National Guard takes on Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria

Emergency management assistance compact requests through NEMA send Soldiers and Airmen to Texas, Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands to aide in response efforts.

See page 3

Photos provided by Nebraska National Guard
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, I got the opportunity to address workplace emergency preparedness at the November Safety and Wellness Connections meeting, sponsored by the Nebraska Safety Council and Workwell. The meeting was held at the Speedway Museum of American Speed in Lincoln on Nov. 7.

At this presentation, I discussed emergency action plans, state and federal homeland security and emergency management sector response, workplace violence and catastrophic community health epidemics.

It is one of our goals at NEMA to reach out to the community and to local elected officials and educate them on how the emergency management process works in the state and how NEMA supports local governments.

Emergency Management 101 sessions are offered to local government officials across the state as requested by local emergency management agency directors. Based on the request, sessions can be tailored to focus on grant funding and reimbursements, aerial suppression with the single engine air tanker program, or the use of hazard mitigation practices to strengthen a community. Contact NEMA at 402-471-7421 if you are interested in a presentation on emergency management.

Sincerely,

Dan Hiller, planning unit supervisor, was honored during a retirement celebration at NEMA on Nov. 3 that included recognition from Preparedness Section Manager, Nikki Weber, Assistant director Bryan Tuma and NEMA Director Daryl Bohac.
The regional office of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) welcomed its new regional administrator Paul J. Taylor on Nov. 27 following his recent appointment to the position by the Trump administration.

"I am joining a talented team of committed public servants who work every day to help citizens and communities not only recover from disasters, but to lessen the impacts of future disasters," said Taylor. "I am really pleased to have this opportunity."

Prior to joining FEMA, Taylor served for more than 20 years in a variety of leadership and government relations roles in the U.S. military and the private sector. As a result, he brings to FEMA a strong background in management, operations, training, and logistics. Most recently, he was vice president of External Affairs at WillCo Technologies, a Kansas City-based software integration firm specializing in cybersecurity compliance and workforce management solutions.

FEMA Region VII Administrator Appointed

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Hurricane Alley Huskers

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Mother Nature had the Nebraska National Guard's eyes focusing south as members of the organization mobilized and deployed for not just one, but three separate hurricane relief and recovery operations in the course of less than two months.

The missions included helicopter rescues and medical treatment support in Houston for Hurricane Harvey; aviation support in northern and central Florida for Hurricane Irma; and in October command and control activities in the U.S. Virgin Islands, which were battered by Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria.

"Your Nebraska National Guard has been pretty busy in the homeland, said Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac Nebraska. "While we never wish for anyone to be faced with a disaster, we are always ready to assist, whether here in Nebraska or elsewhere in the U.S."

Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts said the state was proud to be able to support Americans in need through the Nebraska National Guard.

“The men and women of our Nebraska National Guard continue to respond whenever and wherever they are needed. Nebraskans are grateful for the sacrifices made by our National Guard Soldiers and Airmen.”

For more information on the National Guard deployments check out a special hurricane edition of the Prairie Soldier, the joint newspaper of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard, online at: [http://ne.ng.mil/PAO/Soldier/PS-November-2017.pdf](http://ne.ng.mil/PAO/Soldier/PS-November-2017.pdf)
Integrated Warning Team Workshop Held in Lincoln

Representatives from the three legs of the Integrated Warning Team in Nebraska — the National Weather Service, news media and emergency management — met Nov. 15, at the University of Nebraska Student Union, to consider improvements to weather communication and notification.

“By working together, we can build a weather-ready nation,” said Suzanne Fortin, meteorologist in charge of the Omaha/Valley National Weather Service Office.

Fortin kicked off the presentations, which included information on the Nebraska Mesonet, getting hydrometeorological data, decision support services, hazard simplification, the winter outlook, an overview of the June 16 weather event and breakout sessions on better communication, expectations and message consistency.

One outcome of the discussion was promoting the use of NWSChat as a way to quickly share information between emergency management, media and the weather service.

NWSChat is an instant messaging service where critical warning decision expertise and other types of significant weather information are shared between NWS and its partners in government, emergency management and the media.

Another service NWS highlighted was its decision support services, which provides localized forecasts and information on upcoming events where large numbers of people may be exposed to dangerous weather phenomena.

“Before, during and after an event we provide support with briefings, webinars and meteorologists at emergency operation centers,” said Becky Kerns of the NWS. “We are there to take the weather worry out of a situation.”