The Basic Emergency Management Certification Course was held at Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Oct. 27-28. The course is taught as a capstone to 14 independent study courses offered through the Emergency Management Institute. Twenty-three students completed the course, which emphasizes various phases of emergency management, including requirements and expectation prior to, during and after an event or incident occurs.

Three local emergency management directors offer insight and information during a panel discussion during the Basic Capstone. From right, Colt Farringer of Thayer County, Jim Davidsaver of Lancaster County and Jon Rosenlund of Hall County participated.

NEMA’s Logan Lueking discusses planning, exercise and training.

NEMA’s Patrick Conway outlines how the public assistance program works.

Statewide Interoperability Coordinator Sue Krogman talks about facilitation of communications among responders during emergencies.

NEMA exercise training officers Roger Conrad, left, and Larry Fichtner, standing in the back, served as instructors for the Capstone.
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.

A Message from
NEMA Assistant Director

Erv Portis

A month into my role as assistant director of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, I realize more and more each day, what a challenge NEMA and its team of stakeholders has faced during the last couple of years. The work associated with disbursement of funds as a result of damage caused by the 2019 floods and the COVID-19 response has been enormous. NEMA and its stakeholders have put forth an extraordinary effort. We could not have been, or continue to be, successful in this task as emergency managers if we hadn't worked in tandem with our stakeholders.

I definitely value relationships, and I believe that our reciprocal interaction with our partners is a benefit to us all. A major initiative of my tenure at NEMA will be to focus on stakeholder engagement. Listening to, collaborating with and building our network is a priority. We will proactively communicate, consult and work to understand our partners. Realizing what success means to all of our partners is an important step to knowing what is needed to provide the best resources for the citizens of Nebraska during their hours of need.

Our goals will include continuing to build relationships, to plan, to manage risk, to anticipate, to realize success and to take simple and timely actions together. By getting to know our stakeholders, we can better understand what they need and how we can work together to accomplish our agreed-upon goals.

We will work together to make the most of available resources. Through our partnerships with local governments, nongovernmental agencies, state partners and federal assets we will focus on collaboration. Our stakeholders’ contributions, perspectives and concerns will influence our work. We want to be as inclusive and intentional as possible as we deepen our relationships and connect with additional stakeholders. In addition, our plan will include engaging in activities that maximize the opportunities for varied audiences to participate. It’s important we ensure we are communicating to as many audiences as possible.

A major component of our outreach is to truly listen and to develop an even better understanding of the needs of Nebraskans. We will work together as a team to provide successful preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation to assure long-term resiliency for our state.

Ervin L. Portis
Assistant Director
Gov. Pete Ricketts, along with Nebraska’s State Emergency Response Commission, announced they are seeking new members to fill several vacancies.

Commissioners are charged with overseeing compliance with the requirements of Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 and to include the appointment and oversight of local emergency planning committees. Commission membership includes the:

- Director of the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy
- State Engineer/Director of the Nebraska Department of Transportation
- Superintendent of Law Enforcement and Public Safety
- State Fire Marshal
- Director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency
- Chief executive officer of the Department of Health and Human Services
- two elected officials or employees of municipal or county government.

And, one citizen member represents each of the following interest groups:

- firefighters
- local emergency management
- public or community health
- environmental protection,
- labor
- school district
- small business
- agricultural business
- chemical industry
- highway transportation and rail transportation.

The following positions are currently vacant:

- elected official or employee of municipal or county government (one vacancy)
- public or community health
- school district
- small business
- chemical industry
- highway transportation
- rail transportation

Applications can be submitted online at governor.nebraska.gov. The application can be found on the website under the Boards & Commissions tab of the Constituent Services menu. If applying for a position that is currently filled, the application will be considered at the next appointment term.

Southeast PET Region Holds Communications Exercise

Photos by Steve Cody of Otoe County and Roger Conrad of NEMA

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency staff were among the participants in the Southeast Planning, Exercise and Training Region’s annual communications full scale exercise in Syracuse, Oct. 25. According to Otoe County Emergency Management Deputy Director Steve Cody, the scenario for the exercise was a tornado splitting the town in two from north to south. Agencies responded as the region incident management team to develop the incident action plan for the day’s operational period, with the focus on the resources needed for all agencies to communicate, and test current radio communication capabilities. Agencies participating included: Nebraska Emergency Management Agency; Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer; Cass County Emergency Management; Gage County Emergency Management; Jefferson/Saline County Emergency Management; Johnson/Pawnee County Emergency Management; Lancaster County Emergency Management; Otoe County Emergency Management; City of Syracuse; Syracuse Fire Department; and Nebraska City Utilities
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 in the newsletter to: Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl, 402-471-7428 or jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov.