January 2021 in Review

ICS 300 Held Jan. 11-13 in Lincoln

NEMA’s Roger Conrad, Larry Fichtner and Leo Larkin instructed ICS-300 on Jan.-11-13 at the Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln. The course provides an in-depth focus on the NIMS Incident Command System (ICS) and includes the tools, practices, and procedures that are available in ICS to effectively manage emergency incidents or planned local events at a local Type 3 level.
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 January 2021 comes to a close, the state has distributed nearly 250,000 vaccines and has completed more than 153,231 vaccinations. DHHS launched a COVID-19 vaccination dashboard at the beginning of January to provide Nebraskans with up-to-date information on vaccination data.

More than 75% of the state has completed Phase 1A, which includes front line health care workers and residents and staff of long-term care facilities. Residents and staff at more than 455 facilities have received their first vaccine dose. Second dose clinics began the week of Jan. 18. Most counties began Phase 1B the week of Jan. 25 with Douglas and Lancaster counties beginning Phase 1B during the first week of February. Phase 1B now includes individuals 65 and older, those who are at high-risk for severe COVID-19, as well as workers in critical industries who are unable to work remotely. The high-risk group will include those with medical conditions identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as increasing the risk for severe COVID-19.

We are confident that the state has sufficient capacity for a robust vaccination plan. Our local health districts and other providers have the ability to administer vaccinations as long as there is a consistent supply available.

FEMA has been tasked with creating 100 mass vaccination sites nationwide. FEMA support for the Community Vaccination Centers will be coordinated through the state emergency management agencies. We were notified by FEMA Region VII that Dave Gervino has been identified as Nebraska’s vaccination liaison from FEMA to provide help coordinating distribution of the vaccination delivery to the state. Gervino is well known to NEMA staff as he deployed here during the 2019 flood response with the Region VII Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT). He will be integrated into the incident command structure for COVID-19. In addition, the CDC is naming liaisons for each state public health department. The expectation is that the state emergency management and public health agencies will coordinate and work with locals to set vaccination priorities to send to FEMA if and when resources are needed.

DHHS launched the state’s COVID-19 vaccination online registration portal on Jan. 28 and all Nebraskans can sign up via the website to be notified when it’s their turn to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. If you are already registered with your local health department, you don’t need to re-register. To sign up, visit: https://vaccinate.ne.gov/

We are monitoring the executive orders pertaining to emergency management following the inauguration of the nation’s 46th President, Joe Biden, on Jan. 20, including:

- Adopting the Defense Production Act (DPA) to fill supply chain shortfalls related to pandemic response and designing a strategy to domestically manufacture supplies necessary to a pandemic response;
- Increasing the federal cost-share for National Guard activities and FEMA Category B Public Assistance expenditures related to the pandemic to 100 percent moving forward;
- Establishing a mask mandate in federal buildings;
- Establishing a COVID-19 pandemic testing board;
- Ensuring an equitable response and recovery from COVID-19; and
- Developing a strategy to safely reopen schools nationwide.
- Reinstating the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS).

In addition to monitoring the Biden administration, we are monitoring any legislative changes that are proposed. While President Biden is advocating for a $1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package we will have to wait and see on what a relief package could entail. Advocates have requested assistance for food insecurity, homelessness, funeral expenses and unemployment. Time will tell what assistance will be made available.

Sincerely,

Bryan Tuma
Nebraska continues to dig out from a record-breaking snowfall in many areas of the state. National Weather Service forecasts are calling for additional snow in the days to come.

During the storm on Jan. 25, and in its immediate aftermath, Nebraska State Patrol troopers responded to more than 600 weather-related incidents, including 534 motorist assists, 53 crashes, and 34 assists for other agencies.

“Our team stepped-up once again and responded to this incredible storm with a fierce dedication to helping people,” said Col. John Bolduc, superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol. “There’s no way to truly quantify the work our troopers, dispatchers, and civilian support team have done this week. They started early, stayed late, and never lost focus on the mission of keeping Nebraska safe during this storm.”

Nebraska Department of Transportation crews worked non-stop to clear Nebraska roadways and keep traffic moving. NDOT plows covered thousands of miles on Interstate 80 and other major highways around the state.

“This latest storm tested our forces with the amount of snow over a long period of time,” said Moe Jamshidi, acting director of NDOT. “Thanks to their efforts, along with our partners at NSP, we were able to keep our roadways open. Our crews’ efforts don’t stop after the storm, as cleanup will continue as needed. Please give them the room they need to keep the roadways open.”

All drivers should check the Nebraska 511 system at [www.511.nebraska.gov](http://www.511.nebraska.gov) or on the 511 app to get updated road conditions before traveling.

Anyone who becomes stranded on the road can call *55 to reach the NSP Highway Helpline and speak with an NSP dispatcher.
Haley Stoker Moves on to FEMA Region 10
Assistant Director Bryan Tuma recognizes Planning Specialist Haley Stoker for her commitment and service to NEMA as she leaves the agency on Jan. 20 for a position in FEMA Region 10 in Washington.

Abby Schletzbaum to Join FEMA Region 7
Assistant Director Bryan Tuma recognizes Program Specialist Abby Schletzbaum for her contributions to NEMA as she leaves the agency on Jan. 29 for a position in FEMA Region 7 in Kansas City, Mo.

Unemployment by the Numbers
Week of January 17 – January 23

- New Unemployment Claims
  - 2,642 regular claims
  - 167 Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims

- Continued Unemployment Claims
  - 15,767 weeks of regular unemployment

- Benefit Payments
  - $10.1 million in total payments

Benefits paid since March 29:
- Regular Unemployment Insurance: $341,902,599
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (gig workers/self-employed): $71,881,225
- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation ($600/weekly UI benefits to eligible claimants): $713,533,793
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (extends unemployment benefits by up to 13 weeks): $27,392,780
- Lost Wages Assistance Program: ($300/weekly retroactive payments): $52,539,345
- Total: $1,208,256,329
Many communities do not have the staffing to get from A to B to C in flood risk management. Small rural communities commonly lack the resources they require to build resilience. They appreciate seeing these steps laid out:

**Step A**

The Harrisonville journey from A to B began in 2017 with two major Muddy Creek summer floods. After an estimated $1.2 million in damages, residents and businesses pressed the city to act. When another flood struck in 2019, the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) asked Missouri Silver Jackets for help.

The Silver Jackets team coordinated state and federal agencies for Step A; SEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Geological Service (USGS), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) staffs formed a virtual team to address public concerns and mitigate potential conflict through public engagement. Everyone wanted more facts. For example, many property owners believed that the Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) culvert under the Interstate-49 (I-49) had clogged with sediment and caused the floods, but was this supposition true?

USACE approved a 2019 Silver Jackets interagency nonstructural effort to support public engagement and engineering analysis. The team used two models developed by USACE's Hydrologic Engineering Center; the models considered the whole drainage system and identified and measured the flooding problem (Step A). It turned out that the culvert had not been as significant a cause of flooding as suspected.

Based on the results of the modeling analysis, the team determined the most effective flood risk management measures (Step B). See the Missouri Silver Jackets report for a full description of measures. Moreover, the Silver Jackets team had included dam break modeling in the analysis, which improves planning for the aging Lake Luna and City Lake dams.

Public outreach was largely web-based; fact sheets and articles were locally disseminated on the city web site. Among other things, the online information informed the public that sediment in the I-49 culvert had not caused the flooding in 2017. Harrisonville's floodplain management planning and the community's and city leadership's understanding of flood risk and impacts of potential flood solutions have all improved through research by the team and ongoing public outreach.

**Step B**

For Step B, USACE planners provided two technical services: an engineering analysis (report), "Harrisonville, Missouri: Silver Jackets Floodplain Investigation, dated June 2020, and public involvement services. The latter especially aided in raising awareness about the full menu of flood risk management measures and included outreach tools like a placemat and a trifold pamphlet. These documents were made available online during the 2020 COVID pandemic response.

The USACE study team recommended talking points from the engineering report for the mayor and city staff. Multiple agencies

Continued on page 6
attended the city’s fall Board of Aldermen public meeting, where USACE presented. Following the Aldermen’s meeting, the study team remained and listened for over an hour to residents and businesses dealing with flood damages.

Working from the public feedback, the study team partnered with city staff, the city public information officer (PIO) and city website staff to develop key messaging, including a project fact sheet that describes the report’s findings and other available public messaging. This helped refine the PIO’s coordinated outreach campaign. The city’s staff said that these efforts turned the public perception in a more positive direction.

Step C, finding funding for measures, became difficult as the country went into COVID-related lockdown around March 1. USACE and most other federal agencies began teleworking in earnest about that time. The critical team members from Harrisonville began working heavily online, participating in regular phone and Webex meetings, and — perhaps surprisingly — the project was able to continue with little organizational struggle.

Planned public meetings largely ended for several months, although team information continued to be developed and transmitted by public information sources (web, email, telephone, radio and television news). USACE held a final public meeting in Harrisonville with masks and social distancing in May. The city accommodated a FEMA team member unable to attend by setting up a computer with a FEMA-hosted web meeting for FEMA to answer questions.

The local, federal and state agencies continue to move this project forward. MODOT agreed to clear all their Harrisonville culverts of debris. USGS installed precipitation and stream gages to improve flood warnings. Harrisonville and a local developer entered a public/private real estate acquisition program at the regional detention basin. USACE dam break modelling helped the city move ahead with meetings on the affected properties.

Not every community has the technical tools mentioned in this article; they face Step B with few resources. Silver Jackets efforts like this can help carry cities through the steps with buyin from the public. This helps these communities prepare to apply for FEMA hazard mitigation grants or the USACE Continuing Authorities Program to make progress towards a flood solution (Step C).

NEMA Supports Earthquake Preparedness Month

NEMA will be supporting Earthquake Awareness Month during February and is encouraging everyone to know your risk, take action and be an example where you live. NEMA is committed to earthquake preparedness in Nebraska.

Earthquakes are a nationwide threat to the United States and its territories throughout the year. However, not all earthquakes are alike. Smaller earthquakes may cause minimal damage while larger ones can cause serious structural damage, falling debris and even changes to the landscape. Additionally, earthquakes may only be felt locally, or across multiple states.

Everyone should be aware of earthquake hazards no matter where you live or work, but especially if you live or work near a fault line like the New Madrid Seismic Zone. Even small earthquakes can cause damage, and may be an indication of a larger earthquake in the near future.

NEMA, alongside Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Ready Campaign will be encouraging Nebraskans to take action against earthquakes by:

- Building an emergency kit and making a family communications plan.
- Taking steps to mitigate damage by securing objects like bookshelves or large furniture.
- Holding a discussion, drill, or exercise.

More information can be found at Ready.gov. Information on the different types of hazards is available at Ready.gov or the Spanish-language web site Listo.gov.
Dr. Gary Anthone, chief medical officer and director of public health for DHHS, said, "We’re still in the early days of this vaccination effort and so it’s critical we continue to limit virus spread. Wearing a mask, washing hands, and staying home when you're sick are the best tools to fight against COVID-19.”

Anyone who may have been exposed to COVID-19 should quarantine and get tested. Nebraskans can be #BigRedResponsible by wearing a mask. Additionally, watching your distance, washing hands often, staying home when you’re sick, and avoiding the 3Cs – crowded places, close contact with others, and confined spaces – are still critical to limiting infection.

Most areas in the state have completed first dose vaccinations for Phase 1A groups, and second doses will be scheduled appropriately to complete vaccination in the coming weeks. Phase 1A includes front line health care workers and residents and staff of long-term care facilities.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security — The Acting Secretary of Homeland Security issued a National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) Bulletin, Jan. 27, due to a heightened threat environment across the United States, which DHS believes will persist in the weeks following the presidential inauguration. Information suggests that some ideologically-motivated violent extremists with objections to the exercise of governmental authority and the presidential transition, as well as other perceived grievances fueled by false narratives, could continue to incite or commit violence. You can read the NTAS Bulletin here.

Federal Emergency Management Agency — In alignment with President Joe Biden's plan to respond to COVID-19, FEMA will work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other federal agencies and coordinate with state, tribal and territorial authorities and private sector partners and others to assist, augment and expedite vaccinations in the United States.

Key Messages

■ At the President’s direction, FEMA has increased its support to states, tribes and territories for vaccination sites. FEMA has already obligated more than $1.2 billion to states, tribes and territories, and Washington, D.C. for vaccination sites. FEMA expects that number to climb in the days ahead, and will work with other federal agencies to provide federal support for critical staffing, supplies and other shortfalls that can help get more Americans vaccinated.

■ FEMA is supporting vaccination sites by providing expedited financial assistance, providing federal equipment and supplies, and deploying federal personnel to states, tribes, territories, and other eligible applicants for vaccination efforts.

■ FEMA is coordinating with all 10 regions and other federal agencies to identify potential sites, determine requirements and provide staff for potential deployment.
Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management — Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds announced the appointment of Paul Trombino as Director of the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Trombino was serving as interim director of the Department of Administrative Services as well as the Governor’s Chief Operating Officer. His appointment was effective Jan. 22. “Since devastating floods struck in 2019 and the global pandemic the year after, Paul has worked around the clock to coordinate Iowa’s response,” said Reynolds. “I appreciate his outside-the-box thinking and willingness to challenge the status quo to improve efficiency and functionality in state government. He will do an exceptional job leading this critical state agency.”

National Weather Service — Virtual storm spotter training is offered by the NWS offices that serve Nebraska. More information on training and registration information is available as follows: Goodland, Kans., North Platte, Omaha. Watch the Cheyenne, Hastings and Sioux Falls NWS web pages for their updated schedules.

Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and Natural Resources Commission — have developed a water sustainability fund story map at: New Water Sustainability Fund Story Map. The NRC and NeDNR Information Technology staff prepared this dynamic story map to showcase the work being done through funding from the Water Sustainability Fund. For more information on the Water Sustainability Fund, visit: Natural Resources Commission Water Sustainability Fund.

2021 Severe Weather Awareness Poster Contest Deadline, Feb. 11

The springtime severe weather season is quickly approaching and that means it’s time for the annual 2021 Nebraska Severe Weather Awareness Poster Contest. The contest, sponsored by Nebraska Association of Emergency Management, the National Weather Service the Nebraska National Guard and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, is part of the annual Severe Weather Awareness Week effort produced by emergency management directors/coordinators across Nebraska.

The poster contest is open to all third grade students in Nebraska public and private schools as well as home-schooled students. Teachers are encouraged to have students participate while teaching them about severe weather hazards 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. The Nebraska Association of Emergency Management provides the first, second and third place gift card awards. The fourth place poster winner receives a $50 gift card sponsored by the National Weather Service.

Contest rules are as follows are available here: All entries must be received by the local emergency management director/coordinator on or before Feb. 11, 2021.

The top four students in the 2020 Severe Weather Poster Contest were honored at the Capitol in March and included front row, from left: First Place: Kiersten Hans, 9, Bloomfield, Bloomfield Elementary School, Knox County; Second Place: Ike Carlson, 9, Norfolk, Christ Lutheran School, Madison County; Third Place: Bella Moss, 8, Bellevue, Cornerstone Christian School, Sarpy County; and Fourth Place: Leah Gompert, 8, Center, North Street Academy, Knox County. Also pictured, are the county emergency management directors from the counties the winning students represent. From left, Laura Hintz of Knox County, Bobbi Risor of Madison County and Lynn Marshall of Sarpy County as well as Nebraska Emergency Management Agency Recovery Section Manager Molly Bargmann and National Weather Service Warning Coordination Meteorologist Brian Smith.
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is committed to actively involving youth in preparedness-related activities through the Youth Preparedness Council (YPC). YPC members are students in grades 8 through 11 who are selected to support disaster preparedness and make a positive impact on their communities. The 2021 YPC is now open for applications. The YPC is an opportunity for young leaders to engage with FEMA and provide their perspectives, feedback, and opinions related to preparedness, to grow their leadership skills, and to support the resilience of their communities.

YPC members are selected for two-year terms and are chosen based on their passion for preparedness and helping others, their involvement in their community, and their aptitude for working in a team and as a leader.

The online application opened on January 18, 2021, and students must complete their applications by March 7, 2021, 11:59 p.m. PST to be considered. Selected candidates will be notified in May 2021. Interested students can apply online at https://community.fema.gov/PreparednessCommunity/s/apply-to-ypc.

The Beacon – January 2021 in Review

National Youth Preparedness Council Applications Sought

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