

*Nevada Department of Public Safety's
Division of Emergency Management*

Newsletter for January 2016



This issue of the monthly newsletter from the Nevada Division of Emergency Management covers Emergency Management activities and events throughout the month of December, 2015. It was a busy month throughout the State, with efforts to close out the calendar year, handle emergencies and disasters throughout Nevada's local and tribal governments, ongoing preparation for the year ahead, and a lot more. But, as we

hope to present in this newsletter, it was also a very productive month. The details of statewide events present only a snapshot, and cannot begin to capture the diverse preparedness efforts throughout the state, but we remain committed to doing better each month. Please feel free to keep providing us updates on all that is going on with you. Until then, we look forward to our continued efforts together.

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Nevada Emergency Management News and Events for December

- On December 1, 2015, the **Nevada Board for Search and Rescue** met at the State Emergency Operations Center. This newly-appointed Board consists of representatives from the **Nevada Sheriffs and Chiefs Association**, the **Nevada Fire Chiefs Association**, the **Nevada Division of Forestry**, the **Nevada Department of Health and Human Services**, the **Civil Air Patrol**, and the **Nevada Division of Emergency Management**. The SAR Board is required to meet semi-annually. Its activities are guided by [NRS 414](#), which requires them to support the search and rescue mission for the State of Nevada.
- On December 2, 2015, Homeland Security partners throughout the state participated in the [Nevada Commission on Homeland Security](#) meeting in Carson City and Las Vegas. Emphasis of meeting was on the **State Refugee Program**, Nevada's threat environment, **Fusion Center** capabilities throughout the state, preparations for New Year's Eve in Las Vegas, and an update on the **National Guard's** upcoming **Vigilant Guard-17 exercise**.
- On December 9, 2015, the **Washoe County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Program** hosted a **Public Warning Initiative Capstone Event**. During the meeting, which was directed to statewide broadcasters, emergency managers, law enforcement, and dispatchers, the [Statewide Emergency Alert System Plan](#) was unveiled.
- The **American Red Cross** hosted **Tribal Liaison** training for partners in Nevada. Learning objectives of the workshop included: understanding why Tribal collaboration important to the Red Cross, liaison and tribal liaison basics, introduction to tribal liaison role, sharing resources associated with enhancing coordination with American Indians, reviewing how to best work with Tribal members, understanding what is important to partner with Tribes, an introduction to the tribes of our state, cultural uniqueness of Tribes, identifying partnership opportunities, and more. The training concluded with a table-top exercise around Tribal coordination
- **NDEM** hosted two meetings with state, local, tribal, and even regional partners to provide additional opportunities for input on the [NDEM Strategic Plan](#) and **2016 Action Plan**. This plan, which is in effect as of January 1, 2016, provides a strategic vision, mission, and objectives for the agency as well as individual efforts to achieve them all. It is the first step in a longterm planning process, and the next step is to develop a five year strategic plan for the agency, again with community support.
- At a meeting of the **Lyon County Commission** on December 17, 2015, the Commission closed out the **County and City Joint Declaration** signed on September 25, 2015, in anticipation of flooding events in the **Walker River**. To date, all of the sand bars have been removed from the river as well as hundreds of tons of sediment thanks to the effort of those involved.

- The [Nevada Seismological Laboratory](#) at **UNR** reported a 4.3 or higher **earthquake** at around 10:45 PM on December 22, 2015, with multiple others in the 3 range before and after. While this event had minimal impact, it was a reminder of Nevada's ongoing seismological activity and the need to prepare.
- On December 30, 2015, the **Nevada Department of Public Safety's State Fire Marshal Division** announced the findings from the investigation of the **Industrial Fire Incident near Beatty**. The investigation was led by the **State Fire Marshal Division** with assistance from the **Nevada Division of Environmental Protection** and the **Department of Health and Human Services - Radiation Control Program**. The complete report can be found on the **Department of Public Safety's [website](#)**.
- Numerous entities from **Clark County** coordinated and executed a safe and secure **New Year's Eve** celebration on the **Las Vegas Strip** and beyond. Various local agencies staffed the **Clark County MACC** and incident commands throughout the region, coordinating and responding to minor events throughout the evening. The state of Nevada supported through the **Nevada Highway Patrol**, the **Division of Emergency Management**, the **Department of Transportation**, the **National Guard**, and others. The County and its partners remained vigilant in order to protect an estimated 332,000 visitors in the region for the evening's celebration.■

Nevada Division of Emergency Management Strategic Plan



NDEM Overview and Strategic Plan

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***The Nevada Division of
Emergency Management
Overview and Strategic Plan can
be found on the Division's
Website.***

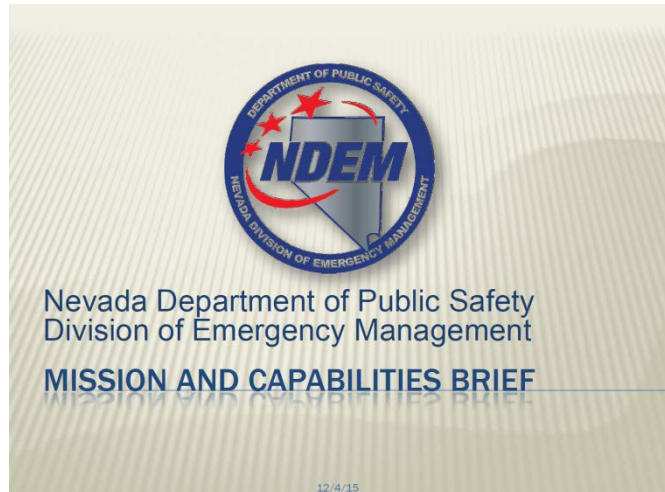
Throughout the second half of calendar year 2015, the Nevada Division of Emergency Management undertook a significant assessment and planning effort in order to ensure that it was meeting its mission and the needs of its statewide partners. It consisted of an internal review process, external input, and a coordinated dialog, all while focus on several key deliverables. Those deliverables primarily consist of the [NDEM Strategic Plan](#) and the [NDEM Mission and Capabilities Brief](#).

The NDEM Mission and Capabilities brief is primarily intended to be a foundational document that explains NDEM's statutory role and what resources it has in order to accomplish the duties and responsibilities associated with that role. Created by NDEM leadership with input from the entire NDEM team, it presents the Division's staffing, its funding streams, its responsibilities, and an overview of how the sections work together. It also provides a brief overview of the newly established vision, mission, and strategic goals.

The NDEM vision, mission, and strategic goals were created by the NDEM team with the assistance and input from partners throughout the state. NDEM met internally six times from July through December to develop these goals, as well as the 2016 action plan, and it also hosted two meetings with the Emergency Managers Coordinating Council and Emergency Support Function partners to provide formal feedback as well. Another opportunity for input came through anonymous surveys, the first of which received input from NDEM team members and the second went out to partners throughout the state.

Taken together, all elements of this effort were intended to provide transparency to our partners, as well as a snapshot of the current status, as well as immediate, intermediate, and long-term strategies and solutions for addressing NDEM's responsibilities. The immediate and intermediate steps are intended to solidify the NDEM vision and consolidate its current and potential successes before moving in a more innovative direction in the third phase, the long-term steps.

The long-term steps will be covered in detail in an annual report developed by the agency and released near the end of the current fiscal year (June 30, 2016). This report will build upon this Overview and Strategic Plan and will provide a public document detailing what NDEM's mission is and what resources it has to execute it, what significant events occurred in the current fiscal year, and what findings and recommendations can be made regarding each. The annual report is intended to provide the foundation for the budget requests and policy changes that NDEM and the statewide emergency management community support to improve Nevada's preparedness and resilience.



The Nevada Division of Emergency Management Mission and Capabilities Brief can be found on the Division's Website.

NDEM recognizes that this is the first step in a larger effort to achieve our goals as an agency, and also that the Strategic Plan that was developed will no doubt evolve based on Nevada's preparedness landscape, input from partners, and input from executive branch leadership at the state level. That said, NDEM also believes that this is a crucial first step in a process that will improve outcomes throughout the state. ■

Meet Chris Molnar, Nevada Division of Emergency Management



Chris Molnar, serving as the main point of contact at the Nevada Department of Emergency Management Headquarters in Carson City, Nevada.

Even with Nevada's huge land mass and a major urban area like the Las Vegas Valley, our state can still have a small town feel. Residents of our state want to be able to reach out to elected officials and service providers at all levels of government, and they expect that they will be able to have whatever issue they are dealing with handled directly, whether in an emergency or not. Having someone like Chris Molnar, who was raised in one of Nevada's rural communities, as the main point of access for all Nevadans contacting the Nevada Division of Emergency Management helps our team remain accessible and keep that small-town feel for our partners throughout the state.

Chris's life has been directly connected to public safety, public service, and national defense for nearly her whole life. Born and raised in Elko, Chris moved to Reno to study journalism in college. Life, marriage, and the military took her family to Giessen, Germany, near Frankfurt, where two of her three sons were born at the military hospital. Chris is very proud today that one of her sons is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Nevada National Guard, and is currently deployed to Iraq, and rightfully so.

Her own involvement in public service and eventually Homeland Security began in 1999, when she went to the Nevada State Legislature to serve as a committee secretary for the late-Assemblyman Bernie Anderson. Following her time with

Assemblyman Anderson, she moved into the Executive Branch, working on late-Governor Kenny Guinn's staff. Chris started working as a receptionist for Governor Guinn before moving to take on additional responsibilities as the Governor's personal assistant and supervising Boards and Commission appointments on behalf of the Governor.

Chris was called into the Governor's Office early on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, when terrorists attacked the symbolic landmarks of the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon. Although she did not know it at the time, she would have a significant impact on the rise of Homeland Security in the State of Nevada following those tragic and terrible events. She helped Governor Guinn select and appoint Nevada's first Commission on Homeland Security after its creation in 2003, as well as his first two Homeland Security Advisors. After a stint with the Nevada Parole Board, Chris would return to Homeland Security, serving as the assistant to the Homeland Security Advisor in 2007.

The Office of Homeland Security was merged with the Nevada Division of Emergency Management in 2010, and she has been the Division's main point of contact ever since. In this position, Chris is one of the first people at the Division to receive word of an emergency of disaster, and she vividly remembers receiving phone calls from local responders about two major tragedies in Nevada in 2011, the shooting at the IHOP restaurant in Carson City and the airplane accident at the Reno Air Races. She is also the person that most of our statewide partners know to be friendly and helpful on the phone and in person when they visit, just like our partners expect and just like she grew up learning in Elko.■

An Interview with Brian Burgess Emergency Manager, City of Elko

As with many communities throughout the state, the City of Elko's Emergency Manager, Brian Burgess, wears multiple hats. Most notably, he is also the City's Deputy Fire Chief and volunteers for Team Rubicon in emergency response and recovery deployments around the country. We interviewed Chief Burgess to learn more about Emergency management in Elko, and what he does to ensure that his community is prepared for emergencies and disasters.

Nevada Division of Emergency Management (NDEM): What is your background before becoming the City of Elko's Emergency Manager?

Brian Burgess (BB): I joined the City of Elko Fire Department in January, 1995. Previous to becoming a career firefighter with the City of Elko I served six-and-a-half years on active duty with Nevada Army National Guard as a Training NCO for the 137th Chemical Operations Company. I moved through the fire department ranks serving as a firefighter, driver, and captain before being promoted to the Deputy Fire Chief. Using my GI Bill I returned to college completing my BS Degree in Occupational Safety and Health with an emphasis in Fire Science in 2011.



Burgess has been a member of the City of Elko Fire Department for over 20 years and now serves as the City's Emergency Manager in his role as Deputy Fire Chief.

includes private citizens and industry, tribal, public, county, state, and volunteer organizations.

NDEM: How do you balance these responsibilities while also serving as the City of Elko's Deputy Fire Chief?

BB: The duties of the deputy chief fit seamlessly into the duties of the Emergency Manager. Understanding the hazards within the community and working hand-in-hand with other departments and agencies helps communicate, coordinate, and cooperate with these entities.

NDEM: How do you work with your counterparts in local, county, and tribal governments?

BB: Maintaining involvement in the Local emergency Planning Committee as well as attending training events and public relations events helps keep everyone informed, interested, and involved.

NDEM: What are some of your challenges serving as an Emergency Manager in one of Nevada's rural communities?

BB: My first challenge as a new emergency manager was to change the emergency manager program from a program on paper to a working program. This involved bringing awareness to other agencies on their responsibilities and how they can help build an effective emergency management program within the community. Each entity or agency performs their everyday tasks very well. Putting the leadership in a room and developing common goals and objectives and prioritizing these goals to the benefit of the community has been a challenge.

NDEM: What are some of the benefits?

BB: Selfishly I have to say the benefit is the education and knowledge I have gained by working with other Emergency Managers. I quickly learned some of the things I didn't know that I didn't know and now know that I don't know what I thought I knew. I am humbled almost every day I work with other agencies.

NDEM: How do you work to ensure that the residents of your community are prepared for emergencies and disasters?

BB: Before concentrating on getting residents prepared for emergencies I felt it was important to ensure that those agencies who residents expect to have an answer to their problems actually have an answer, or know where to get the answers. With that in mind we brought supervisors together to dust off the emergency response plans and review them. Once plans were reviewed and renewed, we included business owners, parishioners, and members of the general public to participate in tabletop exercises so that there was an outsider's perspective and to ask the questions from a layperson's point of view. Getting the word out to the general public on preparedness is always a challenge. The fire department, police department, and other service organizations hold several community events to raise greater awareness throughout the community. We have teamed up with other government entities such as the Nevada Fire Safe Council, fire adapted communities, and Home Depot to conduct demonstrations to the community throughout the year.

NDEM: What are some recent emergencies and disasters that you have responded to and coordinated resources for?

BB: As the Emergency Manager my first goal was to exercise the local emergency response plan, setting a goal of having a table-top exercise and expanding that exercise to a full scale exercise within eighteen months of taking on the emergency manager task. With the help of a lot of people I was able to bring twenty-two private, public, and volunteer organizations together concentrating on responding to a large earthquake in the Elko Area. As a volunteer for Team Rubicon, I have coordinated deployments of Nevada Volunteers to disasters in Tennessee and Alabama for tornado recovery. As the Field Operations Coordinator, I vetted volunteers, coordinated their transportation and link-up with other Team Rubicon volunteers on the ground in support of local emergency responders.

NDEM: Tell us more about the work you do with Team Rubicon.

BB: As the Nevada Field Operations Coordinator for Team Rubicon, it is my responsibility to identify operational needs and coordinate Team Rubicon responses with local emergency management personnel as well as build local and state capabilities.

NDEM: Is there an opportunity to integrate Team Rubicon into the larger Emergency Management community in Nevada?

BB: I believe that Team Rubicon can be easily integrated into all levels of Emergency Management. Team Rubicon has proven itself time and time again in providing services from boots on the ground for muck-out and clean-up operations to establishing and maintaining incident management teams to assist local emergency managers with trained and efficient personnel, reducing the costs associated with extended operations. Mapping disasters, prioritizing work orders, managing spontaneous volunteers, and providing home owners with a willing and able workforce are just a few of the tasks that Team Rubicon can take on, reducing the work load of a system that may already be overburdened with day-to-day operations.

Response teams are vetted to ensure they possess the qualifications and training needed to assist communities. All members have completed FEMA ICS 100, 200, and 700 at a minimum. For extended deployments every member that is deployed has completed a background check to ensure the safety of the community as well as the team they deploy with. With a membership built from veterans and first responders, Team Rubicon is very mission- and task-oriented with a teamwork mentality, a true desire to assist others, and a get-the-job-done attitude.