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A Message from
NEMA Assistant Director

Bryan Tuma

American Red Cross and Nebraska Emergency Management Agency staff were on hand at the Capitol, Sept. 6, when Lt. Gov. Mike Foley declared September as National Preparedness Month in Nebraska at the monthly proclamation signing.

Emergency Management professionals across the county promoted the event to call attention to the need for everyone to make a plan to keep their family, neighbors, coworkers and congregations safe should disaster strike.

We have long stressed the importance of being prepared for the first 72 hours following a disaster. As the Hurricanes in Texas, Florida, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico illustrate, 72 hours is a bare minimum. Power is expected to be off in Puerto Rico for at least a month. States like Oregon where earthquakes and tsunami’s have the potential to cause long-term power outages or evacuations promote a “two weeks ready” plan to make sure their residents are ready and can take care of themselves for at least 14 days.

The most important thing to remember is that we will all have to count on each other in the first minutes, hours and days following a large-scale incident. First responders will have their hands full in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and will have to help the people with the most serious needs first.

In advance of a disaster is when plans and contingencies need to be discussed. It is the time you should talk with your children, parents, neighbors, friends and coworkers about the ways you can get ready.

Discuss ways you could be self-sufficient following a disaster. Check out our Family Disaster Preparedness Kit for ideas on what you should have ready in case of disaster.

Local Emergency Operations Plans and the State Emergency Operations Plan outline how local jurisdictions and the state will respond should disaster strike. In emergency management the saying goes: “All emergencies are local.” That means when a tornado strikes your town, the first people there to help are your neighbors, followed by local police, firefighters and emergency medical teams.

Local city and county officials have a significant role following a disaster. They determine when your community has exhausted its resources. That is when Nebraska state officials may be asked to support the local jurisdiction in a response. The state does not come into a community and take over a disaster; the state supports the local jurisdiction representatives who best understand the community’s unique needs, issues and resources.

In turn, when the state exhausts its resources, it may need to ask for federal resources to assist in meeting the needs of the impacted community. That local, state and federal response with the support of volunteer organizations active in disaster, all starts with preparation and plans before the disaster. I hope you will take a look at your preparedness plans, if you haven’t already, and make plans just in case a significant event impacts your community.
Mike Loftis Honored

At a reception recognizing Radiological Systems Manager Mike Loftis on his retirement from Nebraska Emergency Management Agency on Sept. 15, he was honored for his commitment and service to NEMA and to the citizens of Nebraska from Jan. 3, 2005 to Sept. 15, 2017.

“The contributions Mike has made to NEMA are greatly appreciated,” said NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma. The hard work, professionalism and dedication he displayed as an emergency management professional are commendable and will be greatly missed.

Through his work in first the Radiological Emergency Preparedness Section and later in the Technical Hazards Section, Mike has contributed greatly to preparedness in the state of Nebraska, said Brian Folts, technical hazards unit supervisor. “Mike managed the calibration program for the state and saved local jurisdictions thousands of dollars by repairing and maintaining monitoring and surveying equipment. He trained countless first responders in the use of equipment. He also coordinated and executed two relocations of the calibration lab.”

Loftis was presented with a coin from Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac in a ceremony on Sept. 12. (Picture on the cover.)
Lt. Gov. Mike Foley presented the Be Prepared Awards, recognizing volunteers and community organizations for excellence in emergency preparedness and disaster response on Sept. 15 at the Nebraska State Capitol.

Foley was joined by Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Assistant Director Bryan Tuma and Nebraska Citizen Corps Coordinator Ryan Lowry to present eight emergency preparedness awards.

Presented during National Preparedness Month, the Be Prepared Awards program is in its 10th year of honoring Nebraskans who volunteer their time and energy to support preparedness in Nebraska communities. The awards are sponsored by NEMA in partnership with the Nebraska Citizen Corps Program and the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.

“While we recognize September as National Preparedness Month, those Nebraskans being honored today know that disaster preparedness is a year-round job,” Foley said. “It’s inspiring to see their commitment to preparedness and willingness to respond to any disaster or emergency.”
New Emergency Management Directors Named

Lisa Wiegand, Director
Gage County
Emergency Management

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Lisa Wiegand started Sept. 28 as the Gage County Emergency Management director. She previously was director of Gage County Tourism. Wiegand accepted the tourism director position late last year after an extensive history with Gage County Planning and Zoning.

“I love Gage County,” she said. “This is home and this was an opportunity to make myself a better person.”

Lisa also farms with her husband, Robert. They raise hogs and cattle. They have a son, Justin, daughter-in-law, Becky and grandson, Jaime.

Wiegand has been active in various groups including the Gage County Fairground Board for 30 years and Gage County Zoning.

Nicholas Elledge, Director
Nuckolls County
Emergency Management

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Nicholas Elledge was named director of Nuckolls County Emergency Management in August. Previously, Elledge was an applicator for a local COOP. He attended high school in Nuckolls County but grew up in Kansas. He said he is looking forward to the new challenge.

Elledge said the Nuckolls County Sheriff (and former emergency manager) Brad Baker has been supportive of him in first days on the job. In addition, several of the surrounding county emergency managers have offered support. He and his wife, Laura, have three children, ages 11, 7 and 2.

Amanda Burki, Director
Johnson and Pawnee County Emergency Management

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johnsonpawneecountyem@gmail.com

Amanda Burki started with Johnson and Pawnee County Emergency Management at the end of August. Burki served as administrative assistant at the Johnson County Sheriff’s Office before becoming emergency management director. In addition, Burki was a 911 dispatcher for four years.

“I was always interested in the position,” Burki said. “I have been an EMT for eight years, been on the rescue squad for five years and am the Chief of Tecumseh rescue. I am looking forward to knowing the emergency management process and understanding how NEMA and FEMA work together.”

Burki and her husband, Lukas, have four children and live Tecumseh. She originally from Omaha.

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, which raises awareness about the importance of cybersecurity. This annual campaign engages and educates public and private sector partners through events and initiatives, provides tools and resources needed to stay safe online, and increases the resiliency of the Nation in the event of a cyber incident. The Stop. Think. Connect. Toolkit provides resources to help you stay safe online and host your own cyber event. Materials include ready-made cyber presentations, tips cards, and more. To show your support, register as a NCSAM Champion. Use the hashtag #CyberAware to promote cybersecurity awareness through social media.

Emergency Management Directors Jon Rosenlund of Grand Island Hall County, Kirt Smith of Hamilton County, Chip Volcek of Adams County and Tom Smith of Region 44, along with Grand Island Fire Dept. Captain Tim Hiemer helped judge entries at the Nebraska State Fair. More than 90 entries were judged in the following categories: disaster kits, fire prevention posters, first aid kits, safety careers and scrapbooks.

Get Ready to Shake Out.

Earthquakes can happen where we work, live, or travel. Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drills are an opportunity for everyone to practice earthquake safety and other aspects of emergency plans.

The 2017 International ShakeOut day is October 19, when millions of people worldwide will hold earthquake drills in schools, organizations, communities, and households at 10:19 a.m. local time. Visit ShakeOut.org to register your participation, find resources and learn more.
Charitable Giving

The Nebraska Military Department hosted a variety of events including: a spaghetti feed, sausage sizzle, walking tacos event, bake sale, farmer’s market, silent auction and a “float your boat” ice cream social to promote the State’s Annual Charitable Giving Campaign. Pastor Tom Barber of the People’s City Mission (left) and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac (above) speaking at the campaign kickoff at the Joint Forces Headquarters.

FEMA Offers Advice on How to Help After a Disaster

Thank you to all of the generous individuals who donated their time, money, and supplies to people affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

If you still want to help, whether through financial donation or personal volunteerism, make sure you do so responsibly.

- **Cash is the most efficient method of donating.** Financial contributions to recognized disaster relief organizations are the fastest, most flexible, and most effective method of donating. Organizations on the ground know what items and quantities are needed. They often buy in bulk with discounts and, if possible, purchase through area businesses, which supports economic recovery. To make a cash donation directly to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, visit [www.unitedforpuertorico.com](http://www.unitedforpuertorico.com). You may also make financial donations to a [National VOAD member organization](http://www.unitedforpuertorico.com) to help voluntary or charitable organizations continue to provide services to Hurricane Maria survivors.

- **Confirm donations needed.** Critical needs change rapidly – confirm need-ed items BEFORE collecting; pack and label carefully; confirm delivery locations; arrange transportation. Unsolicited goods NOT needed burden local organizations’ ability to meet survivors’ confirmed needs, drawing away valuable volunteer labor, transportation, and warehouse space.

- **Connect to volunteer.** Trusted organizations operating in the affected area know where volunteers are needed, and can ensure appropriate volunteer safety, training, and housing.

- **Donate through a trusted organization.** Find trusted national and state level agencies to donate or volunteer from the [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster](http://www.fema.gov/volunteer-donate-responsibly) website. Do not self-deploy.

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency is currently seeking talented and hard-working people to help support the response and recovery.

If you need help in determining where and how to give, the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster website has a list of [major non-profits active in disaster work](http://www.fema.gov/volunteer-donate-responsibly). For more information, visit [www.fema.gov/volunteer-donate-responsibly](http://www.fema.gov/volunteer-donate-responsibly) and [Three Ways to Help After Hurricane Maria](http://www.fema.gov/volunteer-donate-responsibly).
ICYMI

In case you missed it

SOCIAL MEDIA

Not sure who to follow on Twitter? Check out the lists NEMA curates or follows.

Hall County has a CERT Team that meets & trains regularly. Interested? Contact us! #bethehelpbeforehelparrives #CitizenCorps #CERT

NE National Guard @NENationalGuard - Sep 15
#NEGuard Soldiers fly over flooded areas of FL surveying #HurricaneIrma damage & confirming civilian safety w/ friendly waves & thumbs up.

NE-TF1 in conjunction with the other task forces present a token of thanks to Eglin AFB prior to departing and heading back to Lincoln!

Good advice during National Preparedness Month!

Stay safe around downed power lines. Consider all lines, equipment and conductors to be live and dangerous. https://t.co/NbC1bJUAC8
ATTN: I-80 Fire Departments: WIPP Shipments Return to Nebraska

By: Debra Robinson, Planning & Training Specialist

The Department of Energy’s (DOEs) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) program has resumed operations after being closed in 2014 due to a fire. The WIPP site in Carlsbad, N.M. is the only repository for transuranic waste (TRU) from nation’s nuclear military program. With the shipments starting again, all training programs must also be restarted to support the program.

Fire departments (volunteer or paid) along the I-80 corridor in Nebraska, that may be called to respond to a transportation incident involving TRU waste, must complete annual radiological training with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency’s (NEMA), technical hazards unit. The foundation of the training program is the Modular Emergency Response Radiological Transportation Training (MERRTT) training which a 16-hour, instructor lead course that covers a variety of transportation-related topics emergency responders need to respond safely to transportation incidents involving radiological materials. Annual trainings are available to the departments that fall under this program at no cost to the local fire department.

How do you know if your department is a part of this program?

If your department is in close proximity to the I-80 corridor, chances are good that you should be receiving the radiological trainings. You can also look at the radiation equipment you were issued by NEMA. If you have a Ludlum 2241 meter and probe kit or a FH 40-G, you are a responding agency and must participate in annual trainings. If you still are not sure if your department is a part of this program, you can simply call NEMA and speak to someone in the technical hazards unit to find out.

We (NEMA) realize that training is always a challenge, especially for volunteer fire departments. That is why we work so closely with the local fire chiefs to schedule times and dates that work for their organization.

Our training capabilities have improved vastly over previous years as we can now incorporate both simulator and live source training into our offerings. This will give first responders the most current and realistic training available. This experience is invaluable when it comes to responding to “the real thing.”

Departments who wish to schedule their trainings should call NEMA at (402) 471-7421 and ask to speak to someone in the technical hazards section about WIPP training.

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