

ICS 300 Held in Grand Island



Above: Grand Island/Hall County Emergency Management Director Jon Rosenlund and, left: NEMA Exercise Training Officer Roger Conrad teach Incident Command System-ICS 300 on Jan. 16-18 in Grand Island. The course is one of many emergency management courses offered in Nebraska. For upcoming training opportunities visit [the training schedule on the NEMA website.](#)



*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 the new year begins, NEMA is transitioning into a number of activities intended to improve its effort to implement performance objectives in support of the Adjutant General's strategic plan for the Nebraska Military Department.

NEMA's managers and supervisors are engaged in the implementation of continuous process improvement concepts. A project-monitoring spreadsheet has been developed to track and monitor assignments on a 60-day time line. Status is reviewed every week and the spreadsheet is updated. This information is then shared with team members in each section and a white board is used by each unit supervisor to prioritize assignments and track activities.

I would like to extend my thanks to emergency managers and ESF coordinators for participating in a second stakeholder survey. This is a follow up to the survey sent in May 2017. This is another activity being used by the agency to improve the delivery of programs and services to the public with the support and engagement of our external stakeholders.

In addition, during the past year, the capacity and capability of the NEMA Watch Center has improved. Still looking for opportunities to improve the delivery and exchange of information, the Watch Officer program has been modified internally to support Watch Center expectations. Watch Officers (formerly know as duty officers) are still the main point of contact for local officials and they will record and document information which is utilized by the Watch Center staff to develop situational awareness related to emerging events or situation. The Watch Center will play an important role in assessing the deployment of resources and determining the staff level of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). I would be interested in any feedback or ideas related to the Watch Center and

how it can support our stakeholder agencies.

Also this month, members of U.S. Strategic Command or StratCom Toured the SEOC at NEMA. Operations Section Manager **Earl Imler**, left, updated the StratCom representatives on how NEMA works with ESFs during disasters and exercises in the SEOC. We are please they showed interest in our SEOC and were happy to show it off.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Buma".

Bryan Tuma
NEMA Assistant Director



NEMA's Sean Runge leads a table top exercise in the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution (TSCI) visiting room on Jan. 9.

NEMA Facilitates Corrections Community Response Tabletop

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency exercise and training staff worked with the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) at the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution (TSCI) on a community response tabletop exercise, Jan. 9.

According to **Sean Runge**, NEMA exercise training officer (ETO), the three-hour exercise focused on a community response following an explosion, fire and hostage situation.

Runge, along with ETO **Roger Conrad** and Unit Supervisor **Dave Reisen** facilitated the exercise.

TSCI's Emergency Preparedness Specialist **Trent Hill** worked with NEMA staff on the exercise.

Thirty-eight people from nine agencies participated including representatives from NDCS, TSCI, Johnson County First Responders Network, Tecumseh Volunteer Fire Department, the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, Johnson County Sheriff's Office,

Tecumseh Rescue, Johnson County Hospital, Nebraska State Patrol and NEMA.

The exercise was designed to establish situational awareness and a common operating picture for all responders. The tabletop was scheduled as a lead up to a full-scale exercise to be held in early summer.

"The exercise went very well with all participants offering good input," Runge said. "Through real-life experience and exercises like this, the first responders and institution staff are working together in a more efficient manner."

Runge said the after-action report identified the following strengths from the exercise:

- A willingness of all agencies involved to participate in the exercise and seek to identify areas for improvement
- Face-to-face interaction with participants
- Shared experience based upon knowledge

NDCS Director **Scott Frakes** requested that NEMA work on the exercise series in an effort to build a positive working relationship between the institution and local first responders and state agencies.

"Preparation is the key to managing a crisis well," Frakes said. "Exercises like this ensure that, when needed, our team members can recall and employ the skills they have learned and practiced. It also provides first responders and other emergency response partners a first-hand look at the issues for which they may be called upon to assist."

"NEMA has assisted NDCS in preparation and during actual emergency events. We appreciate their partnership and their commitment to public safety."

The full-scale exercise will involve the same responder agencies and institution staff along with response equipment and additional personnel in a realistic institutional emergency response.

Severe Weather Awareness Poster Contest

The springtime severe weather season is quickly approaching and that means it's time for the annual 2018 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 Man-

agement 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 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.

The deadline is Feb. 15 and contest rules and other information can be obtained at: <https://nema.nebraska.gov/files/doc/2018-poster-contest-rules.pdf>.

Basic Radiation Incident Response Courses Offered in North Platte

Responding to a radiological incident or accident along the I-80 corridor requires specialized training and NEMA Planning and Training Specialist **Debra Robinson** offered just that Jan. 10-12 in North Platte.

First and emergency responders who would be called to respond to a radiation incident or accident along the I-80 corridor participated in the training in preparation for the Modular Emergency Response Radiological Transportation Training (MERRTT) program for Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Shipments which will be coming to the area in August.

In addition to area fire department personnel, two members from the National Weather Service (NWS) attended the training to learn about radiation incidents and how the NWS could be incorporated into an incident/accident response.

Sessions included radiation basics, monitoring and surveying, and patient handling and included both lecture and hands-on training with simulators and live radiation meters.

"The combination of simulators and live meters gives the participants valuable experience in actually using their equipment and the confidence to trust what their equipment is telling them", said Debra Robinson, NEMA and MERRTT Radiation Instructor.

At an incident of this type, re-



Photo by Leo Larkin

Debra Robinson, far left, of NEMA observes emergency responders as they practice response techniques

sponders are called upon to first verify the presence of radiation using both equipment and evidence such as placards, labels and shipping papers, Robinson said. Then they must implement contamination control procedures to ensure radiation is not spread should an incident or accident occur.

"This includes preparing victims for transport to hospitals for medical treatment," Robinson said. "The goal is to eliminate the potential for cross-contamination of EMS and hospital personnel, the ambulance and physical facilities and resources. Every movement and detail must be considered when it comes to contamination controls.

The full 16-hour MERRTT course will be offered in North Platte on Aug. 11-12.

Fire Department, Law Enforcement, EMS, Hospital Personnel and other response organizations are welcome to register for the MERRTT course whether or not they attended the training offered this month, Robinson said.

For information on registering for the August MERRTT course contact **Joanna LeMoine**, deputy director, Region 51 Emergency Management, by phone at 308-532-7383 or by email at: LeMoineJL@ci.northplatte.ne.us.

You can also contact Robinson at debra.robinson@nebraska.gov.

Health Officials Urge Precautionary Measures

Nebraska, Nation Experiencing Severe Flu Season

Lincoln – A child flu-related death in central Nebraska was reported Jan. 24 to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and state health officials say Nebraska, along with the rest of the nation, is experiencing a severe flu season.

“We started seeing increased flu activity earlier than usual this year and flu continues to circulate at very high levels,” said **Dr. Tom Safranek**, state epidemiologist for DHHS. “During a severe flu season, we see more illness, hospitalizations and sadly more deaths.”

Nationally, 30 children have died from flu this season according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While most children recover from the flu, some can have severe and sometimes fatal infections, but that has been rare in Nebraska. So far, there have been a total of 22 flu-related deaths state-wide - 21 adults and one child.

Antiviral drugs like Tamiflu, prescribed by a health care provider, should be used as early as possible in people who have flu-like illness. For those who aren't sick, preventive measures along with flu vaccine can help prevent flu and other winter illnesses.

Protect yourself from the flu by:

- Washing your hands often
- Avoiding contact with people who are sick
- Staying home from work, family gatherings and social functions if you're sick
- Covering your mouth and nose when you cough with a tissue or sleeve, not your hands
- Eating healthy and get plenty of rest
- Don't smoke

Vaccination plays a critical role in the fight against the flu. It can reduce flu-related illnesses, visits to the doctor, missed work and school and flu-related hospitalizations.

The CDC recommends flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older.

DHHS report that it's not too late to get a flu shot this season.

While flu can make anyone sick, certain people are at greater risk for serious complications. DHHS staff report it is extremely important the following people receive a vaccine:

- Young children
- Adults 65 years of age or older
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic lung disease (like asthma and COPD), diabetes (type 1 and 2), heart disease, neurologic conditions and certain other long-term health conditions, and
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

For more flu information, visit the DHHS website at www.dhhs.ne.gov/flu or the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/flu.

Red Cross Starts 2018 Volunteer Recruitment Drive

The American Red Cross has started its 2018 Volunteer Recruitment Drive to help with emergency and disaster relief efforts during the upcoming severe storm season, and for local emergency response efforts throughout the year.

“There are so many ways to be involved in the Red Cross,” said **Matthew Meyers-Thieschafer**, volunteer services senior specialist for the American Red Cross Kansas, Nebraska, Southwest Iowa Region. “We need volunteers with all kinds of skills. We have

great opportunities for people who have always wanted to help.”

Volunteers are needed for a variety of response roles including those who respond in-person, those who coordinate efforts behind-the-scenes, those who dispatch and coordinate responses, those who provide their medical expertise, those who provide their mental health expertise, those who provide their public affairs expertise, and those who meet with clients after-the-fact to assist with resources.

Most of these roles require

on-call hours where volunteers sign up for shifts based on their availability. All Disaster Services volunteers must be at least 18 years of age, commit to at least one year of service, and attend approximately 20 hours of prerequisite training that is provided at no cost to the volunteer.

To apply to be a Red Cross volunteer, please go to: <http://bit.ly/2018REDCROSS>, or send an email to Meyers-Thieschafer at matthew.meyers-thieschafer@redcross.org

New Ready Business Resources in English and Spanish

Businesses can prepare for emergencies and disasters with new toolkits and videos from [Ready Business](#).

Organizations and their staff face a variety of hazards and the Ready Business program helps organizations plan for these hazards.

The Ready Business Toolkit series includes hazard-specific versions that are applicable to

Nebraska businesses. They include step-by-step guides in English and Spanish to build preparedness within an organization. The following toolkits are available:

- Inland Flooding
- Power Outage
- Severe Wind/Tornado
- Earthquake “QuakeSmart”

The Ready Business videos, available in English and Spanish,

briefly explain several key parts of getting ready, such as:

- Staff/Employee Management;
- Physical Surroundings;
- Physical Space;
- Building Construction;
- Systems; and
- Community Service.

These resources and many others can be download at www.ready.gov/business.

Sillasen Named Keith and Grant Counties Director

Keith and Grant Counties have a new director of emergency management. **Elizabeth Sillasen** started on Jan. 16.

Originally from Carthage Mo., Sillasen, her husband Jason and 12-year-old daughter Samantha have a cattle ranch in Keith County.

She still serves as a captain in the United State Army Reserves

where she works as a human resources officer and previously worked in air traffic control. She served in Iraq during 2006-08 and just returned from another deployment.

“I dealt with a lot of emergency management in the reserves and was looking for something in a career that aligns with my

experience in the reserves,” Sillasen said.

Sillasen has a master’s of science in education and is working on completing her master’s of science in human resources.



Elizabeth Sillasen

Local Disaster Training and Exercise Conducted

Local elected officials participated in disaster training and an exercise on Jan. 24 in Central City that was coordinated by Region 44 Emergency Management.

Instructors from the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency included exercise training officers **Roger Conrad** and **Sean Runge** who presented four hours of training and facilitated the four-hour discussion-based exercise that followed.

The exercise provided an opportunity for elected officials to examine current disaster response capabilities, plans and policies to better prepare their county’s ability to respond and recover from disasters. Participants discussed public information needs, economic impacts, and the resource requirements to respond to and recover from a disaster.

In addition to the exercise, the full-day’s activities also included training that provided an overview of the Incident Command System used by first responders, role of elected official in ICS, incident complexity, disaster declarations, and delegation of authorities.

Participants included Boone County commissioners **Ken Luettel**, **Alan Rasmussen** and **Hilary Maricle**, Boone County Sheriff **Denny Johnson**, Merrick County Supervisor **Jim Graves**, Merrick County Sheriff **John Westman**, and Nance County Supervisor **Ralph Horacek**

The exercise concluded with an



after action review that identified what worked well, areas for improvement, and how to incorporate them into a revised emergency operations plan for their county.

“Participants said the exercise was eye opening and they had a better understanding of the command reporting structures, common terminology and roles and responsibilities inherent in disaster response and recovery operations,” said Thomas Smith, director of Region 44 Emergency Management.

Here's a Resolution You Can Keep

by Ryan Lowry
Citizen Corps Coordinator

Every Jan. 1, people make their New Year's resolutions – lose weight, eat better, save more money. But, as the year goes on, it becomes harder and harder to keep these resolutions.

This year, I challenge you to make a Preparedness Resolution: (and I promise, this one is easier to keep). I would ask that everyone resolve to do one thing each month to be more prepared. If we could all do that, we would help create a more resilient Nebraska!

And the best part? There's

already a great resource available to help you keep your Preparedness Resolution! Do1Thing is a non-profit organization that aims to build more disaster resilient communities by breaking down disaster preparedness into 12 steps for individuals or businesses.

Each month, Do1Thing outlines something people can do to be better prepared for an emergency. Completing all steps throughout the year will create a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan.

You can find more information

about Do1Thing at <http://do1thing.com/>.

You can also start your Preparedness Resolution this month by making or updating your emergency plan. FEMA provides a number of templates that could help you and your family develop a communication or evacuation plan: <https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>.

So, while everyone else is struggling to keep their New Year's resolutions, you can be confident that you have the tools to keep your Preparedness Resolution all year long!

Download FEMA's Winter Preparedness Guide

With winter in full swing, if you haven't already, it's time to prepare for ice, snow and bitter cold.

This year, the Federal Emergency Management Agency released an updated *How to Prepare for a Winter Storm Guide*. The guide includes a preparedness checklist, tips to stay healthy and warm and a winter weather check for your car. There are also actions to protect your home and reduce property damage.

Share how to prepare for, stay safe during, and recover from a winter storm on your website or social media account. Download the

guide today at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/98059>.

There is also useful information on preparing for winter weather on the following sites:

- FEMA's Prepareathon website at https://community.fema.gov/hazard/winter-storm-en_us/be-smart?lang=en_US
- NEMA's winter weather page at <https://nema.nebraska.gov/operations/winter-weather> and
- <https://www.bereadynebraska.com>



Stay Ahead of Winter Weather with Real-Time Alerts

Stay ahead of the weather by making sure you receive real-time emergency alerts.

Keep yourself prepared with alerts on your mobile phone or tablet. Stay updated on critical information in your area with these tips:

- Confirm your mobile device can receive [Wireless Emergency Alerts](#).
- Sign up for text and/or email alerts from your local jurisdiction.
- Consider purchasing a [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio](#).
- If you do not have a landline, check to see if your jurisdiction offers additional options
- to receive messages from systems such as Reverse 911.
- Sign up for alerts from any organizations for which you will need information.
- Download the [FEMA App](#).
- Create a list of all the alert systems available to you. Make sure everyone in the household receives the alerts.

PET Regions

Nebraska's Planning, Exercise and Training (PET) Regions have been formed by memorandum of understanding or inter-local agreement among Nebraska counties to serve as the primary vehicle for distribution of funding and resources for homeland security and interoperable communications.

Leadership

Region **Board Chair**

East Central **Terry Miller**
Boone, Butler, Colfax, Dodge, Howard, Merrick, Nance, Platte, Polk, Saunders

North Central **Doug Fox**
Arthur, Blaine, Boyd, Brown, Cherry, Custer, Garfield, Grant, Greeley, Holt, Hooker, Keith, Keya Paha, Logan, Loup, McPherson, Rock, Sherman, Thomas, Valley, Wheeler,

Northeast **Kevin Garvin**
Antelope, Burt, Cedar, Cuming, Dakota, Dixon, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Stanton, Thurston, Wayne

Panhandle **Tim Newman**
Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden, Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, Sioux

South Central **Brian Woldt**
Adams, Buffalo, Clay, Dawson, Franklin, Frontier, Gosper, Hall, Hamilton, Harlan, Kearney, Lincoln, Nuckolls, Phelps, Webster

Southeast **Renee Critser**
Cass, Filmore, Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Seward, Thayer, York

Southwest **Duane Dreiling**
Chase, Dundy, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Perkins, Red Willow

Tri-County **Marty Bilek**
Washington, Douglas, Sarpy

Registration is Open

2018 NAEM CONFERENCE

March 21-23

Boarders Inn and Full Circle Venue/
Conference Center
Grand Island



- Keep up to date on the latest issues related to emergency management and emergency response.
- Network with individuals from all aspects of emergency management
- See new products related to emergency management in the expanded vendor area.

Conference Registration – \$85.00

Conference price includes one 1 ticket for awards lunch
Guest lunch tickets can be purchased at conference registration desk.

Register Online at:

<http://www.naem.us/event-2776151>

Registration does not include hotel reservation at the Grand Island Boarders Inn. Call 308-384-5150 to make hotel reservations and make sure to indicate that you are with the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management group to get special room rates. Hotel room rates are guaranteed until March 7.



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Governor Pete Ricketts

State Homeland Security Director

Lt. Governor Mike Foley

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 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.

www.nema.nebraska.gov

