Evaluated Ingestion Pathway Exercise Tests Response Plans for Cooper Nuclear Station, Counties, States

Local and state participants in emergency operations centers, the emergency operations facility and in the field responded to the evaluated ingestion pathway exercise with the Cooper Nuclear Station on May 25-25.
A Message from NEMA Assistant Director

Bryan Tuma

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency worked with our state and local partners on a two-day evaluated ingestion pathway exercise with Cooper Nuclear Station that was more than two years in the making. Delayed due to restrictions put in place because of COVID-19, we just completed the exercise on May 25 and 26 that was originally planned for May 2020.

This exercise tested the ingestion pathway portion of a possible incident at the nuclear state. Participants worked to ensure that prompt efficient and effective response actions can be implemented to protect the health and safety of the public in the event of an incident or accident. We regularly test our plans and procedures during exercises to improve our response proficiency. This exercise was evaluated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to validate that we follow our plans and procedures.

We coordinated with our local emergency management partners in Nemaha, Richardson and Otoe counties, our emergency support function representatives and Cooper Nuclear Station representatives. Emergency preparedness programs for nuclear energy facilities and federal, state and local staff are highly coordinated and tested. The exercise involved participants in Auburn, Lincoln, Falls City, Columbus and at the nuclear station near Brownville. It was a great opportunity to work on our response and all of us at NEMA appreciate everyone who worked on this exercise with us.

Sincerely,

Bryan Tuma

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency Assistant Director Bryan Tuma gives an overview of NEMA to Leadership Lincoln participants at the State Emergency Operations Center on May 13. Leadership Lincoln participants visited the agency as part of their tour of the Nebraska Military Department. Leadership Lincoln engages individuals from diverse backgrounds by providing them with the knowledge, experiences, skills, and leadership tools that prepare them to become effective leaders within the community.
Emergency Managers Support Fire School

“It’s a Win-Win Situation”

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency staff, along with emergency managers from counties around the state, supported the 84th annual Nebraska State Fire School, held May 21-23 at Fonner Park in Grand Island.

The emergency managers supported the annual event by using the Salamander accountability system to track hundreds of pieces of fire equipment, students, staff and training hours throughout the event. This year’s school consisted of 29 classes in all phases of firefighting, fire investigation, rescue and fire safety. Training in leadership, fire prevention and emergency medical services was also offered.

Continued on next page
Emergency management staff who supported Nebraska Fire School by using the Salamander System to complete accountability tracking of students, staff and resources are from left: Evie Flessner, Region 21; Ron Tubbs, Howard County; Colt Farringer, Thayer County; Amanda Burki, Johnson/Pawnee County; Steve Cody, Otoe County; Jeff McGill, Cuming County; Larry Fichtner, NEMA; Matt Harrison, NEMA; Roger Conrad, NEMA; Michelle Evert, Colfax County; Matt May, Village of Winnebago; Nic Kemnitz who brought a command trailer, Wayne County; Tia Loftin, NEMA; Kevin Garvin, Cedar County; and Dave Reisen, NEMA.

Nebraska Fire School Continued
The emergency managers tracked the 12 practical application courses held in the field at Fire School.
“This a definitely a win-win situation for Fire School and for the emergency management staff who were able to practice using software we would deploy for managing accountability in an actual disaster,” said NEMA Planning Exercise and Training Unit Supervisor Dave Reisen.
Nebraska State Fire School Director Pat Gould, on behalf of the fire school committee, expressed his gratitude to all who provided their time, effort and support to making this year’s school a reality.
Northeast PET Region Provides EOC Support, Tests Response Capabilities at Short TakeOff/Landing Drag Races in Wayne

Emergency Managers from the Northeast Planning, Exercise and Training Region and the Winnebago Tribe provided emergency operation center support to Wayne County during the May Day STOL Drag Races at the Wayne Municipal Airport/Stan Morris Field, Apr. 28 through May 1. STOL stands for short takeoff/landing. During the event, pilots fly a designated straight track and land on or after a marked line, turn around and race back to the finish line. According to Nic Kemnitz, Wayne County Emergency Management director, the event brought in pilots and aviation enthusiasts from several states. Pictured from L to R: Tom Perez, Thurston County Emergency Management director; Kevin Garvin, Cedar Emergency Management director, Jeff McGill, Cuming Emergency Management director; and Andrew Donawa, Burt County Emergency Management director. Also participating but not pictured were: Bobbi Risor, Region 11 Emergency Management director; Matthew May, Village of Winnebago Emergency Management director; and Shea Scollard, Dixon County Emergency Management director.

~ 2022 CHANGES ~

Secure your EMPG funding!

Do you have a position specific taskbook completed?
Are your credentials current?
Are you sure?

FEMA intends to make the implementation of the National Qualifications System (NQS) a requirement of award for EMPG Program funding in 2022.

Not sure? ASK! Contact Dave Reisen
Planning, Exercise and Training Unit Supervisor, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency
dave.reisen@nebraska.gov
**Challenge:** Multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation planning can be an effective process to build partnerships between communities that face common hazard risks, leading to shared solutions. It can also help build a foundation to shift priorities as risks and vulnerabilities change.

Since 2008, the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District (LENRD) has coordinated hazard mitigation planning for its planning area, which covers more than 2.5 million acres; this includes 47 cities, towns, and villages across 15 counties, and vast areas of agricultural land.

The highest priority hazard identified by communities in LENRD's 2012 hazard mitigation plan was flooding, but that all changed after the plan was adopted. That same year, Nebraska experienced a severe drought - what would eventually be categorized as a D4: Exceptional Drought (the most severe rating on the U.S. Drought Monitor [USDM] intensity scale).

The largely rural area was hit hard, as many wells didn't perform, and groundwater became limited for agricultural production and community use. Due to the size of LENRD's planning area, there are a variety of stakeholders with differing needs, including farmers, ranchers, industry, rural residents on individual wells, and urban residents and business owners on municipal water systems. The impacts of the drought were not experienced equally across the entire planning area, leading to tension between stakeholders in different parts of the watershed. Coordination and planning were needed to identify and to implement the array of solutions required to address the shared problem in a timely manner. As with any natural disaster, emotions can run high in a drought, often leading to irrational responses. Advanced planning can help public agencies and stakeholders develop a decision-making strategy for the onset of a disaster.

**Solution:** Fortunately, the 2012 drought began to ease after one year, although parts of the region would continue to experience some level of drought until 2014. However, the event gave LENRD the impetus it needed to launch a planning effort to address future droughts. It responded by using the networks it had used for hazard mitigation planning to address this new, high-priority natural hazard.

LENRD staff kicked off drought planning in 2016, inviting stakeholders from across the district to a Drought Tournament. Participants were divided into teams and given a multi-year drought scenario to address. Early in the scenario, drought was a relatively easy problem to manage, but as the hypothetical drought intensified, players soon realized the scope and negative impacts that drought can have across a region.

The tournament educated stakeholders about the reality of drought and was used as a brainstorming session to identify community-level solutions to a regional problem. The resulting drought plan was finalized in January 2017 and incorporated as an annex of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. It identifies a common language for talking about, and for triggering, responses to drought based on the USDM scale created by the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. It also recommends responses for different stakeholders, including suggestions for limiting water use based on observed drought conditions from the NDMC. Continual education is important to make sure all stakeholders are aware of the effects of drought.

**Lessons Learned:** LENRD General
Manager, Mike Sousek, advised other organizations with large planning areas not to try to tackle projects alone. Getting input from a full range of stakeholders is critical, but it can be challenging over a large area. He advised planners to engage with experts, including university resources, and to use consultants who can help with the logistical aspects of outreach and planning.

The five-year cycle of the hazard mitigation planning process provides an opportunity to keep the impacts of natural hazards in front of stakeholders, even when the hazards have not occurred recently. However, LENRD doesn’t rely on this effort to keep hazard awareness at the forefront. LENRD also actively uses social media to remind residents about the realities of drought and other hazards, and to remind them that they must be united in reducing and facing hazard impacts.

**Planning for Action:** LENRD is one of 23 watershed-level Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) within the state of Nebraska. Many NRDs have taken on the responsibility of hazard mitigation planning in their watershed. The LENRD drought plan was the first of its kind in the state, but it sparked similar projects in several other districts.

The LENRD Drought Management plan is a mitigation action that was launched through the hazard mitigation planning process. LENRD’s planners used the public interest generated by a disaster event to mitigate the impacts of that event in the future. LENRD’s success reminds us that the purpose of mitigation planning is mitigation action.

“This project raised awareness across the state,” said NEMA Hazard Mitigation Unit Supervisor John Gassmann. “The Lower Elkhorn’s work to incorporate hazard mitigation planning has been a driving effort across the state for other jurisdictions.”
President Joe Biden announced on May 11, additional efforts to increase access to COVID vaccinations. These efforts include:

- Free rides for anyone going to a vaccination site to get vaccinated.
- A partnership with the nation’s largest community colleges to host vaccination sites for students, staff and local communities.
- FEMA funding for states to support on-the-ground efforts to promote vaccinations in their communities.

The Biden Administration released a fact sheet on May 24, regarding the $1 billion investment to protect communities, families and businesses before disaster strikes.

Gov. Pete Ricketts Reports that as vaccinations rise and hospitalizations fall, Nebraska is returning to normalcy. On Monday, the governor held his last coronavirus briefing, and ended all remaining Directed Health Measures—including quarantine requirements. He also signed an executive order to rescind many of the emergency executive orders that I had issued during the pandemic. Nebraska is discontinuing temporary remote work arrangements and getting state teammates back into the office. Gov. Rickets is also urging all organizations, public and private, to drop pandemic restrictions, including mask requirements.

Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac was elected as the president of the Adjutants General Association of the United States (AGAUS). The association is made up of the fifty-four adjutants general of the sovereign states, territories and the District of Columbia. Each Adjutant General is the senior military official in his or her state, territory or district, and the modern embodiment of the concepts of the citizen-soldier, civilian oversight of the military, and protector of the checks and balances between the state and federal military functions that are rooted in the Constitution of the United States. The purpose of AGAUS is to ensure the National Guard and the National Guard of the United States are organized, equipped and postured to fulfill their responsibilities across the full spectrum of operations inherent in the National Military Strategy and the constitutions of the United States, the various sovereign states and U.S. territories.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) The Federal Emergency Management Agency has obligated more than $50 million to the State of Nebraska for the Spencer Hydroelectric plant and dam as a direct result of major disaster declaration FEMA-DR-4420-NE. During the incident period of 3/9/2019 through 7/14/2019, a Severe Winter Strom, Straight Line Winds and Flooding caused damages to the Spencer Hydroelectric plant and dam. Heavy rain on frozen ground followed by a blizzard created a record runoff breaking up ice on the Niobrara River. Large chunks of ice floating in the flood waters over-topped the embankment and spillway structure breaching the embankment in two locations causing catastrophic damages to the Spencer Hydro Electric plant and dam.

Funding of approximately $50 million (75 percent federal share of total project cost) was obligated to assist the Nebraska Public Power District in either its repairs to the Spencer Hydroelectric Facility and Dam to restore the facilities back to pre-disaster design, capacity and function, or towards an Improved or Alternate project. The Public Assistance Program provides grants to state and local governments and certain non-profit entities to assist them with the response to and recovery from disasters. Specifically, the program provides assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and permanent restoration of infrastructure.

In other FEMA news:

- FEMA recently updated the COVID-19 Food and Nutrition Resource Road map to assist state, local, tribal and territorial partners in identifying potential sources of funding and other resources to help them with COVID-19 pandemic recovery. The five Road maps (food and nutrition, housing, healthcare, education, and economic recovery) were developed in partnership with nearly 30 federal inter-agency partners.
- As of May 12, FEMA has received more than 178,400 funeral assistance applications and approved more than $20.2 million.
- FEMA released Shelter-in-Place Pictogram guidance for 10 hazards and three building types. The pictograms provide clear, visual guidance to the public on shelter-in-place actions classified by both hazard and building type to ensure the public takes effective protective actions when instructed to shelter-in-place during emergencies.
- The guidance provides recommended interior locations for specific hazards, additional actions for protection, and the recommended duration for staying sheltered-in-place.
- Follow FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell on Twitter @FEMA_Deanne.

Follow FEMA on social media at:
- FEMA Blog on fema.gov,
- @FEMA or @FEMAespanol on Twitter.
The National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) Bulletin issued a bulletin on May 14. Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas issued the bulletin after consultation with the intelligence community and law enforcement partners. The NTAS bulletin advises that the United States is facing threats that have evolved significantly and become increasingly complex and volatile. Specifically, the bulletin details the threats posed by domestic terrorists, individuals, and groups engaged in grievance-based violence, and those inspired or influenced by foreign terrorists and other malign foreign influences.

Social media and online forums are increasingly exploited by these actors to influence and spread violent extremist narratives and activity. Such threats also are exacerbated by the impacts from the ongoing global pandemic. The bulletin builds on an earlier bulletin issued by the DHS in January, and provides more information on the currently heightened threat environment and how Americans can seek help.

"Today's terrorism-related threat landscape is more complex, more dynamic, and more diversified than it was several years ago," Mayorkas said. "We know that providing timely and useful information to the public is critical as we all work together to secure the homeland. With the issuance of today's NTAS Bulletin, we are advising the public to be vigilant about ongoing threats to the United States, including those posed by domestic terrorism, grievance-based violence, and those inspired or influenced by foreign terrorists and other malign foreign influences. In this evolving threat environment, DHS is redoubling our efforts to detect and disrupt all forms of foreign and domestic terrorism and targeted violence, while safeguarding privacy protections, civil rights, and civil liberties."

DHS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) will continue to provide guidance to state, local, tribal and territorial partners about the current threat environment. DHS is collaborating with industry partners to identify and respond to the radicalization that results from the spread of disinformation, conspiracy theories and false narratives on social media and other online platforms. DHS does not have any information to indicate a specific, credible plot; however, DHS asks all Americans to report any suspicious activity and threats of violence to local law enforcement, FBI Field Offices, or a local Fusion Center.

Since January 20, DHS has increased the development, production, and sharing of intelligence and other actionable information central to countering domestic terrorism, which now poses the most significant and immediate threat to the United States. DHS has established a new, dedicated domestic terrorism branch within the Department's Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A). Further, DHS is increasing training opportunities for law enforcement partners, including through threat assessment and management programs related to domestic violent extremism.

In February, Secretary Mayorkas designated combating domestic violent extremism as a National Priority Area for the first time in FEMA grant programs. As a result, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments are required to spend at least 7.5 percent, or a minimum of $77 million, of their DHS grant awards toward combating this threat.

The department is committed to building trust, partnerships, and collaboration across government, civil society, and communities to combat all forms of targeted violence and terrorism. For additional information, view the entire NTAS Bulletin.
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) — The state reached over 50% in fully vaccinated residents as of May 12. DHHS reported 521 new COVID-19 cases in its most recent report compared to 533 the previous week. That is the lowest figure since early April 2020.

Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles is aware of illegitimate text messages targeting Nebraskans purporting to be from a DMV office. These unsolicited messages are scams and are not sent by the Nebraska DMV or county treasurers’ offices. The text messages are often unsolicited messages from unfamiliar phone numbers that claim the recipient either owes, or is owed, a large sum of money to a DMV office. The recipient is then directed to click a link. These links should not be interacted with and the message should be deleted as soon as possible.

The Nebraska DMV can under certain circumstances send text messages to customers, but only if the recipient voluntarily opts in. The DMV will also not send messages demanding payment or promising a refund.

“We are disheartened that DMV customers are being targeted by scammers and thieves,” said Rhonda Lahm, Director of the Nebraska DMV. “It is important to know the difference between scam attempts and legitimate contact with the DMV. The DMV will not send unsolicited text messages demanding money or offering money.”

Nebraska State Patrol is participating in the multi-state seat belt messaging campaign and asking Nebraskans to “Be a good neighbor and buckle up.” State transportation and law enforcement agencies from Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming are coming together to remind travelers to fasten their seat belts. The State2State. Buckle Up campaign wants both drivers and passengers to stay buckled up no matter what state they are in or how far they are traveling. The campaign coincides with the start of the national Click It or Ticket seat belt enforcement period, which starts today. During Click It or Ticket, troopers and dispatchers will be working overtime throughout Nebraska to keep Nebraska roads safe.

Nebraska Department of Economic Development announced that applications are being accepted for another round of grants under Nebraska’s Rural Workforce Housing Fund (RWHF). Applications to this 2020 Second Cycle are due July 29. Applicants must first submit a letter of intent to apply; the letter of intent is due no later than June 1. On April 14, 2021, DED announced RWHF awards totaling $9,126,500 to 14 applicants who had applied during the 2020 application cycle. That cycle used a $10,000,000 allocation approved by the Nebraska Legislature and Gov. Pete Ricketts. Now, what remains of the funds, in the amount of approximately $873,500, will be awarded in a “2020 Second Cycle.” Note that 2020 first cycle grantees are ineligible to apply for additional funding.

Combined with matching funds, RWHF awards are used to generate Rural Workforce Housing Investment Funds that support construction, reuse or rehabilitation projects. The grants — which require a 1:1 public or private match — are available to nonprofits in collaboration with units of local government. The funds must be invested in counties that have a population of less than 100,000, excluding Douglas, Lancaster and Sarpy Counties. Eligible activities under the RWHF include the new construction of owner-occupied or rental housing; the substantial repair or rehabilitation of dilapidated housing stock; upper-story housing development; and rehabilitation that includes the conversion of an existing building into housing. For detailed information on eligibility, application guidelines and how to apply, visit DED’s Rural Workforce Housing Fund webpage at https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/program/workforce-housing-fund/. For questions, contact Nick Dropinski, nick.dropinski@nebraska.gov or 402-471-2095.

Nebraska Department of Natural Resources has developed the Substantial Damage Assessment Handbook to help Nebraska’s floodplain administrators correctly implement procedures necessitate by participating in the national Flood insurance Program. The guide combines FEMA-recommended guidance and best practices, with insight reported by floodplain administrators and building official across Nebraska. The handbook can be used to guide actions before, during and after a disaster impacts a community. The handbook includes lists and tools for specific actions communities can implement today to reduce the amount of work required after a disaster has occurred and aid in a smoother and quicker recovery process for the community overall. Thomas E. Riley, P.E., Director
Nebraska Department of Natural Resources to hold State Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan Public Meetings to collect public input related to impacts from historic flooding events that have occurred in Nebraska. Attendees will be able to provide location-based comments regarding impacts, repairs and improvements that have been made since flood events. Participants will be able to learn about resources related to floodplain regulations and gain a better understanding of oversight at the local, state, and federal level. Meetings are being held across the State of Nebraska during the first week of June 2021:

- **June 1, 10 a.m. to noon CDT**, Lincoln (public hearing to begin at 11 a.m.)
  Jayne Snyder Trails Center, 250 N. 21st St., Lincoln
- **June 1, at 5 to 7 p.m.**, Kearney, Kearney Public Library, 2020 First Avenue, Kearney, NE 68847
- **June 2, 1 to 3 p.m. MDT**, Alliance, Alliance City Library, 1750 Sweetwater Avenue # 101, Alliance
- **June 3, 10 a.m. to noon CDT**, Valentine, Mid-Plains Community College Valentine Campus, 715 E. Highway 20, Valentine
- **June 3, at 5 to 7 p.m. CDT**, Norfolk, Divots Conference Center, 4200 W. Norfolk Avenue, Norfolk.

Public input can also be provided by contacting NeDNR at (402) 471-2363, or through the NeDNR website. Comments must be received by NeDNR by 5 p.m., July 6, 2021.

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**Unemployment by the Numbers**

**Week of May 16 – May 22**

- **1,543** New Unemployment Claims
  - **1,543** regular claims
  - 2 Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims
- **7,113** Continued Unemployment Claims
  - **7,113** weeks of regular unemployment
  - **2,443** weeks of PUA
- **2,443** Benefit Payments
  - **$8.7 million** in total payments
  - **169,941** individuals paid during the pandemic

**Benefits paid since March 29, 2020:**

- Regular Unemployment Insurance: $403,074,086
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (gig workers/self-employed): $84,509,667
- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation ($300 weekly UI benefits to eligible claimants): $827,987,147
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (extends unemployment benefits by up to 13 weeks): $63,874,415
- Lost Wages Assistance Program ($300/weekly retroactive payments): $53,893,090
- Total: $1,433,373,111

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**Chris Smyth**, left, a planning specialist with NEMA was recognized by **Patrick Conway**, right, public assistance unit supervisor for his work with NEMA during the last 15 months. Smyth left NEMA on May 21 and is returning to Florida to work as a training unit director for a county there. Conway presented Smyth with a battery operated Jeep signed by all his co-workers in the public assistance unit.
AmyLynn Creaney is the enterprise continuity project manager, for NEMA and reports to Sean Runge, Preparedness and Operations Section Administrator.

Creaney assists state agencies with developing and strengthening their continuity capability to mitigate risk and increase operational resilience.

She previously served as a government contractor providing emergency management and Homeland Security operations planning and response capabilities analysis support to Commander, Navy Region Midwest (CNRMW) and FEMA, Region V.

Creaney is a certified Master Business Continuity Professional through the Disaster Recovery Institute International and is a certified First-Aid CPR/AED instructor through the National Safety Council. Her consultation and planning support led the Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer to be recognized by the Digital States Survey for the team’s outstanding work in the category of Disaster Recovery and Continuity of Operations in 2020. She is a graduate of the College of Lake County with an Associate of Applied Science in Clinical Laboratory Science and the University of Illinois at Springfield with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Health Services Administration.

James Rogers was stationed with NEMA on May 5 as the Nebraska FEMA Integration Team (FIT) lead.

FIT supports Region VII by helping the state identify and build relationships with FEMA, private sector and other federal agencies. It works to improve the state’s readiness by connecting it to potential resources and assistance. The FIT provides technical assistance builds capacity within with NEMA, its partners and stakeholders.

Rogers has a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration from Doane College and is currently applying to graduate schools for his master’s of divinity. He has served in a variety of positions including at the Department of Homeland in security operations, continuity test training and in the exercise branch. At FEMA he worked in the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear office. He also was a support specialist program manager; and national incident management assistance team planning section chief. Among his previous jobs he was a management analyst and served as assistant (acting) director of the Douglas County Emergency Management Agency in Omaha, as the preparedness officer with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Emergency Management office and as a correctional officer in Lancaster County Corrections; and as a deputy sheriff in Ohio.

He and his wife, Camelia, have a son Tristan, 11, and daughter, Dani-ca, 6, and an chocolate lab, Grant, 5 who works with Rogers at NEMA. His parents also live in Lincoln. He enjoys hockey, woodworking, fly fishing and reading.