to assist with the response efforts across northeast Nebraska, providing much needed resources to a number of agencies that were called in to respond.

The **Nebraska Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster** also received the 2014 Local Hero Award, recognizing extraordinary service and leadership in helping residents in an emergency situation. The Nebraska



Nicholas Kemnitz, (center) Wayne County emergency manager, receives the Local Hero Award, from Gov. Dave Heineman. Pictured from left, Deputy Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Richard Dahlman, Lt. Gov. John Nelson, Kemnitz, Heineman and NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma.

Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, or Nebraska VOAD, is a membership-based organization that adheres to the principles of cooperation, communication, coordination, and collaboration in order to foster resiliency in communities statewide. These principles serve as the foundation for the Nebraska VOAD as it collaborates with local, regional, and national

partners to coordinate disaster relief, response, and recovery efforts in times of disaster. Nebraska VOAD was an essential partner following both the May 16 and June 16-17 tornadoes through the implementation of its rapid notification and communication system. Once notified of the situation, member

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The Local Hero Award went to the Nebraska Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. From left, John Treolo and Teri Roberts are pictured with Gov. Dave Heineman.



Citizen Corps Volunteer of the Year Dr. Ken Hermsen receives his award from Gov. Dave Heineman.

organizations quickly came together to discuss the needs of the communities and identify who could provide the resources to fill those needs. Nebraska VOAD was also essential in facilitating long-term recovery efforts in communities impacted by the severe storms and tornadoes.

The Citizen Corps Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to **Ken Hermsen**, of Omaha, for his outstanding commitment and contribution to the Medical Reserve Corps, one of the partner programs of the Citizen Corps.

Hermsen is a member of the Eastern Nebraska/Western Iowa Medical Reserve Corps, where he serves on the decontamination team as one of its co-leaders. He is also very active in a number of other volunteer positions. Hermsen is a founding member of the Nebraska Forensic Dental Identification Team and has been deployed as a forensic dentist to numerous disasters including the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina. He also helped found the Nebraska Mission of Mercy,

an annual free dental clinic for underserved communities throughout the state. As a professor at Creighton University, Hermsen is working with his students to encourage a spirit of giving back by developing a disaster response elective for those who wish to become involved in their communities' disaster response efforts. Hermsen's volunteer efforts have had an impact not only on Nebraskans, but in communities across the nation.

Mark Robertson, emergency preparedness coordinator at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln Police Department, received the Excellence in Risk Communication Award, recognizing his efforts in raising awareness of risks and hazards, and highlighting the need for all Nebraskans to be prepared.

Robertson takes an innovative approach to delivering traditional emergency preparedness information to the University of Nebraska – Lincoln community. Robertson uses social media to keep students, faculty, and staff informed of potential emergencies. He

has also developed a series of humorous yet informative videos on YouTube called the "Really Obvious Preparedness Facts" series. These videos deliver preparedness information such as how to create a disaster plan, staying safe on campus, and understanding what to do in case of a fire or severe weather. Robertson recognizes that in order to reach students, he must do so in an engaging way. He has embraced social media as a way to interact with the UNL community and provide important emergency preparedness information.

Tom McMahon, of Omaha, was recognized with the Excellence in Preparedness Education and Outreach Award for demonstrating a commitment and dedication to the safety of the public by volunteering to train, educate and promote preparedness to Nebraskans.

McMahon recently retired from the position as the unit coordinator for the Eastern Nebraska/Western Iowa Medical Reserve Corps. In his time as the unit coordinator, McMahon developed strong relationships with partners throughout the Omaha metro area, including emergency management, public health officials, hospital administrators and other volunteer organizations. These relationships allowed him to bring in highly qualified individuals to provide training and educational opportunities to the Medical Reserve Corps volunteers. Once trained, the volunteers were used by these same agencies to assist with public health screenings, provide first aid at large-scale events like the College World Series, and assist with large-scale disaster drills and exercises.

McMahon recognized the value of building relationships in order to have an effective corps of volunteers. His work has made the Eastern Nebraska/Western Iowa Medical Reserve Corps a valuable asset to the Omaha metro community.

Not pictured: Tom McMahon, Eastern Nebraska/Western Iowa MRC coordinator, received the Excellence in Community Education and Outreach award.



The Excellence in Risk Communication was presented to Mark Robertson, University of Nebraska – Lincoln. Pictures from left, are Deputy Adjutant General Brig. Gen. Richard Dahlman, Lt. Gov. John Nelson, Robertson, Gov. Dave Heineman and NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma.



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State Homeland Security Director

Lt. Governor John Nelson

NEMA Director

Major General Daryl Bohac

Assistant Director

Bryan Tuma

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)

Exercise Training Officer Completes Instructor Training Certification

The Center for Domestic Preparedness welcomed NEMA Exercise Training Officer **Chuck Chase** to the Instructor Training Certification (ITC) course in Anniston, Ala., Oct. 6-10.

The ITC course provided Chase with an overview of instruction in adult learning, task analysis, and testing and evaluations among others. He now has the ability to tailor lessons using FEMA-approved techniques and design courses of instruction for his organization.

“My job identifies gaps in current training throughout Nebraska,” Chase said. “To correct the gaps, I need to write or corrects lessons using FEMA language and methods. There is a lot to learn regardless of how proficient a person believes he is when teaching a class. If I see a gap in Nebraska and there isn’t a FEMA course that fits that round hole, I can make the round peg to fit it, in the correct language.”

ITC is a five-day course that prepares emergency responders to deliver lectures and hands-on training in their local jurisdictions. The course is conducted in two phases: fundamental principles and applied principles. Students prepare lesson plans, im-



Chuck Chase

prove communication skills and deliver training using a variety of instructional technology.

“The ITC course is going to help me understand the process to put together FEMA approved lesson plans and identify any training and response areas Nebraska can improve.”

Completion of the ITC course completed the requirements for Chase to meet FEMA’s basic level of the Master Training Program.

NEMA Staff UPDATE



Nancy Ludden joined NEMA Oct. 6 as a staff assistant in the hazard mitigation unit.

She is working with grants, file management and special projects.

Ludden, who retired from the State Fire Marshal’s Office in March as deputy State Fire Marshal in the flammable liquid storage tank section, worked at the Fire Marshal Office for 11 years.

A Nebraska native, Ludden enjoys reading mysteries and walking. She enjoys nature and walking and makes an effort to get her 10,000 steps in each day.