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.

The first major state-wide snow storm struck just as travellers were ready to hit the road for the Thanksgiving holiday on late Monday and all day Tuesday. There was a concerted effort on the part of the many people including National Weather Service representatives, local emergency managers, local governments, police departments, Nebraska Department of Transportation, Nebraska State Patrol and the media to get the word out that Nov. 26 would not be the best day to travel across the state of Nebraska.

Webinars, news releases, social media posts and news coverage help spread the word of the upcoming winter storm. It is that kind of coordination and teamwork that helps us communicate our message of preparedness to all Nebraskans. Reminding us to keep an eye on the forecast and to #KnowBeforeYouGo is a great message to share this season. Working together we can promote safety and awareness throughout what forecasters have predicted will be a winter season with higher snowfall totals.

As I reflect on the past year on the day before Thanksgiving, I would be remiss if I didn’t take this opportunity to thank all the people who have helped Nebraska respond to the biggest disaster in our recorded history. The many volunteers, local emergency managers, emergency support function representatives, state agencies and federal partners who have contributed to our recovery have worked tirelessly to support Nebraska in its hour of need. I am grateful for all of your efforts as we work on our long term recovery. The response to this disaster is another example of how a coordinated response served this state well.

FEMA-DR-4420 has required us to make some changes in staffing at NEMA. Our updated organizational chart on page 3 reflects those changes. We are working to fill new and vacant positions to better meet the needs of the state for this and future disasters.

Sincerely,

Bryan Tuma
NEMA Assistant Director
More than 100 representatives from local, state and federal departments and volunteer agencies spent Nov. 6-7 at Nebraska Emergency Management Agency discovering some of the many assets that would be available should an accident occur at a nuclear power plant.

“This was a unique opportunity to bring local, state and federal departments and agencies together along with some of the assets that would be called upon if a radiological emergency ever were to occur at Cooper Nuclear Station,” said Deb Robinson, NEMA Radiological Planning and Training Specialist II.

“The workshop was designed so we could understand the wants, needs, roles and responsibilities at each level of government and how we would all integrate together during a response.

“This may have been the one and only time in each of our careers that we were able to see these assets in one place,” Robinson said. “It allowed us to bring together our local, state and federal representatives to learn about each other, what capabilities each of us brings and how we would work together from beginning to end in a response.”

Representatives from Iowa, Missouri and Kansas, and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) were in attendance.

The workshop display included the Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration Aerial Monitoring System; the Environmental Protection Agency’s Mobile Environmental Radiation Laboratory; the Nebraska National Guard’s Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Enhanced Response Force Packages mass decontamination trailer, and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency’s mobile operations center.

In addition, to the two-day workshop, the Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center (FRMAC) and Dose Assessment Trainings were held prior to the Partners Workshop on Nov. 5.

“We received really positive feedback to both the FRMAC Field Team and Dose Assessment Trainings and our Partners Workshop, Robinson said.

“Having the opportunity to see and touch these capabilities and being able to ask questions is an invaluable experience for our emergency management professionals regardless of who they represent.

“We hear the names of the various capabilities all the time, but seeing the capabilities in person really helps to “connect the dots” for the overall emergency response picture. Things just make more sense when you get to see them in person for yourself. “

More Photos on Page 4
As a prelude to the Partners Workshop, Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center and Dose Assessment trainings were held at NEMA on Nov. 5.

Included in the displays from the Partners workshops (pictured on this page and on the cover) were the:

- Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration Aerial Monitoring System;
- Environmental Protection Agency’s Mobile Environmental Radiation Laboratory;
- Nebraska National Guard’s Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Enhanced Response Force Packages mass decontamination trailer, and
- Nebraska Emergency Management Agency’s, mobile operations center.
Emergency Managers Help with Resource Unit at Nebraska Football Games

Each home football game for the University of Nebraska—Lincoln (UNL) means a legion of workers coordinating behind the scenes to help orchestrate one of the best fan experiences in college football.

UNL Emergency Management Director Mark Robertson, involved his emergency management colleagues to lend a hand as members of the resource unit for the Game Day Event/Incident Management Team.

"This group tracks first responder resources using the statewide Salamander resource tracking system," Robertson said. "It is important to track resources for these planned events and prepares us to use the system in emergencies. It is a great example of collaboration by the agencies that help each year."

The volunteers checking Red Cross, Midwest Medical, emergency medical services, police, sheriff's, private security and state patrol officers before the game begins.

Jill Harvey, Phelps County deputy director said she is thankful for the opportunity to work with the Salamander RapidTag and Command systems.

"It has given me the experience I don’t get day-to-day,” Harvey said. "After helping at the games, I have been able to figure out issues we have had in the past. We used it successfully at our last full-scale exercise for our LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Committee). I feel confident I can make it work and have a better understanding of what it can do now that I have some experience.”

Amanda Burki, emergency management director for Johnson and Pawnee counties, agreed the experience has been beneficial.

“I started my all-hazards task book and have worked on logistics resource unit and demobilization,” she said. “We get a lot of repetition checking people in and moving people to different areas of the stadium. It is valuable experience for an actual event.

Networking with other emergency managers and building relationships before a disaster is important and Burki said this has provided a great opportunity to do just that.

Tim Lewis of Clay County said the experience at the Husker Games has been "outstanding practice."

“The hands-on work with Salamander provides a great way for us to keep our skills up, Lewis said.

Working to support UNL emergency management is one way to support other emergency management professionals, Lewis said.

“We have to be there for each other...take care of each other, Lewis said. “When Mark put out a call to the Southeast Planning, Exercise and Training Region, I knew I wanted to offer some assistance.

Colt Farringer of Thayer County says the games provide a great learning experience without the stress of a disaster.

“We learn about staging areas, flow, reduction of bottle necks and stuff you can’t learn from reading a book. It’s real world stuff.”

Nick Elledge, director of Nuckolls County Emergency Management, was amazed at how the resource unit was able to check in more than 400 security staff.

"This was a great opportunity to use the tracking system with other people who know how to use it,” Elledge said.

“The football games provide a good practical experience for system users,” said Roger Conrad, exercise training officer at NEMA. “It takes some time to learn and this is good practice.”

Other NEMA staff who volunteered were: Larry Fichtner, John Cook and Dave Reisen.
Chris Ulrick of NEMA was recognized at the Capitol on Oct. 30 for 10 years of service with the state. Pictured from left are: NEMA Director, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Lt. Gov. Mike Foley, Ulrick, Maj. Gen. Rick Dahlman, NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuman and NEMA Planning, Training and Exercise Unit Supervisor Dave Reisen.

Karen Heath of NEMA was recognized at NEMA on Nov. 26 for 10 years of service. Pictured from left are Assistant Director Bryan Tuma, Heath and Director, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac.

Preparedness and Operations Section Manager at NEMA Sean Runge, center, was recognized on Nov. 12 at the Joint Force Headquarters for 25 years of service with the state. Also pictured are Gen. Daryl Bohac and NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma.

Recovery Section Administrator at NEMA Donny Christensen, center, was recognized on Nov. 12 at the Joint Force Headquarters for 10 years of service with the state. Also pictured are Gen. Daryl Bohac and NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma.

Administrative Assistant II at NEMA Terri Kates, center, was recognized on Nov. 12 at the Joint Force Headquarters for 40 years of service with the state. Also pictured are Gen. Daryl Bohac and NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma.

NEMA Program Specialist Leo Larkin, center, was recognized on Nov. 12 at the Joint Force Headquarters for 10 years of service with the state. Also pictured are Gen. Daryl Bohac and NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma.
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Nebraska announced that agriculture producers affected by natural disasters in 2018 and 2019 can apply for assistance through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program-Plus (WHIP+). Nebraska FSA offices across the state are ready to accept applications.

“Nebraska farmers have had a challenging year,” said Nancy Johner, FSA state executive director in Nebraska. “WHIP+ may be able to assist those who have faced significant losses.”

WHIP+ is available to producers who have suffered eligible losses of certain crops, trees, bushes or vines in counties with a Presidential Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only). A list of qualifying counties is available at farmers.gov/recover/whip-plus. Also, producers with losses in counties that did not receive a disaster declaration or designation may still apply for WHIP+ but must provide supporting documentation to establish that the crops were directly affected by a qualifying disaster event.

“In Nebraska, disaster losses must have been a result of floods, tornadoes, snowstorms or wildfires and related conditions that occurred in 2018 or 2019,” said Johner.

Eligible crops include those for which federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage is available, excluding crops intended for grazing. Because grazing and livestock losses are covered by other disaster recovery programs offered through FSA, those losses are not eligible for WHIP+.

Both insured and uninsured producers are eligible to apply for WHIP+, but all producers who receive WHIP+ payments will be required to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage for the next two available, consecutive crop years after the crop year for which WHIP+ payments were paid.

WHIP+ payment amounts will be determined using a formula that includes several factors: expected value of the crop, how much of the crop was actually harvested, and crop insurance coverage and payments issued on those crops. At the time of sign-up, producers will be asked to provide verifiable and reliable production records.

Producers with WHIP+ payments for 2018 disasters will be eligible for 100 percent of their calculated value. Producers with WHIP+ payments for 2019 disasters will be limited to an initial 50 percent of their calculated value, with an opportunity to receive up to the remaining 50 percent after Jan. 1, 2020, if sufficient funding remains.

FSA will provide prevented planting assistance to uninsured producers, NAP producers and producers who may have been prevented from planting an insured crop in the 2018 crop year and those 2019 crops that had a final planting date prior to Jan. 1, 2019.

An application deadline has not yet been established for the WHIP+ program.

The Milk Loss Program will provide payments to eligible dairy operations for milk that was dumped or removed without compensation from the commercial milk market because of a qualifying 2018 and 2019 natural disaster. In Nebraska, qualifying natural disasters for this program include floods, tornadoes, and snowstorms. Applications for the Milk Loss Program are being accepted through Feb. 1.

Eligible producers can receive payments at a rate of 75 percent of the market value of the milk that was dumped. The payment formula takes into consideration normal milk marketings for the impacted dairy operation, fair market value of the milk, and promotion and hauling fees, among other factors.

Producers also are reminded of the availability of the On-Farm Storage Loss Program. This program assists those who suffered losses of harvested commodities, including hay, stored in on-farm structures in 2018 and 2019.

Additional information about the WHIP+ Program, the Milk Loss Program, and the On-Farm Storage Loss Program can be found at farmers.gov/recover or by contacting your local USDA Service Center.
Nebraska Emergency Management Agency staff participated in Grid Ex V exercises in Lincoln and Columbus on Nov. 13-14.

Grid Ex is a national-level exercise hosted by the North American Electric Reliability Corp. The exercise provides an opportunity for utility companies to demonstrate how they would respond to and recover from simulated coordinated cyber and physical security threats and incidents, strengthen their crisis communications relationships, and provide input for lessons learned.

Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), Lincoln Electric System (LES) and Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) were the Nebraska companies that participated.

Chris Ulrick, Chad Boshart and Nathan Martinez of NEMA attended and observed how public power districts would respond to an event affecting the entire state,” Ulrick said. “This was an opportunity to provide participants with a realistic idea of what state resources be available in an event affecting the entire state.”

Boshart and Martinez were observers at the LES exercise.

In addition, Boshart gave an overview of NEMA's role in a statewide event.

Boshart then discussed their continuity of operation plan and what role NEMA would that play in a response.

“It was a good opportunity to observe a simulation of what a cyber and physical attack on the LES electrical grid would involve.”

The exercise brought together organizations from industry, law enforcement and government agencies and was coordinated locally by a designated asset owner and operator lead planner.

The first grid security exercise took place in November 2011.

Nebraska Public Power held its Grid Ex V in Columbus. Photo by Chris Ulrick
Governor’s Task Force Holds Introductory Meeting in Lincoln

The Governor’s Task Force for Disaster Recovery held an introductory meeting at the Joint Field Office in Lincoln on Nov. 5.

The meeting was led by representatives of Hagerty Consulting, an emergency management firm that has assisted in the recovery of some of the nation’s most catastrophic disasters for nearly 20 years. Hagerty is assisting state leadership to form a Strategic Action Plan that will not only direct the Long Term Recovery following this year’s flooding, but also prepare Nebraska for future disasters.

According to NEMA Program Specialist Chris Schroeder, the Governor’s Task Force for Disaster Recovery is a major component of both current operations and future plans.

“It was activated and mobilized at the direction of Gov. Pete Ricketts,” Schroeder said. “It is a collection of federal representatives, state agencies, and local community stakeholders, managed by NEMA, with six priorities: housing, infrastructure, agriculture, economics, health and social services and natural and cultural resources.”

NEMA Long Term Recovery Manager, Earl Imler said “the discussions we have had as the task force has formed have opened the door to new partnerships and avenues for Nebraskans to help Nebraskans.”

One example of that is the state’s Economic Development Districts offering to help their constituents and communities with grant monitoring, management and reporting.

Kayla Slater, managing associate with Hagerty welcomed task force members to the meeting. She said Hagerty is here to help with the relaunching and rebranding of the recovery effort.

“We are here to help you all take this on and embrace it.”

The task force has also given rise to additional groups and new initiatives, including a local impact team, whose primary objective is identifying and influencing the needs of people and families at the local level.

Imler said NEMA and members of the Governor’s Task Force are continuing to engage long term recovery groups and community assistance partners, assisting in their formation, troubleshooting issues and offering any guidance that proves necessary to provide neighbors and friends across Nebraska with whatever assistance they require.”

Slater reported to the task force that the project objective is to develop a long-term recovery plan which guides post-disaster recovery activities to ensure effective, efficient, and equitable use of recovery resources.”
**Matt Harrison Joins Nebraska Emergency Management Agency Planning Staff**

Matthew Harrison joined NEMA on Nov. 25 as a Planning Specialist in the Planning, Exercise and Training Unit. For the last seven years, Harrison served in the Nebraska National Guard within the Emergency Management Flight of the 155th Air Refueling Wing. Harrison earned a bachelor of science in emergency management from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. His focus was in aviation administration and geospatial information systems (GIS).

Harrison is from Lincoln and attended Lincoln High School. Harrison enjoys cycling any chance he gets. He also likes to play chess and likes to read, especially fantasy books. He is looking into pursuing a graduate degree in GIS.

**State PIOs Offer Training in Crete**

From left, Mike Wight, public information officer (PIO) at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and Jodie Fawl, NEMA PIO, give a presentation on the Joint Information System, Joint Information Center and public information at Public Health Solutions (PHS) in Crete on Nov. 4. PHS provides opportunities for health and wellness to residents of Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Saline and Thayer counties. PHS staff learned that in a crisis, rapid communication with the media and the public is a top priority. "People affected by disaster require early, accurate and completed information," Fawl said. "We need to work together to deliver messages that do not conflict with one another."
Logistics Section Chief Course Held in Grand Island

Jon Rosenlund and Alisia LaMay taught the Incident Management Team Logistics Section Chief five-day course in Grand Island during November. In the picture at left students made resource requests based on basketball game play.

Logistics Section Chief students participate in an exercise during their week-long class in Grand Island.

Back row, from left: Leonard Cassell, Kirt Smith and Jason Smith; front row: Alisia LaMay (instructor), Terri Morrow, Danelle Nelson
Not Pictured: Denise Ziemba, Jon Rosenlund (instructor)

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