

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Strength.

October 2019

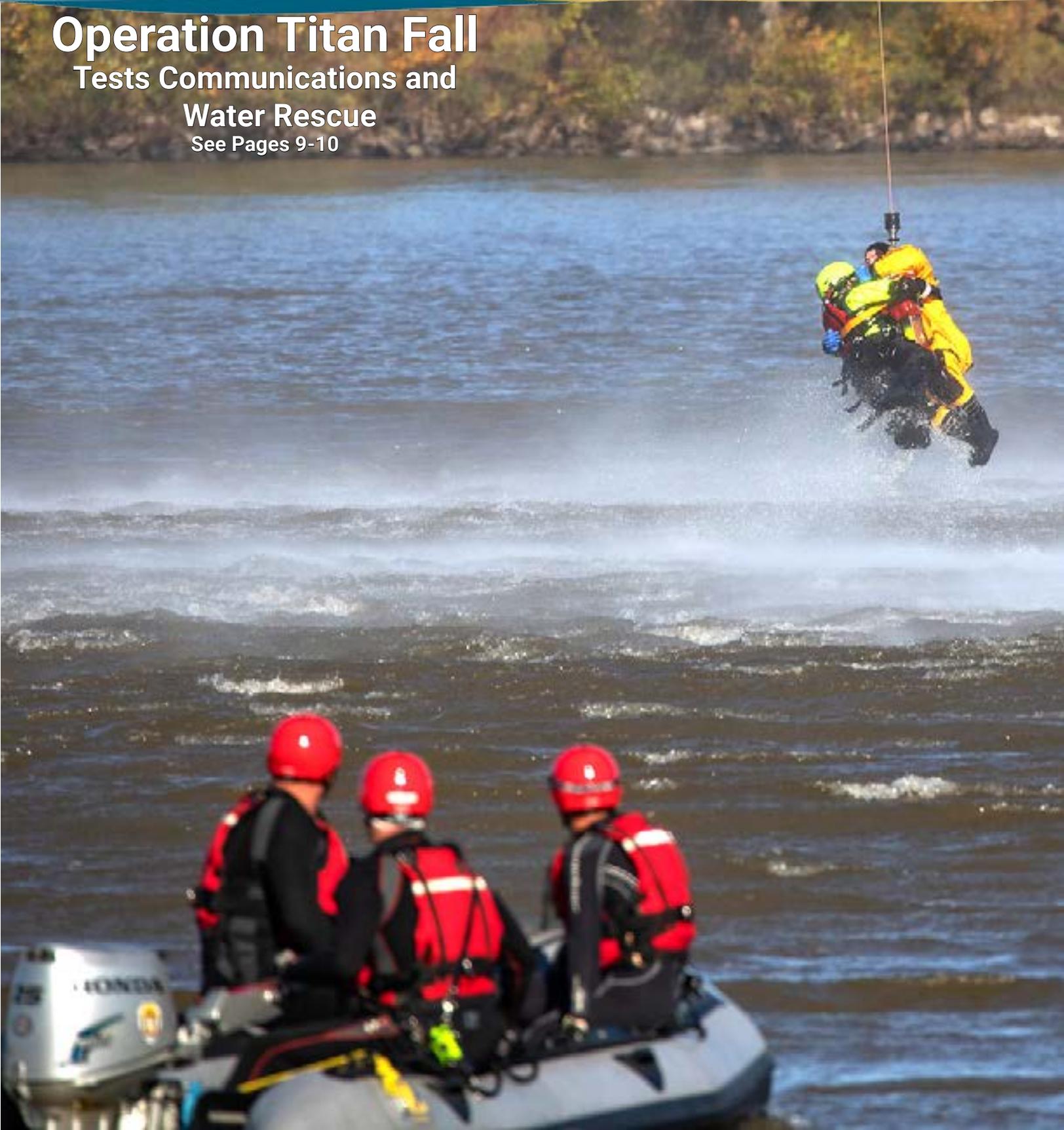


# The Beacon

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

## Operation Titan Fall Tests Communications and Water Rescue

See Pages 9-10





*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.*

Over the last week of October, the National Emergency Management Association held its 2019 annual forum in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho. This year's forum focused heavily on the impacts of the 2019 Midwest flooding on the agriculture sector. Iowa, Missouri and U.S. Department of Agriculture representatives, along with myself, participated in a panel discussion entitled: *Agricultural Disasters: Recovery Lessons Learned from the Midwest Bomb Cyclone*.

During this panel discussion, we wanted to emphasize that the USDA is an extremely valuable partner in providing resources during the response and recovery phases of a disaster. The USDA can become involved in disasters either after a presidential disaster declaration or a declaration by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture..

We are facing an ever-changing weather landscape for the Nebraska farmer. While NEMA has focused on the FEMA disaster recovery and preparedness programs, there is an extensive network of stakeholders engaged in the recovery process. Stakeholder organizations like the Farm Services Administration and

the University of Nebraska Extension offer a variety of capabilities for the recovery process.

As emergency managers, we must emphasize the sharing of information and lessons learned between our various local, state and federal partners to enhance our recovery model and build a more resilient Nebraska.



*Assistant Director of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency Bryan Tuma, (second from right), joined Iowa and Missouri emergency management agency representatives in a panel discussion on spring floods at the National Emergency Management Association meeting held in Idaho on Oct. 27.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryan Tuma".

Bryan Tuma  
NEMA Assistant Director



The State Hazard Mitigation sub-committee gathered during the National Emergency Management Association's Annual Forum in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho to discuss policy changes and updates due to the passing of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act. Molly Bargmann, NEMA recovery manager (second from right) is a member of the sub-committee.



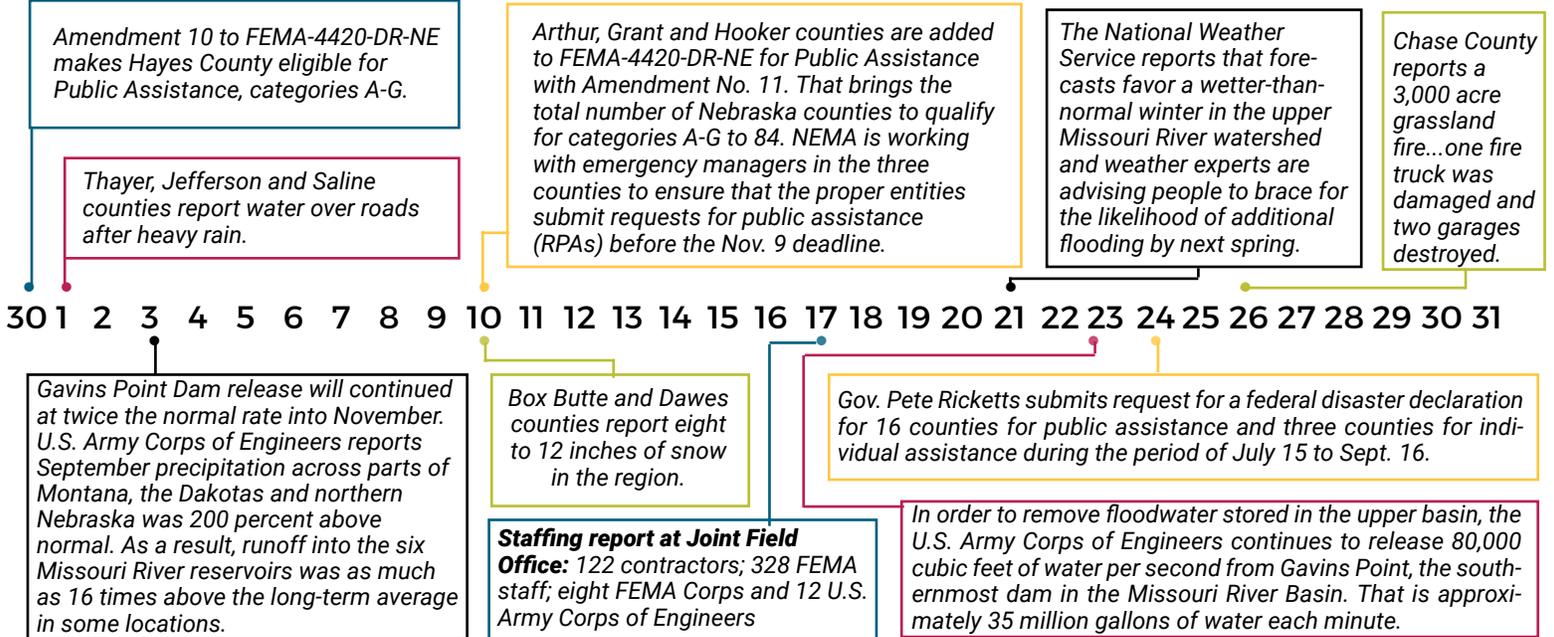
NEMA and FEMA representatives from the Joint Field Office for DR-4420 made a visit to the Consolidated Resource Center (CRC) in Denton, Texas on Oct. 21 and 22. They were able to meet with several members of CRC leadership to learn about how Public Assistance projects are developed under the current PA Delivery Model. The NEMA representatives were also able to sit with CRC Specialists to see first-hand how projects are developed. "It was an eye-opening and informative visit that gave the FEMA and NEMA representatives from our JFO a great deal of information to help guide local operations toward successful project development and ultimately, smooth closeout," said Patrick Conway, NEMA public assistance unit supervisor. Pictured from left are: Arsany Thomas, FEMA CRC deputy director, Roger Smith, FEMA Region VII acting infrastructure branch director for DR-4420-NE, Will Harris, FEMA CRC deputy director, Matthias Mandigo FEMA operations section chief, DR-4420-NE, Patrick Conway, NEMA public assistance unit supervisor, Molly Bargmann, NEMA recovery section manager; Connie Johnson-Cage, FEMA federal coordinating officer for DR-4420-NE and Kyle Barzen-Hanson, NEMA public assistance program specialist.



Members of the NEMA Hazard Mitigation staff, from left: Joe Green, Haley Stoker, Lexy Hindt, McKenzie Slack and John Cook pose after attending a Benefit Cost Analysis class at the Joint Field Office. The group participated in a hazard mitigation trivia contest as part of the class.

# October

## Timeline Snapshot





Nebraska Emergency Management Agency was the location of two courses during the first week of October. Intermediate Incident Command System for Expanding Incidents (ICS 300) and Advanced ICS for Complex Incidents (ICS 400) were both offered. NEMA's Larry Fichtner and Roger Conrad led the course which included a variety of exercises to effectively manage emergency incidents or planned local events at a Type 3 level.

## Road to Reimbursement for Counties Impacted by the Flood

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT), with support from the Federal Highway Administration, is working with local agencies in 43 counties to reimburse entities for work on 179 local government sites with estimated damages of \$47 million following this year's flooding.

In order for reimbursement to occur, a number of steps outlined on

the [NDOT website](#) must be completed.

NDOT will assist local entities with the majority of required documentation and will help walk through a step-by-step process.

Most importantly, counties will need to submit their invoices (time, equipment, materials and contracts) for work done to complete the process.

Invoices can be submitted to:  
**Jodi Gibson**  
Local Assistance Division Manager  
1400 Highway 2  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68502  
[jodi.gibson@nebraska.gov](mailto:jodi.gibson@nebraska.gov)

Invoices can be submitted at any time but NDOT urges quick submission. To see where a county is in the reimbursement process for each impacted site, [click here](#).

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1. The NEMA Planning, Exercise and Training staff, from left in red, Larry Fichtner, Dave Reisen, Roger Conrad and Chris Ulrick kick off the first day of Basic Capstone at NEMA. 2. Public Assistance Unit Supervisor Patrick Conway provides insight into the recovery process during a session of the capstone course. 3. NEMA Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl gave an overview of the Joint Information System and how important it is to provide timely and accurate information to the public during a disaster. 4. Grants Unit Supervisor Julie Mayers gave an overview of grants in emergency management.



## Nebraska THIRA, SPR, TEPW Workshops held in North Platte

Nebraska state agency staff, local agency representatives and various organizations from around the state met for two days to complete the annual Threat, Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) along with the Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR) and Training and Exercise Planning

Workshop (TEPW).

The process helps determine the state's emergency management capabilities and level of preparedness along with identifying gaps and funding needs.

The Training and Exercise Planning Workshop allowed PET regions and state officials to de-conflict

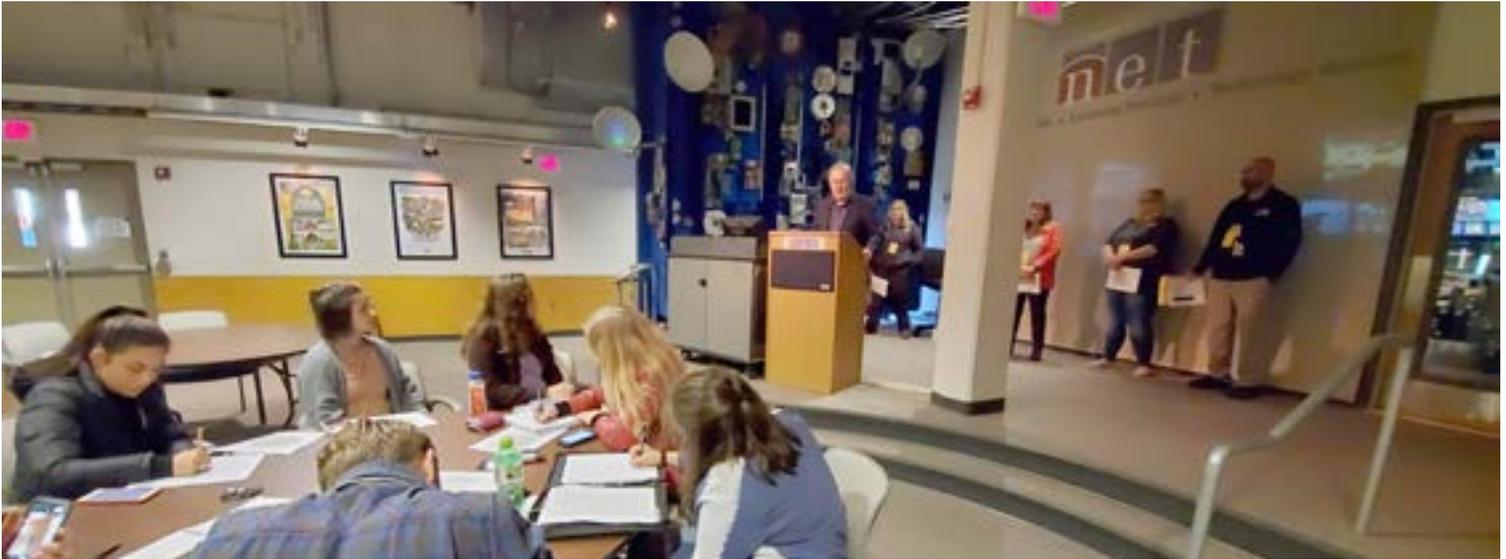
training course schedules for the coming year. This creates greater efficiency and wider training offerings across the state.

These workshops are required for the state to continue to receive homeland security grant funding through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.



1. During a lunch and learn session, NEMA and National Guard staff watched the NET production *And The Floods Came Nebraska 2019*, a production of NET. The documentary produced and reported by Bill Kelly shares the story of what may be the worst natural disaster in the history of the State of Nebraska. Using footage, photos and recollections of those who lived through the events of March 2019, the program lays out a one-of-a-kind narrative of this fast-moving tragedy and subsequent efforts to rebuild lives and communities.

2. Kelly was on hand with Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac and State Coordinating Officer Earl Imler (not pictured) to discuss the response. The documentary is available online at: <https://www.pbs.org/video/and-the-floods-came-nebraska-2019-xaxp1x/>.



University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism and Mass Communications students, seated at left, serve as mock media during a mock news conference in a joint information center (JIC) drill at NET, in Lincoln. NET is the designated alternate JIC site for a response to an emergency at the Cooper Nuclear Station.

## State Public Information Officers Test Joint Information System

Public information officers (PIOs) from state departments and agencies tested the Nebraska Joint Information System (JIS) plan in an exercise at NET on Oct. 17.

“The exercise tested their ability to meet the mission of the state’s emergency response system and centered on a fictitious nuclear power plant incident at Cooper Nuclear Station (CNS),” said **Deb Robinson** of NEMA who, was the

exercise designer. “The mission of the exercise was to provide reliable and accurate information to the media and the public in a time-sensitive manner.”

In addition to the state PIOs, representatives from the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), the Richardson County PIO, students from the University of Nebraska—Lincoln College of Journalism and Mass Communications and the

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency’s Technical Hazards Unit came together to drill processes and procedures that are needed to get information out to the media and the public during an actual incident or accident.

“A scenario and injects were developed to set the stage for the incident and shape the information

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Exercise Director Deb Robinson points to the 50-mile emergency protective zone map as University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism and Mass Communications look on. The students served as the media in the exercise, asking questions during mock news conferences.



Adam Eakin, a public information officer (PIO) with the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles participates in a joint information center drill at NET. Eakin is one of the state PIOs who would respond during an emergency.

## Joint Information Center Drill Continued from page 7

the Joint Information Center (JIC) would need in developing information products, like news releases and talking points, in preparation for media briefings that would need to take place if a disaster were to occur,” said Robinson.

After the information was presented in the briefings, the students, playing the part of local and national news media, asked questions during a mock news conference. In addition, the students and representatives from NPPD’s support team called in questions as both the public and media to further test the capabilities of the JIC.

“The students who served as media brought a sense of realism to the drill and afforded us an opportunity to get some real-world experience,” said NEMA PIO **Jodie Fawl**. “It was a mutually beneficial situation as it also allowed them to



Spokespersons Kristy Richardson of Richardson County, Erika Hill, of the Department of Corrections, Josh Unruh of NPPD and Mike Wight of Health and Human Services plan a news conference.

practice the skills they are learning at UNL.”

The drill was conducted at the NET facilities in Lincoln which is designated as the alternate JIC location for the state to use for incidents or accidents involving CNS.

“We couldn’t ask for better facilities to train in or to use if needed in

a real event,” Fawl said. “The staff support at NET was everything we could have hoped for and would more than meet the needs for us to execute our mission.”

In addition to highlighting the strengths of the JIS program, the drill identified areas where improvement is needed.

“The drill brought forward opportunities for us to enhance and clarify some of the practices used to get information out and the way we deliver it in media briefings,” Robinson said. “All-in-all the drill was a great success.”



Lead PIO Jodie Fawl of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, left, and JIC Manager Lori Arthur of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, right, discuss strategy for releasing information during the Joint Information Center Exercise at NET on Oct. 17.



PIOs Rachel Fitzler of the Department of Corrections and Amanda Woita of Nebraska Department of Environment and Energywrite a news release in the drill.



# OPERATION TITAN FALL

## Water Rescue Exercise Brings Local, State Agencies Together to Practice Flood Response

Testing air-to-ground communications, water rescue and medical response to a mass-casualty incident were the goals of Operation Titan Fall, an exercise held at Stagecoach Lake southwest of Hickman and in Lincoln on Oct. 19.

Overall communication was identified as an area of improvement from the March flooding event. The National Guard specifically identified a need to communicate with local responders. In addition, the Hickman Volunteer Fire Department

had identified water rescue capabilities at area lakes as a training opportunity.

According to exercise director, **Mark Hosking** of Lancaster County Emergency Management, Titan Fall was developed to test, train and improve those capabilities.

"The main communication objective of the exercise was met," Hosking said. "We also identified a couple of areas for improvement. The overall exercise was a success

**Continued on page 10**



1. CHI Health St. Elizabeth staff apply moulage to a National Guard recruit to simulate burn injuries. 2. A National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter lands at CHI Health St. Elizabeth to bring a mock patient to the hospital for treatment. 3. A Hickman fire fighter awaits treatment as National Guard, Nebraska Task Force Once and hospital officials confer. 4. and 5. The State Emergency Operations Center was activated as part of the exercise. 6. Water suits await exercise participants. 7. and 8. Patients are rescued at Stage Coach Lake.

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### Titan Fall Exercise Continued from page 9

due to the involvement of local volunteer, county, state and federal partners. **Lt. Col. Shane Varejcka** helped organize National Guard participation in the exercise which was instrumental to its success.”

In addition to the Hickman Volunteer Fire Department, Nebraska Task Force One, the Nebraska National Guard, Lancaster County Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and others teamed up to tackle the water rescue exercise.

CHI Health St. Elizabeth participated to test medical response to a mass-casualty incident.

NEMA provided support and assets in coordination with Lancaster County Emergency Management to the Hickman Volunteer Fire Department following a simulated small airplane crash at Stagecoach Lake.

After retrieval from the lake, simulated patients were flown to CHI Health St. Elizabeth. National Guard recruits portrayed victims in the simulation.

“We’re supposed to simulate chaos with people being life flighted and then people walking through the doors as well,” NE Air Guard recruit of the student flight program, **Easton Albracht** said.

The mock victims had various levels of trauma.

Intensive care unit doctors and staff were expected to treat the patients as a mass casualty accident.

“They’re supposed to figure out what we have wrong with us,” said **Gavin Peterson**, a Nebraska Air Guard recruit.

“Something such as this, depending on the size and scope, we’re going to have to rely on a lot of people,” CHI Health incident commander, **Jeff Gonzalez** said.

Agencies working together resulted in a great exercise according to Nebraska National Guard, **Col. Jan Behn**.

“Task Force One having the swift water rescue capability, military Nebraska Guard having the aviation hoist capability, and bringing that

together provided the best response for Nebraska,” **Behn** said.

“The exercise provided a good test of communication from an emergency management standpoint,” said **Dave Reisen**, planning, exercise and training unit supervisor at NEMA. “It was a test of full circle communications starting with requests from local first responders for air and water assets to the county, then on to the State Emergency Operations Center and finally to the Nebraska National Guard and Nebraska Task Force One.”

1. CHI Health St. Elizabeth staff and National Guard recruits pose after mock injuries were applied for Operation Titan Fall. 2. Lancaster County Emergency Operations Center was activated 3. Nebraska Task Force One was deployed to Stage Coach Lake.

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# NEMA STAFF UPDATES



**McKenzie Slack** started as a hazard mitigation planning specialist with NEMA on Sept. 30.

She earned a Bachelor of Science from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP) where she majored in soil and land management. During her time at UWSP, she participated in various research projects looking at endocrine disruptors contaminants acquired from agricultural runoff, identifying the effects of rotational

grazing on rangelands and acquired a lignin decomposition rate that has been implemented in Puerto Rico following the disaster.

“Choosing a career in emergency management will give me an opportunity to use my knowledge and skills in soil management to help Nebraska better prepare for unexpected disasters. My two passions have always been people and natural resources and this position combines both.”

McKenzie is from Park Falls, Wisc. In her spare time she enjoys the outdoors, traveling, cooking, exploring new breweries and watching the Green Bay Packers.

**Patrick Conway** has been promoted to unit supervisor for the public assistance unit at NEMA.



Conway joined NEMA in June of 2017 as a planning specialist.

In the wake of the spring flooding and declaration of FEMA-DR-4420 this is a new position with the agency.

“I look forward to continuing my service to the people of the state of Nebraska and working alongside the most amazing team in emergency management.”



**Alyssa Sanders** joined the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency on Oct. 28 as the State Emergency Response Commission Coordinator in the technical hazards unit. She replaces **James Rashilla** who was named unit supervisor for the technical hazards unit.

Sanders was formerly a Deputy State Fire Marshal and oversaw fire prevention and public information. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Journalism from Chadron State College.

**Chris Schroeder** started on Oct. 15 as the NEMA long term recovery specialist.

He has a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Maryland and a master’s degree in Writing from California College of the Arts.

He worked for years as regional director and construction coordinator for a nonprofit committed to repairing and rebuilding homes for families living in critical need around central Appalachia. He was working there when a thousand-year flood event hit West Virginia in June 2016.

“Because of the work my team and I were already doing around the state, we quickly found ourselves at the forefront of the long-term recovery effort working directly alongside the National Guard, FEMA, HUD, various stakeholders, donors, volunteer groups, elected officials, and a legion of other partners.” Schroeder said. “With the help of this great network of people, we were able to do some amazing things for those in need in the ensuing years, but our biggest accomplishment was making an immediate impact by completing 60 new homes for flood survivors in the first 60 weeks following the flood. Many of the systems and efficiencies my team and I employed were adopted by FEMA and became the blueprint for their Rapid Rebuild program in Houston following Hurricane Harvey in August 2017.”

Schroeder enjoys reading, writing, sports, going to the gym, hunting, fishing, and getting out into the woods.

His family lives in West Virginia and Pennsylvania.



# Requests for Letters of Interest

The **Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program** provides quick, targeted technical assistance to selected communities using a variety of tools that have demonstrated results and widespread application.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) delivers the assistance using teams of experts who conduct workshops in the selected communities.

EPA is offering assistance to regional partnerships based on the new EPA and FEMA [Regional Resilience Toolkit](#). Regional partners are considered multiple jurisdictions that are working together, as well as entities that operate at a large geographic scale, such as county or tribal governments, regional planning organizations, watershed coalitions, councils of governments, or other partnerships that work at the multi-state, multi-county, or multi-city/town scale. This assistance is not intended for a single community.

**Eligibility:** The applicant can include multiple jurisdictions that are working together, as well regional organizations that operate at a multi-state, multi-county, or multi-city/town scale. The letter of interest can come from state, tribal, regional and local governments, as well as nonprofit organizations that have a demonstrated partnership with a governmental entity.

**Deadline:** 5 p.m. EDT, Nov. 8.

**How to apply:** Submit a two-page letter of interest.

**Timeframe:** EPA expects to select three recipients by the end of November and intends to provide all technical assistance by Fall 2020.

## How the Program Works

1. Interested communities submit a letter of interest, outlining how the Regional Resilience Toolkit is relevant to their region.

2. EPA reviews the letters of interest and selects three recipients.

3. EPA contacts the selected recipient to schedule a workshop, discuss mutual expectations, roles and responsibilities, and review details about the program. During at least two conference calls before the workshop, direct consultation occurs between EPA staff, technical experts, and local decision-makers whose work relates to the project.

4. EPA's contractors, along with EPA headquarters and/or regional office staff, conduct a one-and-a-half-day

workshop in the community, including a public meeting, through which a collaborative process will yield a set of short- to mid-term actions the community can take to build regional disaster resilience.

5. A "Next Steps Memo" detailing the engagement and outlining identified follow-up actions is delivered to the community

## How to Apply

Submit a letter of interest—no longer than two pages—that contains the following information. (Do not submit maps, letters of support, or other supplemental information.)

1. **Regional geography and partnership.** Define the geographic bounds of your regional partnership. Please describe who your key partners are and the history of the partnership, if any. Describe how you will work across departments, scales of government, and with other organizations in your region. If there is a clear lead for your partnership, please explain how this leadership role came about.

2. **Description of the disaster risk.** Applicants need to articulate the disaster risks facing the region and likely actions needed to address those risks. Disaster types might include hurricanes, earthquakes, sea level rise, wildfire, drought, extreme heat, tornadoes, volcanoes, winter storms, and flooding. Please include information about how this assistance would align with and support related efforts, including recovery from a recent natural disaster, planned updates to a local or multi-jurisdiction hazard mitigation plan, or other pre-disaster mitigation efforts, such as planing for strategic retreat.

3. **Support from elected officials and the public.** Applicants need to identify persons and/or organizations that support the project and will work toward its implementation. Please include a list of references for each of the following (formal letters of support are not necessary):

**Elected Officials Support:** can include mayors, city council members, and representatives from other decision-making bodies with appropriate local, regional, or state governments.

**Public or Community Support:** can include neighborhood coalitions, community development groups, local business organizations, and community-based organizations from underrepresented communities.



4. **Describe your plan for engaging traditionally underrepresented communities,** including low-income, minority, tribal, and/or overburdened communities, in the technical assistance workshop. What are the key challenges facing overburdened communities and residents in hazardous areas?

5. **Describe the region's expected capacity for implementation,** e.g., regional or local policy change, infrastructure or capital improvement projects, new incentives, etc. EPA generally looks to assist communities that are ready for implementation after the Building Blocks workshop is complete.

6. If applicable, **describe how this assistance would complement work being done in the region using other federal funding** (e.g., EPA brownfields grants or water infrastructure funds, U.S. HUD Community Development Block Grants, FEMA funds (Pre-disaster Mitigation, Flood Mitigation Assistance, or Hazard Mitigation Grant Program dollars), Economic Development Administration funds, Opportunity Zone designation, etc.

7. **Affirm that the community can provide the information or materials listed in the "What the Community Provides" section of the tool description** (below).

8. **List the primary point of contact** including title, address, email, and phone number.

The letter must be signed by an elected official or other representative of the region, which might include one or more local elected officials, a regional decision maker, or a nonprofit leader. This signature represents the region's support and commitment to this program and assistance.

The letter of interest must be submitted in an attachment (Microsoft Word or PDF file) by email to Abby Hall at [hall.abby@epa.gov](mailto:hall.abby@epa.gov) no later than Nov. 8, at 5 p.m. Eastern Time.

**Save file using the following format:** Name of Regional Partnership, Name of State. For example: Mid-America Regional Council, Kansas.

For questions about this request for letters of interest, visit the [frequently asked questions website](#). Contact Abby Hall at [hall.abby@epa.gov](mailto:hall.abby@epa.gov) or 202-631-5915.



Meteorologists from the North Platte National Weather Service Office toured the State Emergency Operations Center this fall.

## Winter Weather Awareness Day is Nov. 7

With snow and cold in the forecast, it's a good time to prepare for the winter ahead.

The National Weather Service has produced a "handy-dandy" winter weather awareness information packet again this year. The information packet can be accessed at the following address:

<https://www.weather.gov/media/gid/awareness/wwad/WWAD2019.pdf>

## Spanish Language Resources for Preparedness

- [Listo.gov](#) is FEMA's Spanish-language preparedness website. It has hazard-specific guides, posters and [toolkits](#).
- The [FEMA Mobile App](#) is a helpful resource before, during and after a disaster. The App shares weather alerts and preparedness tips. It can also help find shelter and disaster resource centers.
- The [Red Cross mobile apps](#) are also available in Spanish. They include apps about first aid as well as specific disasters like hurricanes and tornadoes.
- Collecting, copying and storing financial information now could help avoid problems and recover faster after a disaster. [Lista de Control en Caso de Desastres \("Your Disaster Checklist"\)](#) from the [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#) is an easy way to start.
- In the [Prepare with Pedro \(Prepárate con Pedro\) Disaster Activity Book](#), kids can follow Pedro the Penguin around the United States to visit his friends and learn how they prepare.
- Buying flood insurance is an important way to prepare for the most common and costly disaster in the U.S. [Floodsmart.gov](#) has many [resources](#) in Spanish, such as the [¿Por qué necesito un seguro contra inundaciones?](#) ("Why do I Need Flood Insurance?") brochure.
- One of the best ways to prepare financially for a disaster is to save for one. [America Saves](#) has posted many of their resources and stories in Spanish to help you and your community start saving.

# NEBRASKA

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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Governor Pete Ricketts

State Homeland Security Director

Lt. Governor Mike Foley

NEMA Director

Major General Daryl Bohac

Assistant Director

Bryan Tuma

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](mailto:jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov).

[www.nema.nebraska.gov](http://www.nema.nebraska.gov)

