



# NEBRASKA

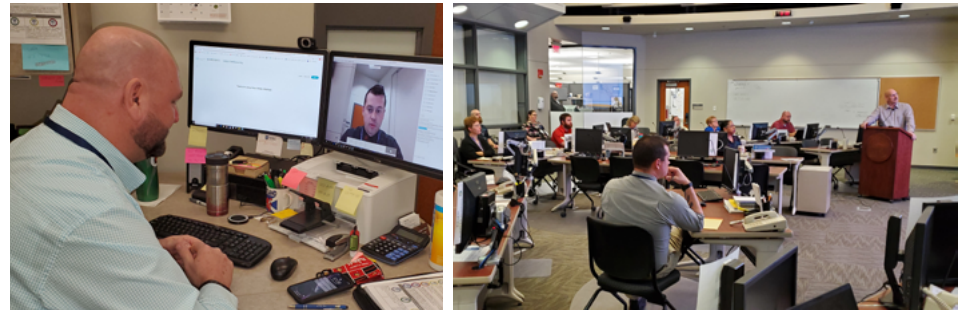
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

## Annual Report 2020



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## Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

***Nebraska Emergency Management Agency is charged by state statute with reducing the vulnerabilities of the people and communities of Nebraska from damage, injury and loss of life or property resulting from natural, technological and man-made disasters.***

*We envision safer, less vulnerable communities in Nebraska, made possible through 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. Our guiding principles are:*

1. *All emergencies begin at the local level. NEMA collaborates with local, state, tribal and federal officials to provide coordinated assistance to Nebraska communities that augment local capabilities when appropriate.*
2. *NEMA activities are grounded in principles of emergency management. Emergency management must be comprehensive, progressive, risk-driven, cost-effective and flexible.*
3. *Respectful, collaborative relationships and professional leadership are integral to quality emergency management. Emergency management activities must be inclusive and involve the whole community.*

# Annual Letter



**Major General  
Daryl Bohac, Director**



**Bryan Tuma,  
Assistant Director**

## Agency Partners and Stakeholders:

The changes we have endured this year due to COVID-19 are difficult to fathom given that this virus was unknown to the world until very late in 2019. More than 83 million people worldwide have been diagnosed with COVID-19, with more than 1.8 million deaths. It has been a year of tremendous loss and suffering. Local, state and federal emergency managers, and all of our partners, have worked to support our public health colleagues as they have responded during this worldwide crisis.

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency has been the point of contact for state and local agencies who required reimbursement for costs associated with the response to the pandemic. The major disaster declarations issued by President Donald Trump authorized the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance Program Category B (Emergency Measures) as a resource to reimburse eligible applicants for costs.

The Nebraska Association of County Officials and the Nebraska League of Municipalities assisted NEMA with the coordination of programming designed to provide financial assistance to local government entities. NEMA values these important relationships between state and local government officials to facilitate recovery efforts associated with the pandemic and other disaster events.

NEMA is also supporting the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services as it addresses the pandemic response. Key to the response is a coordinated and efficient incident command system. NEMA strives to assist the local emergency management offices and their respective public health districts to address pandemic response requirements. The year ends with hope as more than 36,000 Nebraskans have now received vaccinations to stop the spread of this deadly virus.

During 2020, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency continued to address recovery issues related to DR4420, the major federal disaster declared for 2019 flooding. The March 9 to July 14, 2019 disaster period was the longest of any flood event in U.S. history and also marked the second longest disaster period for any natural disaster event in U.S. history. Significant progress has been made with recovery efforts associated with the event.

Success with disaster recovery activities relies on the stakeholder engagement efforts and development of effective working relationships across local, state, tribal and federal partnerships. Critical to the recovery process are the significant contributions of volunteer and faith-based organizations, as well as the Nebraska Preparedness Partnership, a public/private partnership forged by participating private sector entities who wish to provide resources and assistance to communities across Nebraska. The Nebraska Legislature and Gov. Pete Rickett's office collaborated on funding to address the state cost-share requirements associated with FEMA Public Assistance Program projects, which are critical to efforts to rebuild, repair or replace critical public infrastructure. We are grateful for the Unicameral and its approval of \$83.6 million that was essential for the state's early response to COVID through LB1198 and for \$60 million in LB1008 for the state's cost share for DR4420.

FEMA continues to assist Nebraska with the refinement of Public Assistance projects and the identification of costs, scope of work and eligibility issues. NEMA enlisted the services of Hagerty and Associates to assist with the coordination of recovery program requirements. This contract for services is included in the management costs provided by FEMA to assist with recovery issues. Hagerty and Associates worked directly with FEMA Program Delivery managers to write projects, identify costs, develop scope of work, and address eligibility requirements. The addition of contractors to assist with project management issues increased the capacity of NEMA to expedite recovery efforts and provide state and federal cost share funds to reimburse local, state and tribal government for disaster-related costs. To date, DR4420 will exceed an estimated \$557 million in public infrastructure costs. NEMA continues to focus on efforts that expedite projects through the recovery process and resolve concerns or issues between FEMA and sub-recipients.

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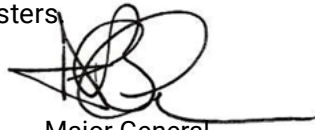
## Annual Letter Continued from Page 3

The use of contractors played critical roles in other areas of the recovery process associated with DR4420. Hagerty and Associates were the lead contractor in the development of the Nebraska Resiliency and Long-Term Recovery Plan. The plan was created in a collaborative process involving the participation of key stakeholder organizations. DR4420 created significant housing issues in Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy and Cass counties. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development and the Nebraska Investment and Finance Authority (NIFA) assisted NEMA with the identification of housing issues in the communities across the state who were heavily impacted by the flood event. DED enlisted the assistance of Hagerty and Associates in the development of a detailed plan to address the utilization of approximately \$108.9 million in Community Development Block Grant funds for disaster recovery. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) expects to approve the plan in 2021 which will permit the use of these funds to address low- to moderate-income housing requirement in communities ravaged by flooding.

The NEMA Recovery Section dedicated significant effort to the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Program in 2020. The State Hazard Mitigation Plan was rewritten with assistance from Innovative Emergency Management (IEM), a private contracting firm, and submitted to FEMA for final approval. The revised plan identifies a number of key strategies and initiatives directly related to lessons learned from DR4420. Critical stakeholder engagement activities were used in the development of the plan. A new Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) was developed in conjunction with the plan and this document provides the foundation for planning activities associated in all facets of emergency management programming. IEM was contracted to develop the State Hazard Mitigation Plan as part of a project and grant authorized by FEMA. NEMA held a series of stakeholder meetings to get input for the plan. The planning group was made up of representatives from 12 local, state and federal organizations. The state plan is not only critical to the Hazard Mitigation Program, but it is a requirement for the State of Nebraska to be eligible for participation in the Public Assistance Program.

A key take away from the events of 2020 has been, and always will be, that we are stronger together. A concerted effort on the part of local, state and federal partners, in conjunction with nongovernmental and business partners, is our best path to successful recovery from disasters.



  
Major General  
Daryl Bohac,  
Director

  
Bryan Tuma,  
Assistant  
Director

## About NEMA

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) works to protect the lives and property of Nebraskans by preparing for, responding to, recovering from and mitigating against disasters, threats, hazards and emergencies. NEMA is part of the Nebraska Military Department and in his role as adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac is director of the agency. Day-to-day operations are administered by Assistant Director Bryan Tuma.

As a relatively small state agency, NEMA relies extensively on full- and part-time emergency management representatives in Nebraska's 93 counties to carry out programs at the local level. It is this partnership with local directors that is a key reason why the state can respond effectively in times of emergency. While NEMA has responsibility to assist local governments when they require support after a disaster, another key to the agency's ability to respond is through the support of the state's emergency support function agencies and organizations. NEMA also relies on the support of other state agency staff and other organizations to coordinate a disaster response.

NEMA supports Nebraska Lt. Gov. Mike Foley in his role as state homeland security director, and acts as the state administrative agency for the homeland security program, the point of contact for integration of emergency management and homeland security programs with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. As the state administrative agency, NEMA has responsibility for overall funding, fiscal accountability, program management and integration with other state agencies to carry out the state homeland security program.

The Nebraska Homeland Security Strategy and the agency strategic plan are updated regularly by NEMA and are in place to lead and guide the agency's performance. At the national level, NEMA interacts with the National Emergency Management Association to keep up with issues that affect all states. Statewide, NEMA actively supports the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management and its membership.

# Administration Section



Members of the Administration Section include: Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Assistant Director Bryan Tuma, Business Manager Deb Kai, Administrative Assistant II Phyllis McCown, and Staff Assistants Karen Heath and Betty McCracken. The Administration Section is responsible for oversight of agency operations and programming, to include:

- Assisting the Adjutant General with the day-to-day operational requirements of the agency;
- Implementing fiscal management associated with general fund appropriations, grant funds, the Governor’s Emergency Fund, and recovery/mitigation funds allocated to the state;
- Coordinating travel, training and expense reimbursement;
- Developing and implementing policies and procedures for agency personnel;
- Coordinating procurement and purchasing procedures associated with state and federal grant programs;
- Maintaining compliance with the standards outlined in the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP);
- Developing the Annual Strategic Plan and supporting performance objectives to address agency operations and the state emergency management program.
- Coordinating Lean Six Sigma concepts to improve agency efficiency and delivery of programs and services.

## Fiscal Management for State of Nebraska Emergency Management

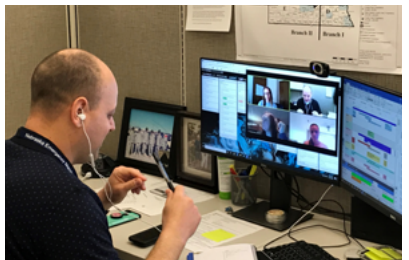
Program	Funding Source	Description	Outcomes
State Homeland Security Grant (SHSG)	Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	SHSG funds are allocated to the state through the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA to support the state efforts to integrate national homeland security strategies intended to prevent, respond and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergencies.	<b>In fiscal year 2020, SHSG totaled \$4,287,500</b> with 80% of the grant going to the eight Planning, Exercise and Training Regions and 20% to the state. The funding supports implementation of the Stakeholder Preparedness Review, the Threat, Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and the Training Exercise and Planning Workshop. Additionally, the state will continue working to strengthen its communications system that integrates prevention activities through emergency public information and warning, and information and intelligence sharing in cooperation with DHS and other federal agencies to the state and local jurisdictions.
Emergency Management Performance Grant	DHS/FEMA	FEMA provides federal funding through the EMPG grant to assist state and local jurisdictions with the implementation of national preparedness initiatives.	<b>EMPG funds totaled \$3,904,262</b> with 64% going to local emergency management and 36% funding NEMA salaries with a 50% match of state funds. Priority use for the EMPG is to sustain the ability of the state and locals to fund full-time paid emergency management agencies with sufficient operating budgets to support efficient and effective emergency management operations from the local level up through the state level.





Program	Funding Source	Description	Outcomes
Emergency Management Performance Grant-Supplement 	DHS/FEMA	Congressional appropriation identified in the CARES Act to assist states, territories, tribes, and local jurisdictions with preparedness measures specific to COVID-19 or future pandemic events. 	<b>EMPG-S provided \$1,099,792</b> and has a cost share requirement of non-federal funds to carry out an EMPG-S award in an amount not less than 50 percent of the total project cost. NEMA has identified enhanced information integration and sharing as key to the overall effort to improve the response and recovery issues associated with COVID-19 or any other pandemic. Delivery of information in a virtual setting must be efficient and effective due to the constraints placed upon emergency operations centers in a COVID environment. This project aligns with other technology efforts designed to enhance the capacity of the SEOC and EOCs across the state to function more effectually. It allows for social distancing of small groups (15 or less) within local EOCs to accommodate governmental meetings, trainings, distribution of PPE, or manning these spaces during an emergency.
FEMA Public Assistance (PA) Program	DHS/FEMA	FEMA recovery program administered through states to assist eligible applicants with the reimbursement of costs associated with emergency measures and permanent work to restore public infrastructure as a result of a federal major disaster declaration.	<b>More than \$550 million in PA costs resulted from flooding in 2019</b> and included 2,200 public infrastructure projects. This is the state's most expensive disaster in history. FEMA provides federal dollars to reimburse 75% of eligible costs. For many applicants, the non-federal share of the eligible costs are split between the applicant and the State of Nebraska.
FEMA Hazard Mitigation Program (HMGP)	DHS/FEMA	FEMA recovery program administered through states to identify and mitigate risks and hazards which contribute to the loss of life and property from natural disasters and emergencies.	<b>\$45.8 million was available for the HMGP federal share in 2020.</b> NEMA submitted 38 sub-applications for assistance to FEMA Region VII in September 2020 with a total cost of \$67.9 million.
Non-profit Security Grant Program to States (NSGP-S)	DHS/FEMA	Provides funding support for target hardening and other physical security enhancements to eligible non-profit organizations that are at high risk of a terrorist attack; and, in previous funding opportunities, located within the States.	<b>NSGP has provided \$301,235</b> , and is a 100% pass-through grant to 501(c)(3) exclusively operating for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes. The NSGP serves to promote emergency preparedness coordination and collaboration activities between public and private community representatives, as well as State and local government agencies. The funding here represents 4 Nebraska recipients - 1 hospital, 2 houses of worship, and the Lied Center.



Program	Funding Source	Description	Outcomes
State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) 2.0	Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration	State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) 2.0 assist state, local and tribal governments with planning activities for the nationwide interoperable public safety broadband network.	<b>SLIGP 2.0 provided \$721,603</b> , to assist state, regional, tribal, and local jurisdictions with identifying, planning, and implementing the most efficient and effective means to use and integrate the infrastructure, equipment, and other architecture associated with the nationwide public safety broadband network to satisfy the wireless broadband and data services needs of their jurisdictions. Nebraska is using the grant to continue to expand its stakeholder education and outreach activities in cooperation and partnership with FirstNet/AT&T. Portions of this grant will be used to support the governance group, the Nebraska Public Safety Broadband Working Group, with all FirstNet activities within the state.
High Hazard Potential Dams (HHPD) Rehabilitation Grant	DHS/FEMA	HHPD grant program provides technical, planning, design, and construction assistance for eligible rehabilitation activities that reduce dam risk and increase community preparedness.	<b>HHPD funds totaled \$262,039</b> to rehabilitate the Willow Creek dam in Red Willow County. In partnership with The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, NEMA assisted the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District to apply for the grant which will focus on studies and engineering design to mitigate dam seepage. Based on the findings of the evaluation, the design and construction of an additional passive relief well system is the chosen alternative to mitigate under-seepage. New relief wells would be constructed of more robust stainless steel and could accommodate rigorous cleaning and pumping.
Hazardous Material Preparedness Grant (HMEP)	Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous material Safety Administrations (DoT/PHMSA)	The HMEP grant program increases state, territorial, tribal and local effectiveness in safely and efficiently handling hazardous materials incidents, and encourages a comprehensive approach to emergency training and planning by incorporating the unique challenges of responses to transportation situations.	<b>HMEP provided \$842,898</b> , and requires a 30% state match. In Nebraska, funds support the activities of the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC), Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC), the Statewide Hazmat teams and an overall more effective hazmat program. Additionally with these grant funds, NEMA provide hazardous materials training to the public sector first responders. Training ranges from awareness level to specialist level training depending on individual departmental needs. All trainings offered by and supported within the state of Nebraska are consistent with National Fire Protection Association and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.



Program	Funding Source	Description	Outcomes
Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP)	Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD)	NPPD operates Cooper Nuclear Station which must comply with Nuclear Regulatory Commission and FEMA regulations to maintain licensure requirements. The REP program supports state and local emergency preparedness and response requirements associated with the operation of the facilities.	<b>NEMA received \$321,000</b> from NPPD for REP activities. The Technical Hazards Unit (THU) conducted full plan revisions for both local Radiological Emergency Response Plans for the 10-mile Emergency Planning Zone surrounding Cooper Nuclear Station. THU staff supported training for over 150 responders and conducted a full-scale exercise in February involving dozens of state and local participants.
Governor Emergency Program-191 (COVID-19)	Coronavirus Relief Fund	The CRF is a federally-funded program authorized through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Security (CARES) Act. Under this act, states received funding to provide for the necessary actions needed to be taken in response to the coronavirus pandemic. On May 27, 2020, Gov. Pete Ricketts announced the State of Nebraska's plan and priorities for the CRF. All CRF funds reside in GEF Program 191.	Through CRF, <b>Nebraska received \$1.08 billion</b> and Douglas County received \$166 million for a total of \$1.25 billion.  <b>\$130 million each</b> was assigned to the state and local programs. NEMA is point of contact for this program. Under this act, Nebraska received funding for necessary actions needed to respond to the coronavirus pandemic.
LB 1008 Program-191 (COVID-19)	Legislature	The bill makes adjustments to appropriations and re-appropriations for the state operations, aid and construction programs, provides for transfers and modified intent language and earmarks accompanying appropriations approved by the 106th legislature, First Session for the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 and the next fiscal year ending June 30, 2021	<b>\$2 million from GEF Program 191</b> to local public health districts to address COVID-related expenses in FY 20-21. To be split evenly for 18 local public health districts in January 2021
LB 1198 Program-191 (COVID-19)	Legislature	Bill approved March 25, 2020 to provide funds to the GEF program 191 for COVID-19 response.	<b>Legislature approved \$83 million</b> for FY2019-20 to the Military Department for COVID-19 response. <b>\$60 million of expenditures to reimburse 1198 was transferred from CARES Act funding.</b>
Governor Emergency Program- 192	Legislature	<p>The Governor's Emergency Fund (GEF) is authorized under the provisions of R.R.S. 810829.31 and 36-75, known as the Nebraska Emergency Management Act, to provide an efficient and effective mechanism to support state agencies and local jurisdictions and the unanticipated fiscal impact associated with emergencies and disasters.</p> <p>The fund assists in restoring essential public services and is intended to be supplemental to local response and recovery efforts and not the primary source of assistance.</p> <p>The fund ensures Nebraska has the fiscal capacity to support the costs associated with response and recovery requirements and is critical in meeting the statutorily-defined duties of the governor used to pay eligible costs related to state emergency disaster declarations.</p>	<p><b>\$54 million to GEF Program 192</b> to address state cost share requirement for DR 4420. The unprecedented activities in 2019 (statewide flooding) and in 2020 (COVID-19 response; wildfire response) showed the necessity of the GEF.</p>  



Program	Funding Source	Description	Outcomes
Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT)	Legislature	The Nebraska Wildfire Control Act of 2013 required NEMA to contract for the services of a SEAT to address wildfire suppression efforts in the state. In addition, LB961 required Nebraska to join the Great Plains Interstate Forest Fire Compact to leverage regional wildfire fighting resources with five other states and one Canadian province. In order to support compact requirements and SEAT operations, the agency elected to use the assets and capabilities of the Great Plains Dispatch Center in Rapid City, South Dakota.	<p><b>SEAT Contract for 2020: \$399,236.</b> NEMA and the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) work collaboratively on the SEAT program, which operates from one of five bases, located in Alliance, Chadron, McCook, Scottsbluff and Valentine, which is staffed by NFS staff. Additionally the NFS has a mobile SEAT base available when needed.</p> <p><b>2020 Activation: July 1 to Oct. 21</b> Operational days: 113; Deployed: 27 missions; Sorties flown to drop retardant: 99; Cost: \$399,236.</p> <p><b>2019 Activation: July 29 to Sept. 28</b> Operational days: 63; Deployed: 0 missions; Sorties flown to drop retardant: 0; Cost: \$346,691.</p> <p><b>2018 Activation: July 16 to Sept. 15</b> Operational days: 62; Deployed: 7 missions; Sorties flown to drop retardant: 24; Cost: \$207,864.</p> <p><b>2017 Activation: July 15 to Sept. 29</b> Operational days: 77; Deployed: 14 missions; Sorties flown to drop retardant: 32; Cost: \$565,287.</p>



# Preparedness and Operations

The Preparedness and Operations Section is led by Section Administrator Sean Runge and Section Manager Earl Imler. The Preparedness and Operations Section at NEMA includes the Grants Unit, Planning, Exercise and Training Unit, Technical Hazards Unit, Long Term Recovery and Public Information. In times of emergency, the section works to provide an effective, efficient and timely response in support of local governments affected by disaster.



# Planning, Exercise and Training Unit

The Planning Exercise and Training Unit is supervised by Dave Reisen.

Staff assigned to the unit are exercise training officers: Roger Conrad, Larry Fichtner and Chris Ulrick; Program Specialist II Logan Lueking, Program Specialist I Leo Larkin and planning specialists Matthew Harrison and Tia Loftin.

The PET Unit oversees the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP), Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR), State Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

(THIRA), the NEMA Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), the state Continuity of Government Plan (COG), the Nebraska Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan (MYTEP) and revisions of county local emergency operation plans (LEOPs).

NEMA adheres to a five-year planning calendar and processes full revisions of LEOPs. Seventeen full revisions of LEOPs were completed in 2020. NEMA has established planning capabilities for the integrated planning process in the eight PET/communication regions.

The unit assisted in the coordination of Nebraska's annual Investment Justification Workshop. NEMA representatives met with the Homeland Security Policy Group and Senior Advisory Committee (SAC) to complete the project award process.

The unit also serves as the agency liaison to Omaha's Metropolitan Medical Response Systems/Health Care Coalition (HCC).

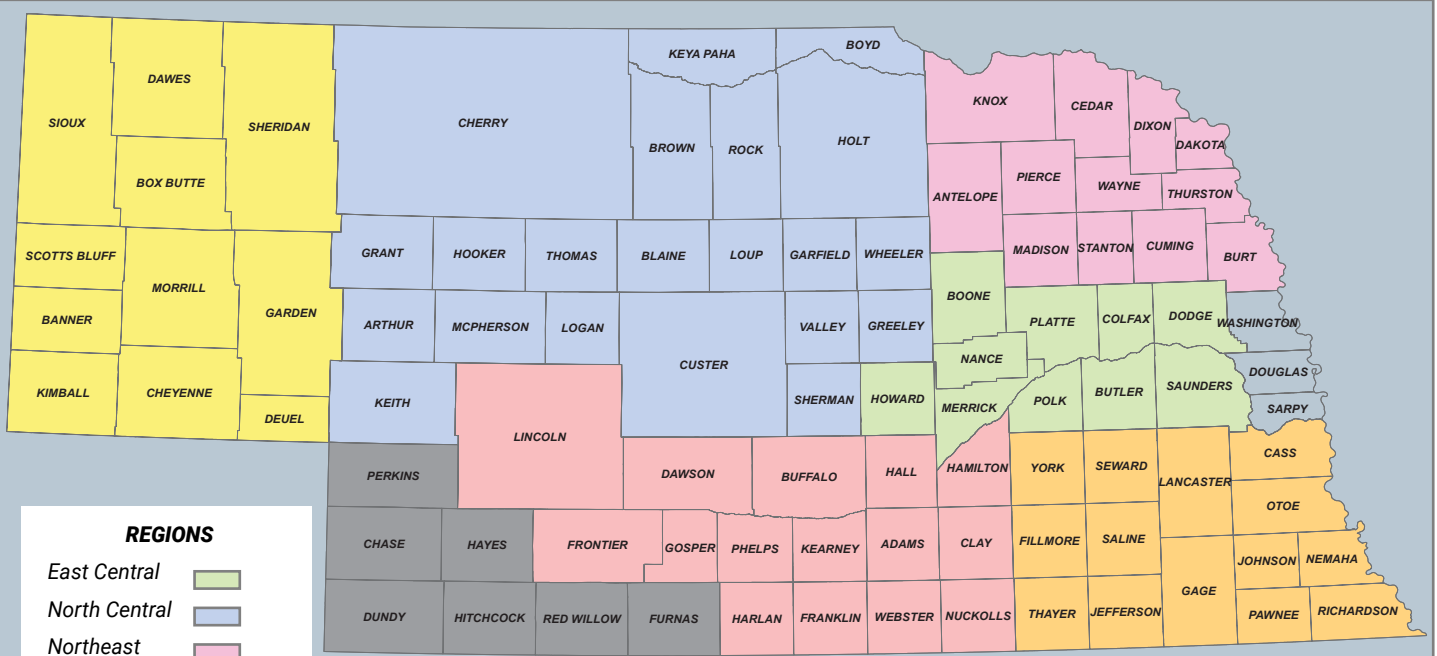
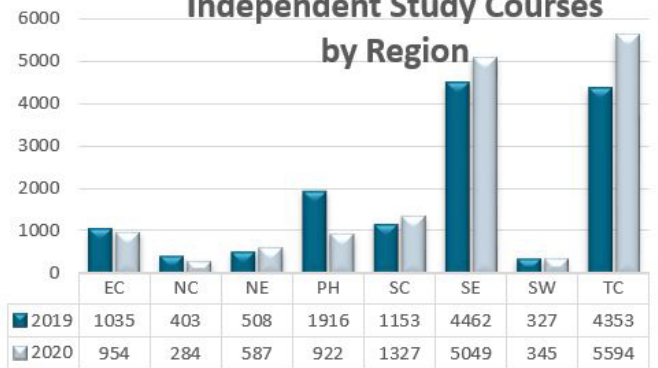
The unit works with Nebraska's eight planning exercise and training (PET)

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**Independent Study Courses by Month**



**Independent Study Courses by Region**



## Planning, Training and Exercise Regions

Regionalization is a requirement of the State Homeland Security Grant and it establishes a governing body in each region to develop grant projects that enhance emergency preparedness within each of the regions across the state.

## Planning Unit *Continued from page 10*

regions. Activities are conducted at all levels, from assistance to local jurisdictions, through regional and state level training and exercises. NEMA offers support to state agencies, local jurisdictions and the eight regions in the form of basic certification and targeted courses for emergency management personnel. NEMA continues to establish a level of training in compliance with requirements identified by the Department of Homeland Security and Nebraska statute.

The PET Unit has assigned a program specialist to support the state's yearly single engine air tanker (SEAT) contract and to assist in operations at the SEAT bases, along with staff members from the Nebraska Forest Service.

An agency metric in 2020 included attendance at regional PET region meetings. NEMA staff provided assistance and updates, enhanced access to programs and grants, articulated PET requirements and assisted local officials.



## Grants Unit

The NEMA Grants Unit is supervised by Julie Mayers. Staff assigned to the Grants Unit include federal aid administrators Tanya Lyon, Chelsea Gray and Heather Silver.

The Unit is responsible for the administration of all Preparedness grants for the State Administrative Agency (SAA), NEMA.

NEMA receives grants from: the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Department of Transportation (DoT)/Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), the Department of Commerce (DoC), National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to support preparedness efforts in Nebraska.

For 2020, and in response to the global pandemic, NEMA was awarded the Emergency Management Performance Grant-Supplemental (EMPG-S) to improve needed support for emergency management activities such as personal protection, operational

coordination and communication. NEMA's portion of the EMPG-S grant is being used for statewide planning and connectivity equipment necessary for working in a "virtual work environment." Among the equipment purchased were teleconferencing cameras for all local emergency managers, and webcams with headsets for agency staff.

The grant is also being used to improve the customer service and the inter-active experience of the agency's website through real time dashboards and the addition of portal technology, not only for local emergency managers, but state agencies, stakeholders, and the public. Additionally, NEMA has begun the Bold Planning Initiative which will update emergency operations plans (EOP) at the state and county levels, and state agency continuity of operations plans (COOP) spearheaded by the Department of Administrative Services.

NEMA is the only State of Nebraska agency eligible to apply directly for funding from DHS/FEMA and DoT/PHMSA, and in turn ensures that

local emergency management programs are not only established but sustained. The SAA is responsible for filing applications on the state's behalf, distributing grant program guidelines to state and local jurisdictions (sub-recipients), receiving applications from sub-recipients for funding, facilitating the distribution of these non-disaster grant funds, and maintaining compliance through oversight and monitoring over the life cycles of the grants.

Over the grants' period of performance, NEMA continuously provides technical assistance and monitors sub-recipients as required by DHS/FEMA and PHMSA. As it applies to each grant, monitoring for compliance includes, but is not limited to: employee reimbursement, equipment, fiscal, local emergency operations plan compliance, National Incident Management System compliance, construction, other direct costs, personnel and direct labor, PET expenses, reporting requirements, supplies and materials, special terms and conditions, and travel/vehicle mileage.

# Citizen Corps

Another part of the Preparedness and Operations Section is the Citizen Corps Program (CCP).

Nebraska CCP works with emergency management, public health, first responders and other preparedness partners to provide public education, training and volunteer opportunities for Nebraskans. CCP focuses on disaster preparedness and response for individuals, families and communities.

Each year, the State Homeland Security Grant helps fund projects aimed at making sure Nebraskans are better prepared for and able to respond to disasters.

In 2020, Nebraska CCP was actively involved in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a number of preparedness and response activities across Nebraska. These activities included:

Playing an integral role in COVID-19 testing sites and drive-through clinics setup and management during the onset of the pandemic, helping to meet the volunteer needs of polling locations, assisting local health departments with contact tracing and logistical support, distribution

of the Strategic National Stockpile supporting local supply chains, and leading local efforts to create thousands of masks that were in turn given to the public free of cost.

Local CCP teams were also utilized in response to local flooding in areas still recovering from the widespread 2019 Nebraska floods. The volunteer led teams supported emergency operations center operations, provided traffic control and river monitoring throughout the evenings, opened the shelter on two separate occasions, and conducted multiple drone flyovers and ground damage assessments to assist local emergency management.

CCP partnered again with Nebraska Disaster Behavioral Health for its annual conference. CCP assisted with behavioral health partners to exercise disaster plans.

Local Citizen Corps programs continued to provide Psychological First Aid (PFA) training as well as community emergency response team (CERT) courses, Rapid Shelter Team Setup/Shelter Management, Stop-the-Bleed and Hands-Only CPR classes throughout the year utilizing online platforms. These trainings

help communities and their citizens become more resilient and prepared to respond to a variety of incidents and support local emergency management efforts.

The State Homeland Grant Program (SHGP) was used to fund the state Citizen Corps coordinator position which provides technical assistance to local programs, works with local, state and federal agencies to strengthen partnerships and assists with the development of the State Citizen Corps Council.

The grant was also used to help purchase equipment that volunteers used for local responses.

During National Preparedness Month in September, CCP worked with Lt. Gov. Mike Foley on the 13th annual Be Prepared Awards program, which recognizes volunteers and community organizations for excellence in emergency preparedness and disaster response.

Quinn Lewandowski and Elizabeth Gleason served as the CCP coordinator throughout 2020 through an arrangement with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.

# Public Information

Delivering the right message to the right people at the right time is a vital function in disaster operations and is the responsibility of Public Information Officer (PIO) Jodie Fawl at NEMA. This year, the PIO worked with local, state and federal communicators to activate a virtual

joint information center (JIC) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Nebraska JIC staff includes PIOs from other state agencies, as well as representatives from local and federal entities involved in the response to an event.



NEMA's PIO works with local emergency managers to promote preparedness via social media campaigns, the severe weather awareness poster contest and other events.

A new project to improve the customer experience on the agency website began in 2020. The first phase of the Medallia project is to assess the purpose and nature of website activities in an effort to improve real-time situational awareness for the public and stakeholder agency representatives during disasters as well as during normal "blue sky" days. The first steps of a Priority 5 project began in 2020 that is designed to improve data integration through real time data dashboards on the NEMA website. The project will also revamp the portal in use by local emergency managers and other agency stakeholders.

# Technical Hazards Unit

The Technical Hazards Unit is supervised by James Rashilla. Staff assigned to the unit in 2020 were: Deb Robinson, senior radiological emergency preparedness (REP) planning and training specialist; Walter Kirkland, REP planning specialist; Terry Miller, radiological calibration specialist; Alyssa Sanders, State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) coordinator; and Amber Schoen, staff assistant II.

The Technical Hazards Unit (THU) covers four distinct programs for the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency: radiological emergency preparedness for Cooper Nuclear Station (CNS), statewide radiological material transportation, the agency's radiological equipment calibrations laboratory; and the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC). These programs work together to mitigate natural and man-made hazards and ensure an effective response if an incident were to occur.

Radiological emergency preparedness (REP) involves planning, training and exercises for the area surrounding Nebraska's sole nuclear power plant, CNS in Nemaha County. NEMA's two REP specialists prepare the communities surrounding the nuclear power plant to respond to an incident involving the power plant. The majority of NEMA staff participate in the quarterly drills at the plant; annual evaluated and unevaluated exercises and various drill/exercise related training opportunities. The REP team prepared NEMA staff for a two-day full-scale dress rehearsal involving various state and local agencies to prepare for a FEMA evaluated exercise which was canceled due to COVID.

THU is also involved in the planning and training of local responders for a response to an accident involving radioactive materials crossing the state. THU maintains situational awareness of dates and routes of any radioactive waste shipments moving through the state. Members of THU participate in national and regional planning efforts regarding the shipment of radiological waste and spent nuclear fuel. In support of this

program, THU receives funding from the Western Governors Association (WGA). In 2020, THU received over \$7,000 in funding from WGA. REP and SERC staff worked together to conduct a Modular Emergency Response Radiological Transportation Training (MERRTT) in Kearney. Attendees from 8 departments were trained in the proper response to transportation accidents involving radiological materials.

The radiological calibration laboratory calibrates and maintains radiological monitoring equipment. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations require annual calibration and quarterly performance checks on equipment positioned around the nuclear station. NEMA's radiological calibration specialist maintains the state's radiological monitoring equipment within performance specifications to meet regulatory requirements. In addition, the lab provides low-cost calibration services to emergency response organizations across Nebraska. NEMA provided calibration services to organizations such as the Nebraska State Patrol, City of Hastings and Buffalo County.

The State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) is the 19-member governor-appointed commission tasked with supporting hazardous materials planning and training in Nebraska. NEMA is the designated coordinating agency for all SERC activities. State statute designates the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy as the point of contact for hazardous materials releases and reporting.

NEMA's SERC coordinator is the programs manager of the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DoT) Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) grant. HMEP monies are used to fund transportation related hazardous



materials planning and training activities, as well as printing the local emergency operations plans for each of Nebraska's 93 counties.

Nebraska has a variety of hazardous materials response resources across the state, supervised and coordinated by SERC. The primary response to a hazardous materials release comes in the form of local fire departments. Using HMEP funding, the State Fire Marshals Agency provides hazardous materials awareness, operations and technician training to local paid and volunteer departments. Funding was also provided to conduct aircraft fire rescue training at Central Nebraska Regional Airport in Grand Island and the North Platte Regional Airport. In addition, NEMA facilitated the purchase of \$90,000 in hazardous materials training equipment for the State Fire Marshal Agency Training Division.

With the State Homeland Security Grant, 10 fire departments and the Nebraska Hazardous Incident Team (NHIT) have signed memorandums of understanding with the state to be provided funding for training and planning. In return, these departments exist as deployable state emergency response teams for hazardous materials incidents. These fire departments are located in Beatrice, Bellevue, Columbus, Grand Island, Hastings, Red Willow County, Norfolk, North Platte, Omaha and Scottsbluff. These teams joined together in 2020 to form the Hazardous Materials Governance Group, which will collaborate between departments on equipment purchases for NIMS typing.

# Long-Term Recovery

Chris Schroeder is NEMA's program specialist for long-term recovery, a unit added to the agency in 2019 during the flood that began in March and would quickly go on to become one of the largest disasters in Nebraska's history.

The aim of long-term recovery is to identify and meet the needs of individuals and communities through a network of organizations, partners, and resources – from local, state, and federal levels. Addressing all the immediate and big-picture issues is often both time- and emotionally intensive for families and municipalities impacted by the disaster, and especially given the extent of the flooding that swept across Nebraska.

To expedite this arduous process, Gov. Pete Ricketts reactivated the Governor's Long-Term Recovery Task Force – a collection of representatives, agencies, and stakeholders from various fields – in November 2019. As an efficient means for helping Nebraskans overcome the disaster, and with the assistance of Hagerty Consulting, this task force began drawing up a new Long-Term Recovery and Resilience Plan, with emphasis on several key areas: agriculture, economics, health and social services, housing, infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources.

Each of these areas became its own committee, or recovery support function (RSF), within which, subject matter experts lined out objectives, strategies, and tactics for Nebraska's recovery – items which would ultimately make up the bulk of the Long-Term Recovery and Resilience Plan. The task force and respective RSFs also helped compile additional documents and reports to help inform these discussions, including a Baseline Conditions and Impact Assessment Report – which tells the story of where Nebraska was at the onset of the flood in a number of areas and fields, as well as initial details on the holes and gaps created by the disaster – and an economic ecosystem analysis – which takes

a county-by-county look at the flood impacts on housing, economics and infrastructure.

The Long-Term Recovery and Resilience Plan itself was finalized, vetted, and distributed in July of this year, and it contains more than 70 objectives and strategies in total, all of which have either gotten underway in some form or fashion, or are actively in progress – not only toward the recovery of the state and its people, but also in advance of and preparation for future disasters of any kind.

However, while progress has not stopped by any means, it has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing protocols, and various directed health measures.

Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 has brought with it a litany of new issues, needs, and insecurities for many flood survivors, and also exacerbated pre-existing needs for many other individuals and communities. But at the same time, the pandemic has added a new contingent of partners and stakeholders to the Governor's Long-Term Recovery Task Force, a new level of coordination and communication across levels, organizations, and communities, and brought the topic of long-

term recovery into more areas and conversations than ever before.

The Long-Term Recovery and Resilience Plan, as with many state plans, is – and will continue to be – very much a living, evolving document. Already, there are needs, topics, and lessons learned from this pandemic which are being addressed in communities statewide, and also being worked into the plan as objectives and strategies, including, but not limited to, workforce development, mental health, and food security.

As the scope of the flood began to become clear in March 2019, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac told representatives in the State Emergency Operations Center, "We're moving from the intensity of response to the urgency of recovery."

And, with a continued, effort from local organizations, state agencies, federal partners, and many representatives in between, that urgency to help friends and neighbors has not only endured but increased – offering proof, if proof be needed, that Nebraskans refuse to be defined solely by disaster events, but instead by their response and recovery to them, for each other and for a better Nebraska.



# Recovery Section

The NEMA Recovery Section includes the Public Assistance Unit and the Hazard Mitigation Unit. The section is led by Recovery Section Administrator Donny Christensen and Recovery Section Manager Molly Bargmann.

## Public Assistance

Patrick Conway is the unit supervisor and serves as state public assistance officer. Kyle Winchell, a program specialist, serves as deputy state public assistance officer. Planning specialists in the unit are Nathan Steed, Tami Reynolds, Chris Smyth, Megan Eckles, Elizabeth Huggins, Andrew Allen and Jamie Hansen.

NEMA's Public Assistance (PA) Unit provides assistance to state, tribal and local governments as well as certain private nonprofits throughout the disaster recovery process. NEMA provides public assistance for both federal and state-declared disasters and is a major component of the disaster recovery process.

The public assistance program provides supplemental federal disaster grant assistance. It provides reimbursement for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the repair, replacement, or

restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned facilities. The program also assists in similar activities for the facilities of certain private non-profit organizations with critical services. Public assistance program encourages cost-effective hazard mitigation measures for damaged facilities. NEMA manages this program for all eligible entities within Nebraska.

2020 was marked by the COVID-19 health emergency. On March 13, it was declared a nationwide emergency under the Stafford Act. This marked the first time that all 50 states were under a Stafford Act Declaration for the same incident. As part of that emergency declaration, all 93 counties in Nebraska were designated as part of EM-3483, with an ongoing incident period beginning Jan. 20, 2020.

In order to provide for a greater

level of assistance from FEMA for the people of Nebraska, Gov. Pete Ricketts requested a disaster declaration, and Nebraska received DR-4521, superseding the emergency declaration, with the same ongoing incident period.

As the year progressed, PA staff continually demonstrated their dedication to the mission of helping the communities of Nebraska recover from disaster. Much of the year saw the team working from the Verizon building (where the DR-4420 Joint Field Office had been), but in October, the entire team moved back to the NEMA offices at the Joint Forces Headquarters. Along the way, there have been some changes to the personnel on the team, including the addition of contract support from Hagerty Consulting to assist with the DR-4420 recovery efforts.



### 2020 Public Assistance at a Glance

(As of Dec. 8, 2020)

#### DR-4521: COVID-19 Health Emergency

430 applicant organizations

FEMA-estimated PA costs in excess of \$169 million

242 projects created

38 projects obligated

#### DR-4420: 2019 Flooding

412 eligible applicants

FEMA-estimated PA costs in excess of \$500 million

2,087 projects created

1,803 obligated

**The NEMA Public Assistance Unit has processed 1,250 Payments on DR-4420 since the disaster began, totaling \$46,533,989 with more payments being processed all the time. In 2020 alone, payments totaling more than \$35 million toward the recovery from DR-4420 have been processed.**

# Hazard Mitigation Unit

John Gassman serves as the state hazard mitigation officer and supervisor of the Hazard Mitigation Unit.

Lexy Hindt is the unit program specialist and serves as deputy state hazard mitigation officer. Planning specialists in the unit are: John Cook, and Heather Thole.

Hazard mitigation is any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards and their effects. This definition distinguishes actions that have a long-term impact from those more closely associated with immediate preparedness, response, and recovery activities. Hazard mitigation is the only emergency management phase specifically dedicated to breaking the cycle of damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. Additionally, hazard mitigation saves taxpayer dollars. On average, every dollar spent on mitigation creates six dollars of benefits, including reducing property damage and loss of life.

NEMA's Hazard Mitigation Unit (HMU) seeks to:

- Promote a comprehensive state hazard mitigation policy framework to coordinate federal, state and local hazard mitigation planning and program efforts.
- Reduce or eliminate long-term risk to property, including public, critical facilities and infrastructure, historic, and private structures.
- Promote public awareness of hazards and how to reduce their impacts.
- Encourage the development and implementation of long-term, cost-effective, and resilient mitigation projects that preserve or restore the functions of natural systems.
- Build stronger by promoting mitigation actions that emphasize sustainable construction and design measures to reduce or eliminate the impacts of natural hazards.

HMU provides technical assistance throughout the life cycle of a mitigation grant. This includes application development, site visits during implementation, and final project inspections and closeouts.

In 2020, HMU continued work on the most destructive disaster in state history, DR-4420 or the flooding of 2019. With nearly \$50 million available for the hazard mitigation grant program (HMGP), the HMU worked with potential sub-applicants across Nebraska. At the application deadline in September, NEMA submitted 38 sub-applications for assistance to FEMA Region VII. These projects will help communities across the state impacted by the storms and flooding in 2019 to build back better.

In the fall of 2020, FEMA approved funding for four planning projects under the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant. These projects will allow planning areas across the state to update their local hazard mitigation plans (LHMPs). To qualify for HMGP funding, a jurisdiction must have an LHMP approved within the last five years. Using PDM to keep plans updated ensures that communities can make use of HMGP when disasters strike.

FEMA also launched the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program in the fall of 2020, which replaced the PDM grant. Under BRIC, FEMA allocates each state \$600,000 for capability- and capacity-building (CCB) activities. These activities

include building codes activities, partnerships, project scoping, mitigation planning and planning-related activities, and other activities. Additionally, FEMA has close to \$450 million for mitigation projects that they will review in a national competition. As of this writing, NEMA is working with sub-applicants on six CCB and 10 competitive projects.

An important area of focus for the HMU is supporting the small communities around the state with small budgets. To do this, the HMU partnered with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NeDED) to identify the municipalities that meet the criteria laid out in 44 CFR. The HMU sent letters to each of the 27 towns and villages to notify them that they qualified for additional federal assistance. Identifying and reaching out to these communities will allow them to participate in mitigation projects despite their limited ability to pay a non-federal share.

The HMU also completed an update of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan with assistance from Innovative Emergency Management (IEM). The updated HMP addresses the shortfalls in the previous plan that were laid bare during DR-4420. The HMP update is complete, and the HMU has submitted the final draft to FEMA for their review and approval. Each state is required by federal regulations to submit plan updates every five years to be eligible for Public Assistance (PA), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), HMGP, and PDM/BRIC Funds.

## 2020 NEMA Hazard Mitigation at a Glance

**New Disasters Declared: 1**

**New Grant Programs: 2**

**Closed Disasters/Grants: 1**

**Active Grant Programs: 12**

**Individual Projects in Progress: 61**

**New Hazard Mitigation Funding: \$600,000**

**Hazard Mitigation Assistance Paid Out: \$1,577,754**



# Communications Section

The Communications Section is comprised of the Information Technology and Communications Unit, and the State Watch Center. The section contains the Point of Contact for the Federal FirstNet Program and it is under the direction of Section Manager and Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) Sue Krogman.

## IT/Commo Unit

Chad Boshart serves as Information Technology/Communications (IT/Commo) Unit supervisor, and Nathan Martinez is IT support analyst. The unit has been researching and implementing new video technology, scheduling equipment and software to be used daily and during events.

The restrictions of 2020 due to COVID-19 presented new challenges for the IT staff. Video teleconferencing played a large roll in support of the COVID-19 response. IT staff prepared laptops and equipment to assign to staff for use when teleworking. To minimize staffing in the office, network access permissions were assigned to staff members quarantining at home due to the pandemic. As staff returned to the office, IT staff continued to provide in office and remote support of all computer hardware and software. Using the state's web conferencing applications, all staff were trained and equipped with video web conferencing capabilities. The use of online meetings became a norm and web meeting capabilities became critical for staff meetings.

During the pandemic, the FEMA Joint Field Office (JFO), supporting the 2019 floods, shut down. While some NEMA staff remained at the JFO to complete their work, the IT Section supported the network and remote capabilities at this site. In October, the IT section moved equipment back to the Joint Force Headquarters.

The IT staff updated and installed new computers throughout the agency and updated existing computers at the alternate EOC in Grand Island. The unit created a database of agency computers and

equipment so they can easily be assigned and tracked remotely.

The GIS staff supported multiple state agencies in the response to COVID-19 and local wildfires and also provided mapping support to the agency exercises and events. A dashboard was created to track school closings due to COVID, and also county and city declarations related to COVID. A project with ESRI was completed which built new products for use by NEMA staff, local emergency managers and the public. Projects included the Watch Center daily situation reports, public assistance damage assessment tools and FEMA lifelines reporting tools.

Troy Harris, communications coordinator, provided communications support to the state during the COVID-19 pandemic. He coordinated with cell phone providers to obtain voice and data devices for forward deployed elements of the Nebraska National Guard.

During the civil unrest in the Omaha and Lincoln area, the Communications Unit stood up to coordinate with the Nebraska State Patrol, Nebraska National Guard, Office of the Chief Information Officer and local entities to provide more than 100 cache radio to national guard assets providing support to the State Patrol and local law enforcement.

The unit managed the agency efforts to migrate to the state voice over internet protocol phone system. This effort changed not only the phone provider but how the agency responds to phone calls. The new

system includes an auto attendant and automatically forwards calls to the watch officer team after normal business hours.

The agency also changed emergency notification vendors. This includes internal, external and notifications using the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System. This required modification of the agreements with FEMA for NEMA, NSP and several local alerting officials.

Finally, in cooperation with the rest of the IT section, the Communications Unit mitigated several communications deficiencies in cellular and wifi coverage in the joint field office, allowing them to operate at that location for an extended period of time.

The GIS staff, assisted by the Nebraska State Patrol, helped support the state's flood disaster by providing an ArcGIS Online dashboard. This dashboard gave timely and up-to-the-minute information on the status and extent of the flooding and was used by state agencies in the SEOC. It could be remotely accessed via computer, tablet or smartphone. Due to the success of this technology during the floods, it allowed the agency to develop an opportunity to work with ESRI to create dashboards, story maps and easy to use surveys to support the NEMA Watch Center and the agency.

The staff also assisted the State Fire Marshal by providing digitized boundaries for fires across the state, as well as supporting local emergency managers with maps and current GIS data.

# State Watch Center

The State Watch Center gathers and disseminates intelligence on natural and man-made hazards and threats with potential, imminent, or ongoing impacts to the state of Nebraska. It is staffed with Unit Supervisor Brent Curtis and Program Specialist Jill Burmester.

A daily situational briefing is distributed Monday through Friday, or more often, as conditions warrant, to more than 500 public safety stakeholders at all levels of local, state and federal government. This briefing helps provide situational awareness about weather, incidents, events and available response resources in the state. The one-page dashboard report was added in February 2018, to provide leadership and others with a summary overview

of hazards, potential threat severity over the next seven days and significant events that have occurred or impacted the state over the previous three days.

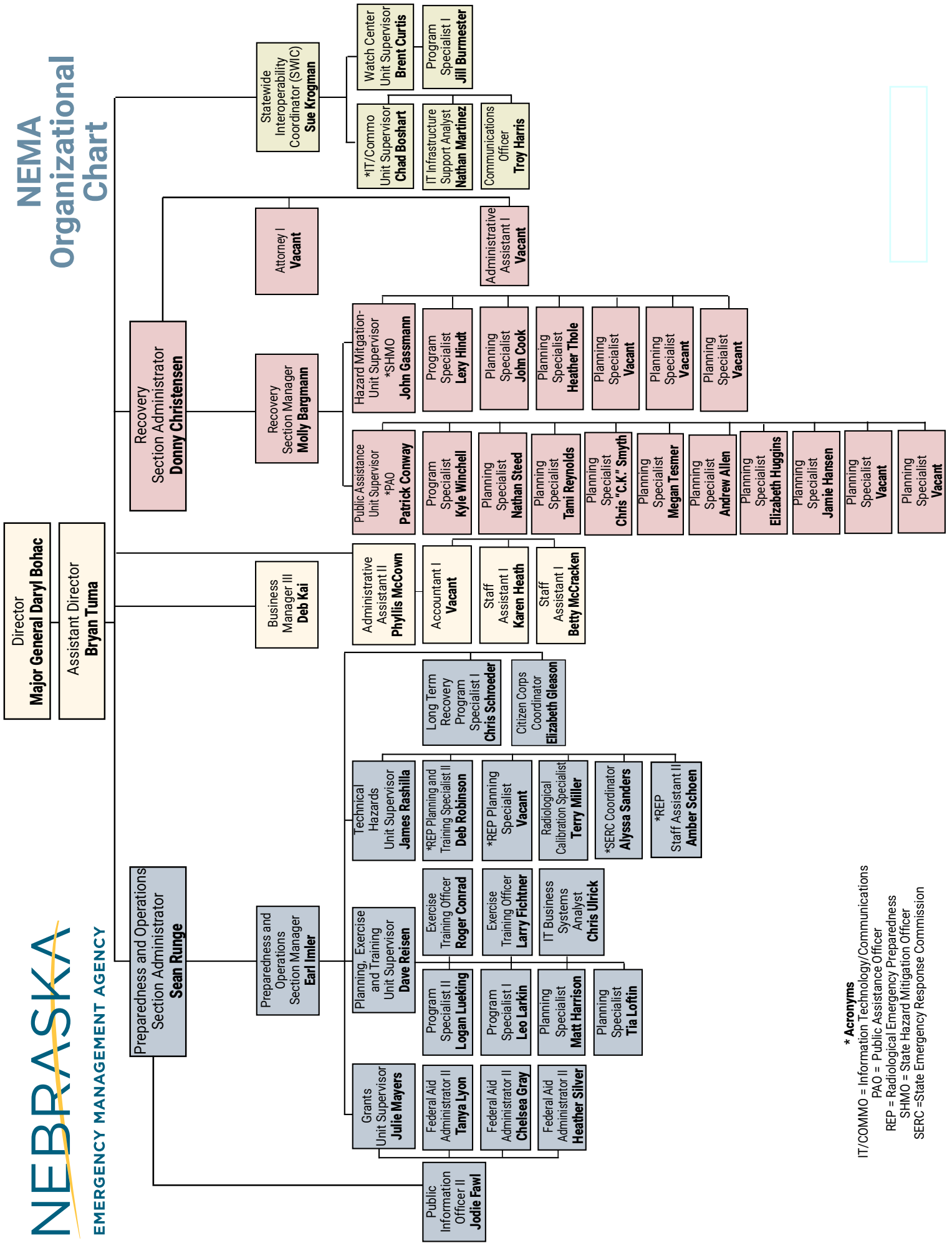
At the end of 2019 the State Watch Center began working with ESRI, a mapping and spatial analytics software company, to revise and evolve the daily briefing and Incident Status Report. From its inception, the daily briefing was, under normal operating conditions, compiled daily. During 2020, the Watch Center rolled out a live dashboard briefing that is updated in real time, as events, incidents, and weather conditions develop. This provides public safety stakeholders with current information on demand.

The State Watch Center and ESRI

have also enhanced the Incident Status Report (ISR) that emergency managers across the state use to provide NEMA with information and requests for state resources. The new ISR reflects a modern approach and a simple, logical work flow to ensure emergency managers spend less time sending critical information.

The Watch Center is responsible for monitoring events in the state and integrating with stakeholders from other agencies and the emergency managers across the state that represent each of Nebraska's counties. The Watch Officer system, staffed on a rotating basis by all qualified, full-time NEMA personnel, provides on-call 24/7 response, monitoring and information gathering for NEMA.





**\* Acronyms**  
 IT/COMMO = Information Technology/Communications  
 PAO = Public Assistance Officer  
 REP = Radiological Emergency Preparedness  
 SHMO = State Hazard Mitigation Officer  
 SERC = State Emergency Response Commission



## Contact Information

**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 FEMA and other federal partners.

*Nebraska Emergency Management Agency's 2020 Annual Report was produced by Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl. For additional information about the report, other agency publications or to be added to the agency email list for news releases and publications, call 402-471-7428 or email: [jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov](mailto:jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov).*

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