

NEBRASKA

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The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

Public Servants Recognized at Governor's State of the State Address ... Page 3





*A Message from
NEMA Assistant Director*

Bryan Tuma

We envision safer, less vulnerable communities in Nebraska made possible through effective collaborative partnerships committed to saving lives and reducing the impact of disasters.

Our mission is to coordinate, support and serve Nebraska through an effective and relevant emergency management agency.

As 2020 began, our focus on preparedness continued. Even though the floodwaters from 2019 have subsided we are very carefully monitoring the potential for a recurrence of flooding in 2020. We are a long way from last year's historic levels of flooding but NEMA and our partners are taking steps to make sure we are as prepared as possible for any potential flooding in 2020. Our preparedness activities this spring included a Flood Preparedness Spring Overview webinar, held Jan. 28, where National Weather Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers representatives gave an overview of current and potential weather and flooding information.

The takeaways are that it's just too early to tell if we will have flooding issues again this season. Winter is far from over, and high snow fall amounts in February did us in last year. According to the National Weather Service, the mountain snow pack is slightly above normal and river levels are two to three times higher than usual for this time of year. One storm system could make a difference in what will happen with flooding this year.

The National Weather Service is holding stakeholder briefings in Fremont, Columbus, Omaha and Norfolk during February to give citizens an overview of the potential for flooding this spring. NEMA staff will be on hand to answer questions at those events.

In addition, NEMA staff are monitoring Norovirus conference calls, wildfire council meetings, levee call and ice jam meetings. Dryer weather in portions of the panhandle increase concerns for potential wildfires and we are monitoring that situation closely, as well.

As far as disaster relief is concerned, Gov. Pete Ricketts highlighted, in his State of the State address, the following points:

- Communities across Nebraska have been rebuilding, but there's still a long way to go. The federal government will step up to provide significant support, but the state must do its part as well.
- Eighty-four counties and five tribal nations have submitted more than \$400 million in disaster relief projects to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- The Governor's recommendation includes \$50 million to address the state's share of these projects and another \$9.2 million to aid the counties most severely impacted by the disaster.
- He is also recommending an additional \$3 million to maintain an adequate balance in the Governor's Emergency Fund, so the state is prepared to address any future events.

Sincerely,

Bryan Tuma
NEMA Assistant Director

Gov. Ricketts Recognizes Public Servants During Annual State of the State Address

Gov. Pete Ricketts recognized the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska National Guard, Nebraska State Patrol and Nebraska Department of Transportation during his State of the State Address, Jan. 15.

In December, **First Lady Susanne Shore** and Ricketts honored flood heroes at a Capitol ceremony.

"These men and women are ordinary Nebraskans who recognized a need, and took lifesaving action," Ricketts said. "In many cases they did this, not because it was their job, but because they cared about their neighbors and their communities."

Ricketts said he wanted to recognize NEMA staff for helping to coordinate the response across the state, supporting local emergency managers, directing resources and running a joint information center among countless other duties.

"They are the best among their peers in the nation," Ricketts said. "I believe that 2019 will be remembered as Nebraska's finest hour. When we were faced with the most widespread and costliest natural

disaster in state history, Nebraskans responded with heroic grit, determination, resilience, and generosity."

For 318 days, from Feb. 4 to Dec. 19, Nebraska had a flood warning, watch or advisory somewhere in the state.

"Through it all, Nebraskans showed the world what Nebraska Strong truly means," Ricketts said.

Members of the Nebraska National Guard drove nearly 45,000 miles and put in 335 hours of flight time during the flooding.

"Along the way, they rescued 112 people with 66 rescues by helicopter hoist," he said.

In the weeks following the blizzards and floods in March, the Nebraska State Patrol made more than 160 rescues using patrol units, light armored vehicles, boats and a helicopter. In July, when another round of flooding struck central Nebraska, the State Patrol evacuated hundreds of people from flooded businesses and hotels in Kearney.

At the Nebraska Department of Transportation, teammates like **Rudy Novacek** spent countless

hours keeping people safe.

Novacek was escaping through floodwaters in a plow truck and turned around to go back and assist a State Trooper who got stranded behind him.

"Since the flood, the agency has helped rebuild the state by reopening and repairing 3,300 miles of state highways along with 27 bridges," Ricketts said.

Sadly, the flooding claimed the lives of six Nebraskans. One of those Nebraskans was **James Wilke**, a farmer from near Columbus, who sacrificed his life while volunteering to save the life of a stranded motorist.

"When local emergency responders asked for his help, James answered the call, put on his boots, and got on his tractor," Ricketts said. "When driving his tractor to the rescue, the bridge he traveled over could not withstand the powerful water and collapsed."

Ricketts said Wilke will be remembered for his selflessness and heroism. His wife and daughter attended the address.



Gov. Pete Ricketts showed his appreciation of NEMA staff with recognition during his annual State of the State Address at the Capitol.

Runge Named NEMA Section Administrator



Sean Runge has been named Preparedness and Operations Section administrator for Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. He will

begin those duties effective Feb. 3.

Runge has been manager of the section which now includes the following units: grants, planning, exercise and training and technical hazards, in addition to public information, long term recovery and citizen corps.

Imler to Manage Preparedness/Operations



Earl Imler has been named Preparedness and Operations Section manager. Imler was the Long Term Recovery manager.

Prior to that, Imler was Operations Section manager. He will address the direct administration and supervision of the technical hazards unit, the planning training and exercise unit, the grants unit, the long term recovery program specialist and the citizen corps coordinator.

McCown Heads Administration Unit



Phyllis McCown has been named administrative assistant II in the Administration Section of NEMA.

She replaces

Terri Kattes, who retired in December.

Previously, McCown served as accountant for the agency.

The administration unit, which McCown supervises, includes the accountant and two staff assistants.

Bargmann Accepted for Harvard Executive Education Program



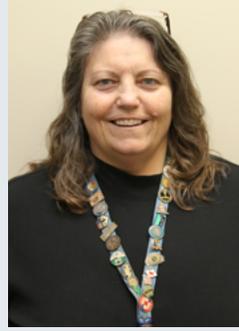
Recovery Section Manager **Molly Bargmann**, has been accepted by the Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education Program. She will be traveling to Cambridge, Mass. this coming April to attend Leadership in Crises: Preparation and Performance. She hopes to complete the Public Leadership Certification within 12 months.

Executive Education at Harvard Kennedy School is an educational opportunity for senior leaders from every sector of society who seek to optimize their effectiveness, accelerate their impact, and connect with other visionary leaders to build an international network of peers.

Bargmann has been with NEMA for six years and is excited to continue her education and ultimately apply her lessons learned within the Recovery Section.

She has served as deputy state coordinating officer for the 2019 flooding disaster and will assume the responsibility of state coordinating officer from **Earl Imler** on Feb. 3 as he transitions to Preparedness and operation Manager.

Robinson to Attend Naval Post Graduate School for Executive Education Program



Radiological Emergency Preparedness Planning and Training Specialist II **Deb Robinson** has been selected to attend the Naval Post Graduate School, Center for Homeland Defense and Security, REP, Executive Education Program.

The in-residence REP program is conducted at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS)

on the campus of the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif.

The program is designed for local, state, federal, tribal, territorial and industry leaders responsible for off-site, fixed nuclear facility emergency preparedness, response and recovery.

There are two four-day in-residence sessions over the course of a six-month period.

In order to qualify, participants must have demonstrated a commitment to a career in public safety and emergency management. In addition, they must have strong collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as an appreciation for continuing education and professional growth.

The programs includes facilitated discussions and debates where participants learn from one another.



Terri Kattes retired from her position as administrative assistant at NEMA at the end of 2019. She was recognized at a reception in the Joint Forces Headquarters on Dec. 20. Left, NEMA **Assistant Director Bryan Tuma** presents her with a certificate of appreciation for her work at NEMA; center, NEMA staff and NEMA retirees show their appreciation of Kattes; and right, **Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac** recognizes Kattes for her more than 40 years of service to the State of Nebraska and Nebraska Military Department.



Tami Reynolds joined NEMA on Jan 6 as a planning specialist in the public assistance unit.

Reynolds previously worked as assistant manager of a

parking management company for 20 years.

Reynolds graduated from UNL in 2003 with a bachelor of art in geology with a minor in environmental studies and geography.

She lives in Lincoln with her husband, Kevin, and their daughters Aspen, 15, and Ember, 10.

She enjoys photography and making an annual calendar. She enjoys being outside, camping and reading.



Jessica Scharf started with NEMA on Jan 6 as a planning specialist in the hazard mitigation unit.

Scharf studied English Education at the University

of New Hampshire. She is originally from Long Island but relocated to new Hampshire in 2008. She was working as a medical transcriptionist prior to working in the FEMA Corps Volunteer program.

While in FEMA Corps, she traveled across the county and Puerto Rico. Her last deployment was at the Joint Field Office in Lincoln. She Loves music, art and enjoying nature. She lives with her significant other, April, in Omaha.



Nathan Steed joined NEMA on Jan. 6 as a planning specialist in the public assistance unit.

Previously, Steed worked as a store manager at a

retail sports store in Utah for four years.

Steed earned a bachelor of science in Emergency Management from Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah. Steed is originally from Las Vegas.

He is married to Kaylin and they are proud parents of a Maltipoo named Sadie.

Steed said he enjoys television and movies and likes to play volleyball and hockey.



Megan Tesmer Joined NEMA, Dec 23 as an administrative assistant in the Recovery Section. She will work on arranging travel, tracking payments, filing and other duties for the public assistance and hazard mitigation units.

Tesmer earned a bachelor of science in business management with honors from Doane University.

Previously, she worked at the Nebraska State Patrol in the Criminal Identification

Division and also at the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Health and Human Services. She has two children, Nicholas Schleich II, 23, a deputy sheriff in Sherman County and Alexis Schleich, 20, who is in school for early childhood development. She enjoys restoring her 1971 Chevelle, camping and playing with her 5-month old grandson, Nicholas.



Jamie Hansen joined NEMA as an intern, Jan. 13.

She is working in all sections and units of the agency to get a broad perspective on everyone's responsibilities and roles.

Hansen is a senior studying criminal justice at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She will graduate in May.

Hansen said she plans on finding a job in the emergency management field following graduation.

Hansen is a Member of the University of Nebraska rodeo team and competes in barrel racing.



DuWayne Tewes, federal coordinating officer for disaster 4420, was recognized for his work in Nebraska since the flooding disaster in March 2019. NEMA Assistant Director **Bryan Tuma** said of Tewes: "I really want to express my appreciation for DuWayne for everything he did for us because he was here from the very beginning. I think if you look back on the progress we had made over the last several months, we are doing great things and it would not be possible unless we had you folks and all the assistance and resources that you bring to our state." Pictured, from left, NEMA's **Earl Imler**, Tuma, Tewes, **Molly Bargmann**, **Patrick Conway** and **Donny Christensen**.



AWR-136 - Essentials of Community Cybersecurity was offered in Nebraska City by Otoe County Emergency Management Agency on Jan. 29. The course provided participants with an introduction to concepts related to community cybersecurity.

Participants examined the different types of cyber attacks, how communities are vulnerable to cyber attacks and incidents, and what types of organizations are most likely to be targeted.

The course also introduced the participants to the Community Cyber Security Maturity Model and how to use the model to build a community cybersecurity program and their cyber resilience.



State of Nebraska public information officers met with **Gov. Pete Ricketts** during their quarterly meeting at the Governor's Mansion. NEMA was represented by PIO **Jodie Fawl**, fifth from right and Intern **Jamie Hansen** standing furthest to the left on the stairs.

Dept. of Natural Resources Story Map Describes 2019 Flood/Response

The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources has developed a [story map](#) describing the conditions that led to the devastating March 2019 flood.

It includes the various efforts involved in the flood response and provides information related to the meteorological conditions leading up to the event. It can be reached by visiting: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/9ce70c78f5a44813a326d20035cab95a>.





Tornado Simulator Helps to Prepare Adams County Students

Adams County elementary students got to experience a tornado in their classroom Jan. 28 thanks to Adams County Emergency Management Director Ron Pughes, who built a tornado simulator with a tent, leaf blower, Styrofoam balls and recorded sounds of thunder.

Students got to feel what a tornado might feel like when they got inside the tent. The leaf blower swirled the Styrofoam balls around the students and the sounds of thunder filled the air.

"It's important for kids to be engaged when it comes to weather and not necessarily be scared of it," Pughes said. "They need to realize it's part of nature, and learn how to protect themselves."

Nebraska emergency managers across the state promote the annual severe weather awareness poster contest for third graders as a way to get preparedness information out to students and their families.

Pughes said he made the simulator to give kids an interactive experience that would help get students to prepare for Nebraska's spring weather.

Pughes also gave the students information on what to do if severe weather strikes.

"Kids and their families need to know what to do when severe weather strikes," Pughes said. "They should head to the basement with their emergency kits, which should have items like food, water and clothes. Kids should also know emergency phone numbers, and have an emergency plan in place."

Workshop held in Broken Bow

The North Central PET Region held a hands-on Criminal Interdiction Workshop covering narcotics, terrorism, illicit currency, explosives, weapons and opioids from Jan. 8-10 at the Mid-Plains Community College. Representatives from 40 law enforcement offices from 17 counties were in attendance for the three-day Desert Snow Course in January. Included in the class was information on threats facing communities, the mind-set of a contraband smuggler and spotting deceptive behavior. The workshop portion of the class included hands-on searching of vehicles; exposure to simulated improvised explosive devises (IEDs); electronic compartments; a variety of simulated contraband and different ways to conceal contraband.





Wayne Fire Department representatives discuss response to a tornado during a tabletop exercise.



Wayne area officials participate in a tornado tabletop exercise in preparation for a Vigilant Guard full-scale exercise in May.



Sgt. Julius Aquino and Wayne County Emergency Management Director Nic Kennnitz discuss a response to a tornado.

Wayne Gets Ready for Vigilant Guard

Wayne County Emergency Management Agency held a tornado tabletop exercise, at Wayne State College, Jan. 8 in preparation for the 2020 Vigilant Guard exercise in May.

Wayne is one of four sites state-wide participating in the full-scale Vigilant Guard Exercise.

The tabletop exercise involved members of the Northeast Planning Exercise and Training Region, Wayne State College officials, local businesses representatives, volunteers from American Red Cross and

Civil Air Patrol, and National Guard representatives.

The exercise started with weather updates prior to the severe weather. Participants discussed each organizations policies, procedures and trigger points for hazardous weather prediction, tornado watches and tornado warnings.

The exercise advanced into response to a tornado and took into account life safety, accountability and situational assessment and plans and procedures for those areas.



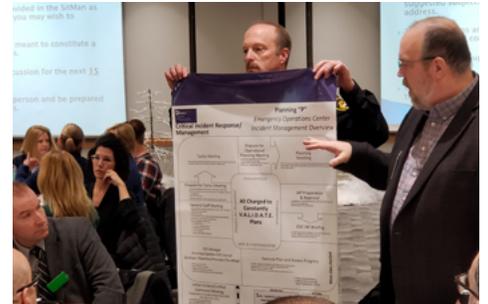
From left, Thurston County Emergency Management Director Tom Perez and NEMA Program Specialist Leo participate in the tabletop.



Northeast Planning, Exercise and Training emergency managers used the Salamander system to check participants into the tabletop.



Breakout discussions give participants an opportunity to discuss issues that will help prepare them for the full-scale exercise in May.



Process Begins to Distribute Community Block Grant Disaster Recovery Funds

As announced at the end of 2019, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has allocated \$108.9 million in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds to support Nebraska's disaster relief, long-term recovery and restoration efforts in the aftermath of the March 2019 floods.

This week, HUD published a notice in the Federal Register detailing rules and regulations for the use of these funds.

As such, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) has officially begun the approximately six-month process that will culminate in the distribution of disaster recovery grant funds to Nebraska's flood-impacted areas. (Note that local governments are eligible recipients under CDBG-DR; funding will not be made available directly to individuals, businesses,

or homeowners/landowners).

The State of Nebraska is required to perform a number of steps before it can begin to distribute CDBG-DR funds, such as preparing and receiving HUD approval for an implementation plan and action plan. As a part of this process, DED will develop and make available application materials for local governments. Moreover, the State will seek to expand the HUD-imposed limitations on the target area delineated in the federal notice.

These steps take time, but ultimately will help to ensure that funding is distributed in the most impactful manner as possible to address Nebraska's recovery needs.

DED has prepared a visual timeline describing the necessary steps, which can also be accessed on DED's CDBG-DR webpage at <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/cdbg-dr>.

Note that the webpage will serve as an informational resource in the coming weeks and months for potential grantees and the interested public; affected stakeholders are encouraged to create a bookmark and visit this page regularly for potential news and updates.

Local governments preparing for the availability of CDBG-DR funds are encouraged to begin the planning process, but should anticipate not being able to apply for CDBG-DR funding for several months. Note that CDBG-DR funds can be used as non-federal match for funds from other agencies, including the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Highway Administration and FEMA.

DED will continue to distribute information as it becomes available. In the meantime, direct immediate questions to ded.cdbgdr@nebraska.gov.

DHHS Closely Monitoring Novel Coronavirus Outbreak/ U.S. Travel-related Cases

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and its partners are carefully monitoring the unfolding outbreak of respiratory illness caused by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). The virus originated in China and has spread beyond the country's borders with cases now reported in multiple countries, including the United States.

"This is an evolving situation and we're watching it closely. It's very possible that we could see a travel-related case here in Nebraska. We've shared information with Nebraska health care providers and health care facilities regarding recognition, management and reporting of patients with potential 2019 Novel Coronavirus infections as part of our plan to address this threat," said Dr. Tom Safranek, state epidemiologist for DHHS.

Disease experts continue to

extensively study this new coronavirus. They know it can cause respiratory illness with fever, cough and shortness of breath. While severe illness and deaths have been reported in China, other people have experienced milder illness. How easily 2019-nCoV can be transmitted is not yet established, but it is spreading person-to-person.

While CDC officials consider this a serious public health threat, they say the immediate health risk of 2019-nCoV to the American public is currently considered low.

Quick facts about 2019-nCoV:

- The outbreak of respiratory illness caused by 2019-nCoV originated in Wuhan, China in late 2019 and has continued to spread.
- Public health screening to detect ill travelers traveling to the United States from Wuhan, China is occurring at Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and San

Francisco airports.

- If you've traveled to Hubei Province, China, including Wuhan in the last 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough or shortness of breath, you should seek medical care. Call ahead before you visit your health care provider or health care facility and tell them about your recent travel and symptoms so medical staff can anticipate your arrival and initiate isolation precautions.
- There is currently no medication to treat 2019-nCoV infection or vaccine to prevent it. But there are medications to help relieve symptoms.

To learn more about 2019-nCoV, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

For frequently asked questions about 2019-nCoV, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

FEMA's Youth Preparedness Council Accepting New Member Applications

FEMA is seeking applicants for its Youth Preparedness Council. The council offers an opportunity for youth leaders to serve on a distinguished national council and participate in the Youth Preparedness Council Summit in Washington, D.C.

The Youth Preparedness Council offers an opportunity for young leaders to complete a youth preparedness project of their choosing while learning about youth

disaster preparedness from FEMA leadership and other national organizations.

During their two-year term, council members will complete a national-level group project and share their opinions, experiences, ideas, solutions and questions with FEMA and other preparedness organizations.

Students in eighth through eleventh grade are eligible to apply. Those interested in applying to the

council must submit a completed application form, two letters of recommendation, and their academic records. All applications and supporting materials must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 8.

To access the application materials, read about the current council members, and for more general information about the Youth Preparedness Council visit www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness-council.



Nebraska Homeland Security Policy Group Holds Orientation for new Appointees

An orientation for new appointees to the Nebraska Homeland Security Policy Group was held Jan. 29 at Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. The seven new members of the policy group got an overview of emergency management and their role on the policy group. The group provides overall direction and decision making related to Nebraska's homeland security strategy, which provides direction for enhancing capabilities required across whole communities to promote resilient communities, and prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to Nebraska. **Lt. Gov. Mike Foley** serves as state homeland security director and is chairman of the policy group, which advises him in his role as director. NEMA is the State Administering Agency for the State Homeland Security Assessment and Strategy program.

NEBRASKA

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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State Homeland Security
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Lt. Governor Mike Foley
NEMA Director
Major General Daryl Bohac
Assistant Director
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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 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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