ICS 300
Held in Raymond
July 27-29

Fire Marshal Training Specialists
Allen Michel and Brian Busse Serve as Instructors
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.

This month, Test Nebraska, reached the milestone of testing more than 100,000 Nebraska residents for COVID-19 since April. Through Test Nebraska, the state has the capacity to test 3,000 residents a day across 30 Test Nebraska drive-up and clinic sites statewide.

Nebraska is testing an average of 176 people per 100,000 residents in the state. Six percent of residents who have tested returned positive test results; five residents per 100,000 have been hospitalized. As part of the effort to prevent virus spread, the Test Nebraska program includes additional follow-up with residents who have already tested negative. In addition, individuals who have completed an assessment, but opted not to be tested are encouraged to continue monitoring their health.

If you have any symptoms or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, please visit [www.testnebraska.com](http://www.testnebraska.com) and sign up to get tested.

Nebraska has submitted a request to FEMA for $83 million in PPE and testing costs. Deloitte has processed approximately 330 requests for public assistance, and every entity who applied has been assigned a grant coordinator to assist with capturing costs, determining eligibility and resolving any issues before submitting to the FEMA CRC.

Even though it was anticipated a move to the Phase 4 directed health measure would take place across the state around Aug. 1, recent data on disease prevalence has indicated that it’s not advisable at this time. Health departments continue to monitor the spread of COVID-19 and are ensuring that the DHMs are appropriate to the needs of the community.

Sincerely,

Bryan Tuma
NEMA Assistant Director
FEMA Public Assistance Requests

The governor has directed the FEMA Public Assistance Program as the primary source for state and local entities to recoup costs associated with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. Treasury issued guidance on June 24, 2020, in the form of a FAQ document verifying the Coronavirus Relief Funds are permitted to be used as a source for the state’s cost share. In addition, the Federal Emergency Management Agency issued a Fact Sheet on July 1, 2020, confirming the cost share issue.


FEMA guidance indicates the following items would qualify:
- Personal protective equipment
- Sanitizing products
- Necessary medical supplies and equipment
- Temporary emergency staffing and overtime costs for staff that is substantially dedicated to the mitigation or response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

All eligible local public entities for public assistance shall submit request reimbursement for eligible costs through FEMA under the Category B – Emergency Protective measures. Eligible entities who do not submit project worksheets for FEMA public assistance will not be eligible for reimbursement of costs from the Cares Act Coronavirus Relief Fund. Eligible entities should submit a request for public assistance (RPA) on FEMA’s Grant’s Portal if one has not been submitted previously for DR 4521.

Applicant briefings are being scheduled to allow eligible applicants to submit project requests. The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency will continue to notify entities regarding the dates and times for the virtual applicant briefing sessions.

FEMA will require public assistance projects to be submitted through the Grants Portal. (The State of Nebraska has secured Deloitte and Touche (Deloitte) to manage the process to request reimbursement and process payments. Deloitte has access to the Grants Portal which would then permit them to review the projects prior to submission to the FEMA Consolidated Resource Center (CRC).

Once the project and costs are deemed to be eligible by FEMA, the project will be obligated/awarded by FEMA. Deloitte and State Accounting are working through the requirements that would permit the State of Nebraska to process payment of both the FEMA 75% cost share and the 25% cost share from the CRF simultaneously.

Eligible entities may submit subsequent requests for Public Assistance as they incur additional costs related to COVID-19 activities.

For counties, cities and villages, and public utilities, Coronavirus Relief Funds will be used to meet the 25% cost share requirement for FEMA public assistance projects. For those expenses not deemed eligible for FEMA public assistance reimbursement, a process will be established by Deloitte to determine eligibility for CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund reimbursement.

NEMA continues to work with Deloitte to establish a website or portal for all other cost reimbursement issues to be addressed. A new website: coronavirus.nebraska.gov is now operational. Deloitte is working to develop forms or templates which can be used to submit project costs not eligible under the FEMA Public Assistance Program for consideration under the Coronavirus Relief Fund. Additional guidance specific to the Coronavirus Relief Fund will be forthcoming.

Nebraska COVID-19 Local Government Response Assistance Program

In accordance with earlier directives issued by the Governor, $100 million has been allocated for reimbursements to local governments for direct expenses incurred in response to the COVID-19 emergency. The State of Nebraska has entered in to a contract with Deloitte and Touche (Deloitte) to manage the process to request reimbursement and process payments.

Eligible Units of Local Government:
- Counties
- Cities, and Villages
- Utility Districts

Necessary Expenditures Include:

Continued on page 4
Acquisition and distribution of:
- Personal protective equipment;
- Sanitizing products;
- Testing equipment;
- Ventilators;
- Other necessary COVID-19 medical supplies and equipment;
- Temporary isolation or quarantine sites;
- Other related necessary expenditures;
- Medical transportation;
- Expenses for sanitizing public areas and other public facilities;
- Temporary emergency staffing and over-time costs for staff that is substantially dedicated to the mitigation or response to the COVID-19 public health emergency; and
- Payroll costs for public health and public safety employees for services dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency. No presumption permitted.
- Equipment used for the conduct of meetings by telephonic or electronic means.

Limitations and Requirements:
Any funds provided pursuant to this program cannot be used as a revenue replacement for lower than expected tax or other revenue collections.

Douglas County and local political subdivisions, excluding the City of Omaha, within Douglas County are ineligible to receive reimbursement pursuant to this program. Since Douglas County has received their own direct allocation of Coronavirus Relief Funds, those entities should contact Douglas County.

In accordance with earlier guidance county governments were required to open the county courthouse and county offices for business on a non-appointment basis prior to June 15, 2020 in order to receive funds. Appointments are permitted for services that normally require an appointment or to provide better service times for customers, but appointments may not be the sole means to obtain services. Customers may be encouraged to wear face coverings, but may not be refused service for failure to do so. Counties may otherwise require adherence to minimum social distancing guidelines and follow procedures for disinfecting common areas as established in the directed health measure for that county.

Individual county offices may be closed if any employee within that office has been exposed or tested positive.

County board chairs may control traffic flow by limiting public access to certain proscribed entry and exit points.

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**Nemaha County Hospital Gets RAD**

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency staff conducted a **RAD Training for Hospitals** at Nemaha County Hospital in partnership with Cooper Nuclear Station and Nemaha County Emergency Management. The class covered the various types of equipment workers would be expected to use and included a tour of the Radiation Emergency Area at the hospital. NEMA staff also discussed how radiological personal protective equipment (PPE) is practically the same as medical PPE. The class was held July 22-23, and nearly 100 staff members from every discipline and department were in attendance.
Gov. Pete Ricketts Unveils Coronavirus Information Website

Gov. Pete Ricketts unveiled a new website on July 15 that is dedicated to providing updates about the state's response to coronavirus. The website features information about the state's plans for coronavirus relief funding as well as links to key public health and virus testing information.

The public can find the website at coronavirus.nebraska.gov. Updates will be made to the website on a regular basis as the State continues to disburse virus response funds.

Previously, President Donald J. Trump and the U.S. Congress provided $1.08 billion to aid the state of Nebraska's coronavirus response.

The website was designed as a part of the state's work with Deloitte and Touche, a company hired by the state to provide oversight of federal funds received by the state.

The COVID-19 situation has demanded a great deal of our attention during 2020, making the tragic flooding events of 2019 seem like an event from the distant past. Seeming like a distant memory is probably not the case for individuals and businesses that had to cope with the devastating impact or uninsured losses resulting from those floods.

The Department of Insurance encourages insurance producers and insurers to assist business owners and individuals with evaluating the value of flood insurance. Adequate insurance and flood mitigation are important components of effective risk management and resiliency. **Flood facts to consider include:**

- Many businesses never reopen after a flood, usually because they were uninsured and can't financially recover.
- Business owners, as well as homeowners do not have to be located in a flood plain to buy a policy.
- There is typically a 30-day waiting period before a flood insurance policy takes effect.
- It's important to have disaster provisions at the workplace, along with evacuation maps, and a working radio to hear instructions from local authorities.
- Be sure to back up all personal and company data on a regular basis to help ensure you are prepared in case information is lost during a disaster. Keep a copy of your organization's flood insurance policy. Flood-related information and brochures are available on the websites of the Nebraska Department of Insurance, National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
July is Minority Mental Health Month

Mental health conditions do not discriminate based on race, color, gender or identity. However, background and identity can make access to mental health treatment much more difficult.

The Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) at Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is calling attention to July as Minority Mental Health Month. The division is determined to make sure everyone who needs mental health care receives it. Poor mental health care access and quality of care contribute to poor mental health outcomes, including suicide, among racial and ethnic minority populations.

“While millions of Americans struggle with the reality of mental health conditions - whether they themselves have mental health conditions or their loved ones, the life experiences, education, income, race and ethnicity of an individual can make access to mental health treatment much more difficult,” said Sheri Dawson, director of the Division of Behavioral Health at DHHS. “We encourage all our communities to talk about the importance of mental healthcare and treatment to help break down barriers, such as negative perceptions about mental illness.”

Of the 32,579 consumers in Nebraska who received community-based services from the Division of Behavioral Health in FY2018, 3.3% were Native American; 0.6% were Asian; 8.4% were Black; 0.4% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders; 72.1% were white; 1.3% were two or more races; 3.7% were categorized as “other” and race was not available for 10.2%.

“Unfortunately, COVID-19 has significantly impacted racial and ethnic minority communities in Nebraska. Existing difficulties in accessing healthcare can compound the challenges many minority populations face during a public health event, such as the ongoing pandemic. Stress related to COVID can also have an impact on individuals, so it is important that culturally competent behavioral health care is provided to everyone in need,” said Josie Rodriguez, administrator for the Office of Health Disparities and Health Equity in the Division of Public Health at DHHS.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health (OMH) is hosting a virtual symposium on Sept. 17, to highlight efforts to address COVID-19 among racial and ethnic minority populations. For more information, please visit https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=1&lvlid=6.

Need to talk? It’s okay to want to feel better. Reach out to your health provider, to faith based communities, your community center, or a mental provider near you. There are resources available to help you. They include:

- The Nebraska Family Helpline, 1-888-866-8660, can help callers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Interpreters are available.
- The Rural Response Hotline, 1-800-464-0258, has helped thousands of hard working men and women since the 1980s. In addition to mental health counseling, the Rural Response Hotline can provide information regarding legal assistance, financial clinics, mediation and emergency assistance. Interpreters are available.
- The Network of Care can help connect you to mental health services: https://portal.networkofcare.org/Sites/nebraska/mh
- If you or a loved one are feeling overwhelmed with emotions, anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or someone else, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255 (English) and 1-888-628-9454.
Focus on NEMA’s Recovery Section

Articles on this page by Public Assistance Unit Supervisor Patrick Conway

If you have visited Nebraska Emergency Management Agency at the Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) in the last year, you may have noticed some empty cubicles in the Recovery Section.

Since early in the recovery process from DR-4420, the Recovery staff collocated with FEMA partners at the Joint Field Office (JFO), located in the old Verizon call center building in the Highlands neighborhood of Lincoln.

Initially, FEMA had hundreds of employees working PA (public assistance), IA (individual assistance), HM (hazard mitigation), and several other programs out of the same facility.

Most of NEMA’s Recovery Section moved to the facility in order to have better, more consistent communication with our federal partners. Section Administrator Donny Christensen, Section Manager Molly Bargmann and Administrative Assistant Megan Tesmer continue their work at the JFHQ NEMA location.

In June, following a gradual decrease in field-based employees attached to DR-4420, the FEMA staff relocated to a smaller facility in south Lincoln near Highway 2 and south 48th streets.

Plans are in the works to relocate NEMA staff back to JFHQ in the next six months.

Although we have been conspicuously absent from JFHQ, we have remained very busy and Disaster 4420 recovery continues to move forward. Since the floods of 2019, the Recovery Section has grown considerably. At the time of the flood, the Recovery Section numbered eight staff. Since then, we have doubled in size to 16 people.

NEMA Public Assistance Unit Update

There were 413 eligible applicant organizations for public assistance in DR 4420. The NEMA PA team, as of July 29, has made, or has in progress, 990 payments, totaling $28,422,895.46, for DR-4420, alone.

With the assistance of our contractors from Hagerty and the support of our FEMA partners pushing the 4420 mission forward, there are 1,429 projects obligated, for a total of $118,888,804.50.

Another 619 projects are in development with a value in excess of $260 million.

Even with the massive scale of DR-4420, the NEMA PA unit continues to press forward, moving older open disasters toward closeout. We have Large Project Closeout requests and Sub-Grantee Closeout requests from all of the currently open disasters in process at Region 7, and we continue to make progress.

On the Hazard Mitigation side of 4420, the team is working with a larger pot of money than ever before as they administer the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), also known as 404 Mitigation.

They have 46 projects in progress, with a total value of $82,347,353.65. Projects include local hazard mitigation plans, warning sirens and property acquisitions.

Two of the biggest projects they are working on are a multi-use facility community safe room in Central City and a system of flood protection measures at an Omaha waste water treatment facility.

Our Hazard Mitigation team continues to work with local communities, multi-jurisdictional organizations, and statewide agencies to improve the ability of the People of Nebraska to withstand and overcome the negative effects of disaster.

In the midst of recovering from the biggest PA disaster in Nebraska history, the Recovery Section, like the rest of the agency, is working through the challenges that have come about as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whatever the challenges are that arise in front of this team, NEMA's Recovery Section will continue to push the mission forward.

NEMA Public Assistance Staff

Patrick Conway is unit supervisor and planning specialists are: Makaria, Kirianov, Abby Schletzbaum, Nathan Steed, Haley Stoker, Tammy Reynolds and Kyle Winchell. Joe Green and Jessica Scharf of Hazard Mitigation are work with PA halftime due to the increase workload.
Hazard mitigation is proactive, not reactive. Mitigation saves everything — money, lives, communities and the list goes on.

Hazard mitigation works to put public assistance out of business. It is our goal to reduce the impacts of future disasters.

Actions taken to help reduce or eliminate long-term risks lead to building stronger, safer and smarter communities that are better able to reduce future disasters.

While mitigation should be taken before a disaster occurs, it is essential after a disaster.

Mitigation is more than repairs and reconstruction designed to simply restore damaged property to pre-disaster conditions.

The replication of pre-disaster conditions can result in a repetitive cycle of damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. This recurrent reconstruction becomes more expensive as the years go by.

Hazard mitigation breaks this repetitive cycle by taking a long-term view of rebuilding and recovering following disasters.

We work to build stronger, safer and smarter communities that are better able to reduce future injuries and future damage.

Our NEMA Hazard Mitigation team works hard keeping their dedication visible. They are determined to get every project through FEMA and approved so that the state can be one of the most resilient in the nation.

On a typical day, if there is such a thing in emergency management, we start with a morning huddle to discuss our weekly goals, identify areas where we need help from teammates and get a handle on how everything is progressing.

Our days are filled with application review, grant management, and outreach to sub-applicants regarding all sorts of things.

The Hazard Mitigation team is currently working on:

**DR-4420 Application review** — We are ensuring projects are eligible, feasible and that they support the state’s mitigations goals to fulfill all requirements.

**Closing out old disaster projects** — We reconcile and confirm projects are 100% complete and have met or exceeded the requirements set forth by FEMA.

**Monitoring old disaster projects** — We observe and guide sub-applicants to assure they stay within their defined scope of work, follow the requirements/rules set forth by FEMA and implement their project appropriately and effectively.

**Outreach** — We talk with potential sub-applicants about the definition and benefits of mitigation and what types of projects are considered mitigation.

We have roughly 38 projects that need to be submitted to FEMA Region 7 for final review by September 17. While that is going on, we are currently monitoring 10 other disasters/grant programs.

If we could recommend some best practices for mitigation applicants, the following would be on our list:

- Submit notices of interest for mitigation project
- Provide as much detail as possible in your projects, if you think it is important or FEMA is going to ask, include it.
- It is also okay to sound like you are consistently repeating yourself.

Our sub-applicants are completely understanding, easy going and are just as dedicated to the mission as my co-workers.

We are continuing to work older grants and recently inspected the work being done by the City of Lincoln on the 56th and Morton project, a $5 million project that was obligated as part of the DR-4013 HMGP grant (2011 flooding).

**NEMA Hazard Mitigation Staff**

- **John Gassmann** is unit supervisor and serves as the state hazard mitigation officer (SHMO).
- **Lexy Hindt** is program specialist and serves as the deputy state hazard mitigation officer.
- Planning specialists are **John Cook, Joe Green, McKenzie Slack, Jessica Scharf, Heather Thole** and **Chris “C.K.” Smyth**.
As many of you know, the Emergency Management Program here in Nebraska is funded by grants, with our main source of income coming from the Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency grant programs. However, these are not the only grants that Nebraska Emergency Management Agency receives for the state.

This year we have also been awarded the State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) 2.0, which is a grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration of the Department of Commerce.

This grant is to assist state, tribal and local jurisdictions with identifying, planning and implementing the most efficient and effective means to use and integrate the infrastructure, equipment and other architecture associated with NPSBN (Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network) to satisfy the wireless broadband and data services needs of the State for First Responder Network Authority.

Additionally, we have received the Emergency Management Performance Grant Program COVID-19 Supplemental (EMPG-S), which is a DHS/FEMA award, for $1,099,792.

This grant is in response to the nationwide pandemic crisis and is part of the CARES Act funding. However, unlike the other CARES Act grants, this one comes with a 50/50 cost share match.

There were six local projects that were applied for and will be funded: they are: from Clay County, Richardson County, Platte County two from Saunders County and Region 51. NEMA will use the remaining funding to help Nebraska support planning and operational readiness for COVID-19 preparedness and response, development of tools and strategies for prevention, preparedness and response, and ongoing communications and coordination among federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial partners throughout the response.

We have applied for and are waiting to hear if we have been awarded two other ‘project specific’ grants. The first grants is the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant (TVTP) DHS Office for Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention.

The grant was derived from the December 2017 National Security Strategy that included a Priority Action on enhancing local terrorism prevention capabilities and the October 2018 National Strategy for Counterterrorism that included countering terrorist recruitment and radicalization as one of six lines of efforts and called for the development of a nationwide prevention architecture. NEMA is collaborating with the University of Nebraska-Public Policy Center for the execution of this grant.

The second grant is the Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dams (HHPD) DHS National Dam Safety Program Office. Potentially, there are three dam projects that would benefit from this funding, but again, we will have to wait and see.

Nebraska’s grant awards were announced earlier this month; however, to date we have not been funded. They are:

- SHSG for $4,287,500
- EMPG for $3,904,262
- NSGP-S for $310,235 (amount subject to increase)

So looking at what we will be able to accomplish with this funding, 2020 as it turns out is not all bad.

Aaron Araiza served as Nebraska Emergency Management Agency intern this summer. Araiza is a senior at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and will graduate with a bachelor of science in emergency management in December 2020. Araiza is from Riverside, Calif.

He served in the U.S. Navy from 2008-16 as a machinist mate on the U.S.S. Missouri.

His wife, Melissa, attends law school at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. They have a son, Alaric, age 2.

Araiza enjoys basketball and is a Lakers fan. He also enjoy bowling.
Hazardous Materials Grant Funds Live-Fire Training in North Platte

For the third consecutive year, North Platte area firefighters conducted live-fire and Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting awareness training on a burning aircraft fuselage at the North Platte Regional Airport in May. The mobile aircraft training prop from 139Fire allowed firefighters to train in a number of realistic live-fire scenarios. Firefighters from North Platte, McCook, Hershey, Sutherland, Wallace, Scottsbluff and Alliance were all able to train on the aircraft over the course of five days. This training was funded by the Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning grant administered by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency totaling just over $25,000.
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