First Basic Capstone Held at NEMA

STORY PAGE 8
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.

On Oct. 5, Congress approved and the President signed legislation that makes changes to the way the Federal Emergency Management Agency does business. Under the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 (DRRA), pre-disaster mitigation grant funding is expected to quadruple, and communities adopting and enforcing modern building codes would be more competitive applicants for that funding. DRRA addresses the rising costs of disasters in the United States. The act will help Nebraska communities better prepare for, respond to, recover from and mitigate against disasters.

Highlights of the legislation include:

- Increased investment in mitigation before a disaster with the National Public Infrastructure Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which will be funded through the Disaster Relief Fund as 6 percent set aside from disaster expenses.
- Reduced risk from future disasters after fire by providing hazard mitigation grant funding in areas that received Fire Management Assistance Grants as a result of wildfire.
- Increasing state capacity to manage disaster recovery by allowing for higher rates of reimbursement to state, local and tribal partners for their administrative costs when implementing public assistance.
- Providing greater flexibility to survivors with disabilities by increasing the amount of assistance available to individuals and households affected by disasters.
- Retaining skilled response and recovery personnel by authorizing FEMA to appoint certain types of temporary employees who have been with the agency for three continuous years to full-time positions in the same manner as federal employees with competitive status. This allows the agency to retain and promote talent-ed, experienced emergency managers.

DRRA reforms federal disaster programs to ensure communities are better prepared for future hurricanes, flooding, earthquakes, wildfires, and other disasters. It focuses on improving pre-disaster planning and mitigation, which will reduce the future loss of life and the rising costs of disasters throughout America.

FEMA Administrator Brock Long said of the legislation:

“This transformational legislation will allow the emergency management community to continue to improve the way we deliver assistance before, during and after disasters. We’ll never be able to eliminate all risks, but this enables us to take action now so that individuals and communities will be better positioned to recover more quickly when disasters do occur. We thank Congress, the administration and our state and local partners in their efforts to move this critical reform package forward.”

DRRA encourages building and rebuilding better and smarter to facilitate speedy recovery efforts whenever and wherever disaster strikes. Strengthening mitigation practices is also a wise use of taxpayer dollars. According to a report from the National Institute of Building Sciences, for every dollar spent on mitigation, $6 is saved in avoided disaster recovery costs.

DRRA will help remedy a problem of the Stafford Act which only allowed rebuilding communities as they stood before the disaster, rather than building back stronger. Changes will allow flood-prone buildings to relocate and other future risks to be mitigated.

DRRA is an improvement over previous laws and hopefully the conversations will continue on how the federal government defines its role in preparing for disasters. In addition to it’s role as an emergency response agency, this legislation lets FEMA become even more focused on trying to make sure we’re better prepared for the next disaster.

Sincerely,

Bryan Tuma
NEMA Assistant Director
Thirty-five responders participated in a two-night hazmat operations refresher in Wayne. Agencies represented included: Wayne Police Department, Wayne County Emergency Management, Thurston City Emergency Management, Allen Fire Department, Wakefield Fire Department and host department Wayne Fire Department. Members set up and operated emergency decontamination, mass decontamination, technical decontamination and, under the supervision of a hazardous materials technician, the application of a dome clamp assembly on MC 306-DOT 406 tank simulator.

Grant-Funded Simulator Prepares Firefighters

Firefighters in Nebraska are learning how to manage leaking gas transport trucks thanks to a simulator purchased with hazardous materials grant funds, administered by Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and training offered by the Nebraska State Fire Marshal’s Office.

Bill Pfeifer, a training specialist with the Nebraska State Fire Marshal’s Office, and SFM coordinator for the Nebraska Hazardous Incident Team, said the simulator allows instructors an appropriate way to train both volunteer and paid firefighters.

“We can teach them how to effectively manage a leaking MC 306-DOT 406 transport trailer,” Pfeifer said. “In a rollover accident, gas can leak from the dome lids and the simulator helps us get responders to understand the challenges they would encounter at gas transport vehicle accident.”

A dome clamp is designed to lock down the dome lids on tank trunks in an emergency situation. Gas can leak from a fuel truck in rollover accidents. The clamps stop release of the product.

“In the past, the only way to train firefighters on a leaking dome lid was to physically lay a trailer on its side. The simulator tank turns 180 degrees and the trainers can fill it with water to simulate leaking gas. “They learn how to stay out of the leak while applying the clamp,” Pfeifer said.

Nearly 80 firefighters have completed training since the simulator was purchased and several towns have purchased dome clamps.

“This allows trained responders under technician supervision to mitigate situations long before a hazmat team can even get to the scene.”

NEMA Preparedness Manager Nikki Weber said the hazmat grant for the simulator and the training offered by the Fire Marshal’s office will help keep Nebraskans safer should a transport truck overturn.

“The simulator is a real-world applicable training tool that will allow emergency responders to practice procedures on tank trucks,” Weber said. “We were really pleased to be able to provide funds to supply such a valuable training tool.”
Above: Chad Boshart, GIS/IT specialist with NEMA, was recognized for 15 years of service with the state of Nebraska at a Teammate Recognition Ceremony at the Capitol, Oct. 18. Pictured from left are Assistant Director Bryan Tuma, IT/Commo Unit Supervisor Sue Krogman, Boshart, Lt. Gov. Mike Foley, NEMA Director Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac and Operations Section Manager Earl Imler. Right: Lt. Gov. Foley recognized Chad, and his wife Kath Boshart who works as an IT Applications Developer with the Department of Education, because both were honored for 15 years of service with the state.

Logan Lueking, program specialist with NEMA, was recognized for 10 years of service with the state of Nebraska at a ceremony at the Capitol, Oct. 18. Pictured from left are Preparedness Section Manager Nikki Weber, Assistant Director Bryan Tuma, Lueking, Lt. Gov. Mike Foley and NEMA Director Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac.

Jodie Fawl, public information officer with NEMA, was recognized for 10 years of service with the state of Nebraska at a ceremony at the Capitol, Oct. 18. Pictured from left are Operations Section Manager Earl Imler, Assistant Director Bryan Tuma, Fawl, Lt. Gov. Mike Foley and NEMA Director Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac.
HAZMAT Conference Held in North Platte

Frank Patterson, the emergency management coordinator for Waco, Texas, was the keynote speaker for the 2018 Nebraska Hazmat Conference held Sept. 27-28 in North Platte.

Patterson discussed lessons learned in the West fertilizer plant explosion.

He told Nebraska responders that about 270 tons of ammonium nitrate, the same chemical used to create the bomb that destroyed the Alfred Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, was stored at West Fertilizer Co. on April 17, 2013.

“Hearing about the experiences of responders in Texas was beneficial to all participants,” said James Rashilla, State Emergency Response Commission coordinator.

The conference covered hazmat preparedness for transportation and storage of chemicals and included speakers covering local emergency planning committee operations, response to hazmat calls, public/private partnerships and the Civil Support Team, State Emergency Response Commission, EPA Region 7 and state agencies.

The conference also included:

- A tour of the world’s largest railyard, the Union Pacific Bailey Yard
- Local instructors from Nebraska’s premier hazmat teams
- National speakers on hazmat response and recovery
- A weather balloon launch with the National Weather Service.

James Rashilla of NEMA and Trent Klienow of the North Platte Fire Department lead a question and answer session on hazardous materials, planning and response.

Nikki Weber and Greg Kelly detect source radiation in a garment during one of the sessions at the hazmat conference.
National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (NCSAM) was celebrated in October.

Each of us has a role in online safety and security. We all need to understand the risks and work together on efforts to combat them. Connected devices are essential to our professional and personal lives, and criminals have gravitated to these platforms as well. Many common crimes—like theft, fraud, harassment, and abuse—are now carried out online, using new technologies and tactics. Others, like cyber intrusions and attacks on critical infrastructure, have emerged as our dependence on connected systems reveals new vulnerabilities.

Successfully mitigating these threats relies on a combination of information sharing, prevention efforts, and enforcement work.

Government agencies, the private sector, and individuals all have a role to play.

National Cybersecurity Awareness Month was created in 2004 by the Department of Homeland Security and the National Cyber Security Alliance to provide a reminder that each of us has the power to make the Internet safer and more secure.

The FBI coordinates closely with the private sector as well as with state, local and international partners to understand and anticipate cyber threats and pursue cyber criminals with every available resource.

Make it a point to learn more about what you can do to understand current cyber threats and support efforts to combat them.

DHS encourages everyone to Stop.Think.Connect when you use the Internet. To get tips and resources to be safer online, visit https://www.dhs.gov/stopthinkconnect.

Here are some tips to increase the security of your Internet-enabled devices:

- Keep a clean machine. Like your smartphone or PC, keep any device that connects to the Internet free from viruses and malware. Update the software regularly on the device itself and on the apps you use to control the device.
- Think twice about your device. Have a solid understanding of how a device works, the nature of its connection to the Internet, and the type of information it stores and transmits.
- Secure your network. Properly secure the wireless network you use to connect Internet-enabled devices.

Are You Prepared for Flu Season?

Flu Season is just around the corner. Did you get your flu vaccine? The flu can affect people of all ages, even those in good health. Protect against the flu by getting a flu shot, and use these tips to stay healthy during flu season:

- The CDC recommends getting a flu vaccine by the end of October.
- Getting the flu vaccine can help you avoid missing work or school because of the virus.
- It takes about two weeks after you get the vaccine to be fully protected. Get a flu vaccine before the virus spreads in your community.

For more information about staying healthy this flu season, visit https://www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/prevention.htm.

November is Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Month

Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Month, observed in the month of November, builds awareness and appreciation of the importance of critical infrastructure and reaffirms the nationwide commitment to keep our critical infrastructure and our communities safe and secure. Securing the nation’s infrastructure is a national priority that requires planning and coordination across the entire community.

The Nation’s critical infrastructure provides essential services that underpin American society and sustain the American way of life. We know critical infrastructure as the power we use in our homes and businesses, the water we drink, the transportation systems that get us from place to place, the first responders and hospitals in our communities, the farms that grow and raise our food, the stores we shop in, and the Internet and communication systems we rely on to stay in touch with friends and family.

The security and resilience of this critical infrastructure is vital not only to public confidence, but also to the Nation’s safety, prosperity, and well-being.
Dan Douglas served as deputy director in Region 5/6 for 10 years before taking over as director of Washington County Emergency Management following the retirement of Bill Pook, former director for the region, which has disbanded.

Douglas is a licensed electrician journeyman. He started as a volunteer firefighter in 2004 and says that is what led him toward emergency management. He is now assistant chief for Arlington.

Douglas was born and raised in Omaha. He is married to Linda and they have a son, Jack, 18, and a daughter, Katy, 10.

Ron Pughes was named director of Adams County Emergency Management Director. He was a firefighter/paramedic for the city of Hastings for two years and prior to that ran Midwest Medical, an advanced life support transport company.

Pughes has run the Central Nebraska Medical Reserve Corps for the last 10 years. He has a bachelor’s of science in fire and emergency management from Purdue and graduated Summa Cum Laude in June 2018. He’s been married for 25 years to Jennifer and they have a son named Johnny, 8. They recently bought a farm and plan to raise miniature donkeys and rescue animals.

Terry Schroeder was named emergency management director for Burt County. He served as a deputy director of Region 5/6 for about 16 years.

Carl Schroeder, Terry’s father, was civil defense director for Burt County for many years starting Region 5/6 with Burt, Washington, Dodge, Thurston and Cumming counties in 1973.

Terry Schroeder has lived in Burt County all his life. He started with the Tekamah Police Department in the City of Tekamah in 1977 and then in 1981 went to work for the city street department. In 1992 he started with the water and waste department. He plans to retire from the city in February after 42 years. He will work part time in law enforcement and as city emergency management director as well as Burt County emergency manager.

Schroeder has three children, 10 grandchildren and one great grandchild. He enjoys camping on 15 acres of property he owns along the Missouri River, riding motorcycles and flying remote control airplanes.

Denise Ziemba was named coordinator of Region 44. She has worked with the United States Postal Service for the past eight years.

Ziemba has an associate’s degree in medical transcription from Phoenix University.

She is married to Adam and they have four children, Landon, 14, Lainie, 12, Londyn, 7, and Landry, 5.

She enjoys training horses and watching youth roping and riding events.

Quinn Lewandowski joined NEMA as the Citizen Corps Coordinator in September. He has been at the Public Policy Center for three years as a research specialist and will now devote most of his time to NEMA.

Lewandowski is a graduate of both the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Nebraska Wesleyan University where he earned a master’s degree in public health and a bachelor’s degree’s degree in exercise science respectively.

He is married to Catie and they have one puppy child, Vesper. In his spare time, Lewandowski likes riding bikes and going on adventures with his wife.

Ashley Prososki, a senior in Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln from the Shelby/Rising City area is working at NEMA this semester as an Intern. When she is not studying and working at Menards, Prososki enjoys volunteering with horse rescue operations.
BASIC CAPSTONE

Eighteen emergency management students were the first to complete the updated Basic Emergency Management Certification at a two-day capstone class at NEMA, Oct. 18-19.

It marks the first time the course was taught as a capstone to 14 independent study courses offered through the Emergency Management Institute.

Representatives of cities, villages, counties and interjurisdictional emergency management agencies, as well as representatives of state government agencies and partner organizations who work directly with NEMA to provide emergency management response and support across the state, took the course.

The course emphasizes various phases of emergency management, including requirements and expectations prior to, during and after an event or incident occurs.

Individuals who completed certification previously will be grandfathered into the new program but are encouraged to take the new course as a refresher.

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.