



# *Buffalo County Emergency Management 2009 Year End Report*



## INTRODUCTION

2009 started off as a mild weather year and for the most part continued that way through the entire year of 2009. There were a total of 55 watches, warnings and advisories for the 2009 year. June 08 alone had 58 warnings and watches. Winter temperatures were mild with a hand full of days up to a week at a time that saw below zero weather. There were no major winter weather advisories or storms through January, February, and March, and only two winter weather warnings in December. December produced 4 inches of snow during the first warning in the Kearney/Buffalo County area while other areas in the central part of the state saw up to 20 inches. The second warning again produced very little snow; however, the wind was a factor putting Buffalo County and the central part of the state in blizzard conditions for up to three days. June and July were the busiest and most destructive months for the year for severe weather activity. Between those two months, the Buffalo County saw high winds, flooding, large hail and several tornados. There were 12 watches and 25 warnings issued for Kearney and Buffalo County during June and July. June produced tornado watches and warnings on the 14<sup>th</sup> at 17<sup>th</sup>. The storms produced damaging winds, flooding, hail and tornados during the month. Damage reported in Buffalo County ranged from car windows being knocked out from large hail, trees down, large building destruction and roof damage from high winds. Over flowing creeks and rivers from flooding rains, crop damage due to hail, and pivots, farm buildings, and homes damage due to tornados and straight winds in Buffalo County. There were straight winds up to 70+ miles per hour on the 6<sup>th</sup> with large hail. The 17<sup>th</sup> produced 7 tornados. The sirens were sounded both on the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> in Buffalo County. July storms produced damaging winds, flooding, hail and possible tornadic activity. Damage reported in Buffalo County included trees down, a 2 stall garage torn from a house and roof damage from high winds as well as two turned over vehicles on the Interstate near the same location of the house damage. Also reported were over flowing creeks and rivers from flooding rains and extensive crop damage due to hail.

Several Table top Exercises were completed over the last year as well as partnering with UNK to plan for a community wide full scale exercise in 2010.

The 2007 Homeland Security Grant allocation was approved locally. Buffalo County purchased VHF mobile radios for Sheriff's office vehicles and additional portables for Kearney Police Department. All radios have been distributed and installed. Grants have kept the Emergency Management office busy in 2009. All home land security grants through 07 have been completed and closed out. The Emergency Management office requested and received a \$200,000.00 Emergency Management Performance Grant to help fund the new Emergency Operation Center for the City of Kearney and Buffalo County. In addition, this grant funded the purchase of equipment and technology for the new back up communications center and other items from the city that supported emergency operations.

A request was made for 22,000.00 to help pay for the new tower at the Justice Center. This tower has been put up and funding is still in the waiting. Homeland Security Grants continue to support the statewide communications projects and are now being distributed at the regional levels not at the county level. Much of the years time has been taken up with the building the new EOC. This office managed the grant, the bid/quote requests, invoices and purchase orders, reimbursement requests as well as the management of and over seeing the construction and implementation of the EOC itself. This included vendor orders and vendor management, from deliveries to placement of equipment and technologies into the EOC area.

Public education campaign for Emergency Preparedness was moved to a number one priority for this office over the last year. Several additional speaking engagements were completed as well as PSA's, for radio and TV. This is a mandatory requirement for the Emergency Management position across the state. It is felt by this office and other Emergency Management offices in the south central region that with some additional funding we could do a much better job in this area.

There have been a number of hazardous material responses over the last year, requiring minor cleanup to local evacuations. January 17<sup>th</sup> the West Company Pharmaceuticals in Kearney reported a leak in a 100 pound Chlorine cylinder causing an evacuation of the plant employees and to the citizens in a six block area east of the scene. In March, a Chlorine Spill was reported at the Quality Inn Hotel in Kearney, The hotel staff and patrons were evacuated for their own safety. The Hazmat Team mitigated the incident allowing the employees and patrons to reenter the building. In May, a semi and car accident produced a fuel Hazmat spill in excess of 25 gallons. The incident was mitigated by Kearney Fire and cleaned up by a cleaning company out of Omaha. In June, a Pepsi truck and car accident produced a fuel Hazmat spill. The spill was under 25 gallons on the side of the road and was not a reportable quantity. On June 4<sup>th</sup> there was an anhydrous ammonia leak reported south of Gibbon. The tank broke away from tractor, breaking a line on the tank causing the leak. Notifications were made to citizens on the south end of Gibbon asking them to evacuate or be prepared to shelter in place if needed. In November, a semi ran off the road creating a fuel leak in the ditch. The incident was mitigated by Ravenna Fire. The trucking company hired a cleaning crew to clean up the fuel, estimated amount of the spill was less than 25 gallons.

March brought with it high winds, dry conditions and large wild fires. Two separate days in March produced fires on the Platte River south of Shelton and south of Kearney. While both of these fires burning, there were several other grass fires across Buffalo County; every fire department in Buffalo County assisted in the fires. Both fire days required mutual aid from the Buffalo County Highway Department, State Roads Department, City Street Departments as well as up to 10

additional fire departments from around the surrounding communities and counties.

April 2009 became the month and year of the H1N1 Pandemic influenza virus. Prior planning for a pandemic of this kind assisted the counties and the regional health departments with the ability to combat this virus with full force. This virus swept the globe in a few short months. This office helped the health department with planning, meetings, implementation, education and picking up supplies from the SNS. This office assisted law enforcement, hospitals and other first responder agencies by writing a virus protection policy, a pocket sized victim first contact questionnaire for responder self protection. This pocket sized question card became very popular and spread across the state for use for other first responder agencies and hospitals.

Many of the 2009 goals have been met and or implemented. Most of these goals are a continuation from year to year and will carry over into the next.

This annual report will highlight the major activities of the Buffalo County Emergency Management office. It is not inclusive of the everyday meetings and activities of the Emergency Management Office for Buffalo County.

## **Emergency Management Concept**

The four phases of comprehensive emergency management are mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Each phase results from the previous one and establishes the requirements of the next. This past year the City of Kearney/Buffalo County Emergency Management Office continued to focused on all four phases not only in training but real life emergency incidents.

The EOC (Emergency Operations Center) was opened on several different occasions throughout the spring and summer months of 2009. The EOC was opened at the readiness level on many occasions; however, it was never opened in its full operational capacity. All EOC operations were handled at the lowest Emergency Management level and were never operational through one full operational period. The EOC was operational on weather related events, ie Thunderstorm Warnings, Tornado watches and warnings, and Fire and Hazmat related events. Most all activities from the EOC on weather and Fire/Hazmat events were coordination efforts among first responder agencies and outside jurisdictions as well has acquiring needed resources for the requesting of first responder agencies.

The EOC was opened on January 17<sup>th</sup> for a Chlorine release in Kearney from the West Pharmaceuticals which caused a 6 block evacuation of the area; March 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> both for wide spread fires in the county; May 26<sup>th</sup> semi car accident resulted in a Hazmat spill which put the EOC on stand-by in a readiness state; and weather activity opened the EOC in June and July on several occasions.

June 4<sup>th</sup> an Anhydrous ammonia tank began to leak in a corn field just south of Gibbon there was concern that the south part of Gibbon would need to be evacuated if the wind came up and shifted out of the south. The High Speed Notification system was used to notify the citizens in the area of the incident. June 6<sup>th</sup> produced large hail and 70 plus mile per hour wind; within the county there were several reports of crop damage and one large building in Shelton was blown down with several homes and tree damage in both the Shelton and Gibbon area. There were 7 different tornados spotted and reported on June 17<sup>th</sup> with damage to several farmstead buildings and pivots across the county. Both the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> also caused wide spread flooding across the county. The EOC opened in July on several occasions for weather related events; one weather event produced large hail, high winds and a possible tornado that up rooted large trees, tore a two stall garage off of a house with a third of the house roof and turned over two vehicles on the interstate. There was wide spread crop damage and flooding do to this storm.

The Emergency Management office continues to partner with many community groups and agencies involved in the area of public safety. In the year 2009, the Emergency Management Director served on the Buffalo County LEPC as the Vice Chairman; Buffalo County Mutual Aid Association to work countywide with fire, EMS, and law enforcement; worked with the Midway Amateur Radio Club to coordinate with the ARES members that serve as storm spotters for the City of Kearney; and the Technician Level Hazmat Team continues to operate with the Emergency Manager serving as the administrator of this team.

The 10 county (CNRI) Central Nebraska Regions for Interoperability that was started in 2004 grew into a 22 county region over 5 years. The CNRI concept has now caught on across the state in year 6 and is now being implemented state wide. A lot of work has gone into the project over the last 6 years and will continue into 2010. Much of the communication has shifted to two groups but not taking the place of CNRI. These groups are the (NWIN) Nebraska Wireless Interoperable Network and (NCOR) Nebraska Council of Regions. Both groups are a Governor's appointed Executive Board who focus on Interoperable Communications at the state level and at the regional levels. I continue to be part of NCOR group representing the SCPET region.

(COAD) Community Organizations Active in Disasters was developed in the Buffalo County/Kearney area in 2006 and continues to go strong with its third annual Public Safety Awareness Day event held at the Hill Top Mall. This event gets bigger and better every year. The COAD group met quarterly over the last year as well as participated in a tabletop exercise based on volunteer response to a chemical release in the downtown area. There was good response during this exercise and much was learned.

One of the members from the COAD group took the lead with the United Way to develop an Emergency Spontaneous Volunteer Guide for implementation, identification, and coordination of spontaneous volunteer groups. This plan is a comprehensive plan that has been adopted by the COAD group and the Buffalo County Emergency Management office.

(TRMRS) Tri-City Rural Medical Response System being developed in 2004 and as of 2008 had expanded to an MRC (Medical Response Corp) for Central Nebraska. Both groups continued to work on vital plans for emergency response and recovery in 2009. TRMRS continues to work on interoperable communications for the 18 hospitals in its region as well as trying to coordinate regional plans and exercises for Mass fatality plans. The MRC group now has good direction and now has over 50 volunteers, and has been assisting the Public Health Departments during its free H1N1 clinics in the TRIMRS region.

The CERT (Citizen Emergency Response Team) program was started in a regional area to include Buffalo County in 2006. The CERT program continues to assist with public education within Buffalo County through promotional items and advertisement spots. Although there has not been a big community response to the CERT program, which makes it difficult to hold trainings in the area, the Buffalo County Emergency Management office is trying to take full advantage of its other educational programs.

Buffalo County Emergency Management and the Two Rivers Public Health continue to work closely together as a partnership. All the planning for Pandemic Influenza may have paid off over the last 5 years with the onset of the H1N1 influenza virus in 2009. Most of the activities working with the Two Rivers Public Health Department has been focused on the H1N1 flu. The two agencies have worked together holding meetings, planning events for the hospitals and clinics, and educational events for the public. While this has been the main focus when these two agencies have worked together over the last year, we also continue to work together on other projects such as COAD, TRIMRS, Emergency Response ID system, identifying the special needs populations, and the upcoming full scale exercise in the Kearney area.

Buffalo County had average to below average severe weather activity for most of the 2009 year. The more severe weather was recorded in the months of June and July. Significant damage was reported during these two months due to large hail, flooding, straight winds, and wide spread tornadic activity. The warning sirens in Buffalo County were activated on 2 different occasions during the summer months of 2009, once on June 6<sup>th</sup> and once on June 17<sup>th</sup> in multiple communities in Buffalo County.

Kearney and Buffalo County were placed under Severe Thunderstorm / Tornado watches or warnings 46 times, 6 winter weather advisories and no flash flood warnings in the 2009 year. Buffalo County was right at average to below average rain fall for the year. Buffalo County and the Kearney area has received normal to above normal rain fall for the last several years removing the county from the drought status that it had been in for so many years prior. The Kearney area and Buffalo County received 30.37" of precipitation in 2007 and 36.13 inches for the 2008 year and between 19 and 22 inches of precipitation in 2009. The average rain fall for the Kearney/Buffalo County area is approximately 24.80 inches. The precipitation report for 2009 could be off by more than an inch or two due to the missing monthly data for rain and snowfall during the year.

## **MISSION AND VALUES STATEMENT**

### **Mission Statement**

To provide a prepared and capable emergency management program for Buffalo County through training, community education, and preparedness by providing information and education to the general public, area emergency responders, and volunteers.

### **Values Statement**

Emergency Management is by function and by law a cooperative effort on the part of all levels of government and the private sector. At the local level, Emergency Management is concerned with the protection and education of the public from the hazards and risks that affect them. The credibility of the program resides in the credibility of the program advocate. The Emergency Manager should exemplify the utility of the emergency management program.

The job of the Emergency Manager is defined by law. It does, however, have a moral basis. The emergency manager must balance the duties authorized and required by law with the moral obligation of the public employee to do everything possible to protect and preserve the safety of citizens in the city and county.

Emergency Management expresses a strong commitment to provide interagency cooperation and coordination of activities relating to mitigation of, prevention of, preparedness for, response to, and recovery from disasters and emergencies.

## ORGANIZATION

The Emergency Manager is an appointed position responsible for the development, implementation and maintenance of an emergency management system in Buffalo County to save lives and protect property. Such emergency management system shall include disaster mitigation, preparedness, and response and recovery capabilities. The incumbent is charged with making certain that the components of the emergency management system know the threats to the jurisdiction, planning for emergencies, being able to function effectively in an emergency, and conducting recovery operations following a disaster.

The position requires direct responsibility for the organization, administration, and operation of the Buffalo County Emergency Management System, subject to the direction and control of the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors. The position serves as the principal advisor to the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors in disaster/emergency matters. Supervision of day-to-day activities shall be directed by the Buffalo County Sheriff and Kearney Chief of Police.

The incumbent, in discharging duties, must work with elected and appointed officials of the local governments, of the state and of the Federal government, and private sector interests.

The incumbent is given broad and extensive authority to determine program priorities, requirements and procedures so as to implement and support the local, state and national programs and objectives. Completed work is reviewed in terms of net results and the achievement of broad objectives and conformance with general policies. Job effectiveness can be determined by the ability of the Buffalo County Emergency Manager to take the lead in developing local capabilities to mitigate disasters/emergencies and conduct coordinated operations in disasters/emergencies, making maximum use of all public and private resources available.



## TRAINING

As required by the Nebraska Emergency Management Act, Section 81-829.46 (6), which requires the *“Director to devote full time to the duties of emergency management, and that he/she shall be qualified and certified in accord with criteria established for the state by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency,”* all

courses were completed by the Director to fulfill the Basic Certification requirement before hire. In addition to this certification, completed in 2005 was the Nebraska Emergency Management Advanced Certification for Emergency Management as well as meeting all NIMS compliances, ie. IS 100, 200, 700, and 800. In 2006, the FEMA Professional Certification was obtained. In 2007, the NIMS 300 and 400 certification was accomplished.

**Additionally, the Director attended or conducted the following non-NEMA courses / conferences:**

Severe Weather Spotter Training (2)  
State Wide Tornado Drill  
School Emergency Plans / Checklists Training  
NAEM Conference  
Central District Meeting  
Pandemic Influenza Town Hall meetings  
Hazmat Decontamination Shower Training  
Amateur Radio ARES Full Scale Exercise  
COAD Tabletop training  
COAD Safety fair  
Interoperable Communications Responder Level Training  
PARACLETE Training  
Nebraska Hazardous Materials Association Conference  
Recovery and Handling of Radiologically Contaminated Human Remains  
EPA Training  
Amateur Radio classes complete (General License)  
(Comm-L) Communications Leader training  
(PIO) Public Information Officer and (JIC) Joint Information Center training  
Region 7 LEPC conference  
Household Pet rescue and shelter training  
Pet Shelter Training

In addition there were 26 other assorted local or regional trainings sent out to First Responder agencies throughout the year.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PRESENTATIONS**

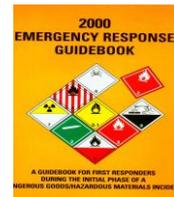
- 1 Emergency Management presentations
- 2 4 Emergency Management presentations for UNK students
- 3 Emergency Preparedness sheltering presentations to Mount Carmel Nursing home
- 4 North Ridge Assisted Living Center discussing emergency plans
- 5 (7) presentations on the new EOC to community boards/councils
- 6 Kiwanis group discussing Emergency Management and Homeland Security
- 7 Emergency procedures, evacuations, and operations to RYDE transit group

- 8 Emergency Management and EOC presentation to the Buffalo County Women's Republican group
- 9 Emergency Management and Homeland Security Preparedness presentation to the Rotary on the Bricks
- 10 (2) Emergency Preparedness presentations to the Yellow Van employees
- 11 Emergency Management overview to the ESU 9 and 10 at the request of the State Department of Education
- 12 Overview presentation on Interoperable Communications and Incident Command System to Buffalo County Mutual Aid Group

## LEPC

### LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Buffalo County LEPC is a component of the emergency management program. The Director is responsible for reviewing and maintaining Tier II reports, filing LEPC minutes from the quarterly meetings, maintaining the membership roll, maintaining spill reports, and compiling this information to send to the SERC (State Emergency Response Commission) for the Buffalo County LEPC. The LEPC has not been active in the past year and no LEPC meetings have been held in 2009.

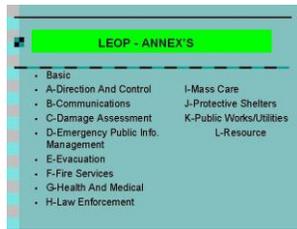


### TIER II REPORTS

All copies of Tier II reports filed by facilities in Buffalo County that are required by the Community Right-To-Know Act to report hazardous substances are placed on file in the Emergency Management Director's office. The facilities are required to update the reports on a yearly basis and are reviewed by the Director for the HAZMAT Annex of the LEOP, and for the yearly report sent to the SERC. Members of the Buffalo County LEPC, as required by law, also complete a review of the Tier II reports. Copies of filed MSDS sheets are also available in the Director's office.

### CONTINGENCY PLANS

The Director maintains all contingency plans filed by facilities in Buffalo County that are required to file the plans, or do so because they understand the importance of providing the information for emergency planning and response.



## RMP (RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS)

Fourteen facilities in Buffalo County were required by law to file Risk Management Plans. This is a requirement by the EPA. The Risk Management Plans are on file in the Director's office and are also available on the secure portion of the EPA website.



The Director received notification involving radioactive transports of spent fuel and low specific activity materials prior to the shipments entering Buffalo County. Notices were made to the appropriate agencies that would respond in a radiological incident. The transport reports continue to be down this year. This is due to transportation regulation changes on reporting requirements as well as less radioactive transports through the primary routes though Nebraska and Buffalo County.



## EMERGENCY WARNING SYSTEM

The Director, Communications Supervisor, and Communications Officers conducted monthly tests of the alarm radios, pagers and outdoor warning system throughout the year. During the scheduled tests, there were minimal reports of sirens failures. I contribute this to conducting pre-maintenance services on the sirens during the month of March within the Kearney area. Four sirens were found to be in failure at that time and were repaired by Platte Valley Communications.



The Dialogic High Speed Notification System continues to work well for notification of the public and special groups. This system is used to call up special response units, i.e. Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS, Hazmat Teams, etc. It is also used to complete general notifications to the citizens of Buffalo County for any type of emergency. From hazmat spills, a tornado warning, flash flood, evacuation, school closings, or simple road closings, the possibilities are endless. This system was used for a number of different public notifications this last year, from missing persons, YRTC escapees, evacuation of Kearney citizens within a 6 block radius of a chemical release, and weather related events. A number of the volunteer fire departments are now use this system to disseminate information to volunteers that serve on the departments. Law Enforcement continues to use this system for specialized team callouts and the City of Kearney has developed a department head and administration radio callout. This system now has over 1000 members with 47 different groups that have been developed. 3 new groups were added in this past year while several other groups were dissolved. Mapping and phone number updates as well as backing up the system are performed every six months.

The Notification system developed a problem in the mid part of the year. It seemed to shut itself down every other Monday at 11:03. IT finally figured out the notification server was conducting a self test at these times and the UPS that was backing up the power for the system had failed and was no longer providing power to the server during the power failure test. This would not allow the server to reboot. After about a month of testing the Kearney IT department tracked down the problem and fixed it. There have been no problems since.



## RESPONSE UNIT ACTIVITIES

The response unit was used for the third time during the annual Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Expo in May. This year was the first year it was held at the Fort Kearney recreation area. This unit provided communications to several agencies that were participating in the management of the event from Game and Parks,

State Patrol, Kearney Police Department, Buffalo County Sheriff's office, Good Samaritan hospital EMS, and the Red Cross. In addition to providing interoperable communications to these agencies, it continues to provide a good opportunity for training for the Incident dispatch team in a low stress environment.

The Mobile Response was used to demo for a Homeland Security communications event. The unit was able to show its versatility and its capabilities during this event.

The Mobile Response unit was also used during a planned Sheriff's office execution judgment on a farmstead in Buffalo County.

The Mobile Response unit was used for a suspect in a middle of a cornfield that was threatening suicide.

### WEATHER



Tornado strewn Irrigation pipe



Hail damage crops



Hail on the side of the road

The following list indicates the number of watches, warnings and winter weather advisories by the months they occurred in.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Watch</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>Winter Weather Advisories</b>
January	0	0	1
February	0	0	1
March	1	0	1
April	0	0	0
May	0	3	0
June	9	18	0
July	3	7	0
August	3	3	0
Sept.	0	0	0
October	0	0	1
November	0	0	0
December	0	2	2

## WEATHER



Tornado Damaged Home



Destructive path of the Tornado



What happened to my Garage?

## BUDGET

The Emergency Management budget for the fiscal 2008 year stayed under budget and was closed out. The new fiscal 2009 Budget was approved by the Board of Supervisors Budget Committee. The Buffalo County Emergency Management Department budget for 2009 is \$96,168.00. The board informed all departments that the budgets had to come in flat in the 2009 year meaning that there could be no increase from the 2008 budget year.

The EMPG (Emergency Management Performance Grant) for the fiscal years 2007/2008 closed out and the 2009 grant started in June of 09. This program is designed to reimburse the Emergency Management budget up to 50%. The program is administered through the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency which will assist the Buffalo County Emergency Management budget at 50% for the 2008/2009 fiscal budget year. The prior 2007/2008 year was initially funded at 43% leaving April and May unpaid; however, NEMA allowed for additional funds that finished out the 07/08 year at 50%. This grant is based off of the total budget expenses at the end of the budget not the total allowable budget.

The total amount funded for the 2009 budget year is \$47,650.00. This under went a State Audit for the 2005 and 2006 homeland security grants as well NIMS compliance. The audit found that all of the paperwork documentation and equipment was in order. Additional work was cited for documentation and tracking for NIMS compliance. This discrepancy was complied with before the compliance due date and sent to the State.



## **POSSIBLE AND POTENTIAL EMERGENCIES 2009**

### January

2 High wind warnings were issued on the same day. On January 12<sup>th</sup> a High wind warning was issued at 04:19 to 10:19 and again from 13:34 to 19:34. There were gusts recorded over 60 miles per hour with a sustained wind of 45 to 50 miles per hour.

On Saturday January 17<sup>th</sup> 2009 at 14:24 the West Company Pharmaceuticals reported to the Buffalo County 911 Center that they had discovered a pressure leak in a 100 pound Chlorine cylinder bottle stored in a small building on the east side of the plant on 923 West Railroad, Kearney, Nebraska. Upon arrival at the scene the Incident Commander was the Kearney Fire Chief. Hazmat 2 was the Hazmat Technician Commander. Hazmat 2 was also the research provider for the chemical release, wind direction, and plume release. The Buffalo County High speed notification system was used to inform the citizens within a 6 block radius of the scene. Officers were dispatched to assist in the evacuation of the plant employees and to the citizens east of the scene. The leak was stopped and the scene declared safe. Decon of the teams were completed. All teams were given the OK to stand down. Clean up of the scene and equipment inventory was completed by the hazmat team. The evacuated citizens and the on-coming and off-going plant employees were allowed to return to the area. All reports were completed and compiled with, and all the proper state agencies were informed of the incident.

### February

There was one winter weather event to report for the month. Although there was no advisory put out on February 9<sup>th</sup> there were wind gusts recorded across Buffalo County from 45 mph in Elm Creek to 57 mph in Shelton. The Kearney area recorded 48 mph wind gusts on the 9<sup>th</sup>. A Winter Weather Warning was issued on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> a for Buffalo County; and in the Central Nebraska Region, 6 inches of snow fall was recorded in the Kearney area.

### March

There were 3 Emergency Management emergencies that required assistance and or notification to the Emergency Management office during the month. Early in the month there was a report of a Chlorine Spill at the Quality Inn Hotel in Kearney. The Hazmat Team responded to this incident at the request of the Kearney Fire Department. This turned out to be Chlorine tablets for the swimming pool that had spilled out into the pump room of the pool house, additional caution was taken when Meradic Acid was also found in the pool house. The acid was contained in its original container; it was removed away from the Chlorine tablets and the tablets were cleaned up. As a precautionary nature, the Hotel was evacuated for

their safety. No formal report was taken or passed along at the state levels. All appropriate notifications were made to the local level. There were two significant grass / wild land fires during the month of March, both in which required Mutual Aid assistance from outside the jurisdiction as well as additional resources. There were several fires in Buffalo County on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, from hay bale fires outside of Kearney, to field and pasture fires in Ravenna, and a large fire on the river near Shelton. The fires in Ravenna and Shelton both needed Mutual Aid assistance from additional fire departments, Air Craft and large front end loaders. March 23<sup>rd</sup> produced another rash of fires in Buffalo County; again there was a fire on the river, this time between the Kearney and Minden interchange. Again there was a large fire in Ravenna just east of town. Pleasanton Fire covering the Kearney Fire district responded to a grass fire on Dove Hill Road while Kearney Fire was fighting the fire on the river. Both the Ravenna Fire and the Kearney river fire both needed outside agencies for assistance. Note worthy items both fire days -- fires were simultaneous, at one point all fires were being fought at the same times. The Shelton river fire had 7 fire departments, the Buffalo County Highway and State Roads departments, Air Craft, as well as civilian assistance. The Kearney Fire on the river had 10 fire departments, City Street, Buffalo County Highway, State Roads, with 10 loaders, and civilians with tractors and discs. The Ravenna fires had 3 separate fire departments respond as well as city streets and civilian assistance with tractors and discs as well. A Local Disaster was declared by the Board Supervisor Chairman for Buffalo County for the March 23<sup>rd</sup> fires. The coordination and resource efforts took place at the Emergency Operations Center and the primary 911 center all three incidents.

## April

The month of April introduced the country to the H1N1 influenza virus becoming a significant emergency management activity for local Emergency Managers and the regional Health Departments in our area. The H1N1 initially dubbed the Swine Flu Virus spanned the globe in a matter of months. By the end of April, there were 11 countries with 331 confirmed cases; 109 cases in the US, and 1 case in Nebraska with 5 probable and 31 pending cases. Locally I feel we were pretty prepared for this incident; however if H1N1 had been as deadly as first feared, all the planning efforts that we had been working on over the past 5 years would have surely been put to the test.

## May

There were 3 Thunderstorm warnings in Buffalo County to report for the month of May; 2 on the 13<sup>th</sup> at 01:50, 1 at 02:28, and again on the 15<sup>th</sup> at 07:11. There was no damage reported in Buffalo County due to the storms. There were winds up to 45 miles per hour on the 13<sup>th</sup> with small hail, and the warning on the 15<sup>th</sup> was cancelled early as the storm stayed south of the Buffalo County borders.

A semi and car accident reported on May 26<sup>th</sup> produced a Hazmat spill. This spill was diesel fuel from the semi's fuel tank. The spill was in excess of 25 gallons and in a ditch with water. The spill was mitigated by the Kearney Fire Department; all notifications and documentation were completed by Emergency Management office to the appropriate state agencies. Clean up of the spill was conducted by a clean up crew out of Omaha.

## June

There were 6 thunderstorm watches, 14 Thunderstorm warnings, 3 Tornado watches, and 4 Tornado Warnings in Buffalo County to report for the month of June. Thunderstorm watches were on June 5<sup>th</sup> at 21:31, June 6<sup>th</sup> at 17:48, June 18<sup>th</sup> at 23:52, June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 15:25 and June 26<sup>th</sup> at 20:43 and 21:02. Thunderstorm Warnings were on June 5<sup>th</sup> at 23:30 and 23:46, June 6<sup>th</sup> at 00:20 June 15<sup>th</sup> at 21:53, and 22:15, June 17 at 17:41, 18:10 and 18:41 June 19<sup>th</sup> at 00:13, 0021, and 00:56 June 24<sup>th</sup> at 20:28. Tornado watches were on June 14<sup>th</sup> at 15:32 June 17<sup>th</sup> at 12:49 and 21:01. The Tornado Warnings were on June 17<sup>th</sup> at 18:24, 18:55, 19:20 and 20:17. The storms produced damaging winds, flooding, hail and tornados during the month; damage reported in Buffalo County ranged from car windows being knocked out from large hail, trees down, and large building destruction and roof damage from high winds. Over flowing creeks and rivers from flooding rains, crop damage due to hail and pivots turned over due high wind and tornados, farm buildings and homes damage due to 7 reported tornados in Buffalo County. There were straight winds up to 70+ miles per hour on the 6<sup>th</sup> with large hail. The 17<sup>th</sup> produced 7 tornados, the sirens were sounded both on the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> in Buffalo County.

There were two other significant emergency management activities to report for the month of June. There was a Pepsi truck and car accident reported which produced a Hazmat spill. This spill was diesel fuel from the semi's fuel tank. The spill was just under 25 gallons and just on the side of the road which did not make it a reportable quantity. On June 4<sup>th</sup> there was an anhydrous ammonia leak reported just south of Gibbon. The tank broke away from tractor, breaking a line on the tank causing the leak. All the proper notifications and paper work was completed by this office and the incident mitigated by the Gibbon Fire Department. Clean up was completed by contracting agencies through insurance companies.

## July

There were 3 thunderstorm watches, 7 thunderstorm warnings in Buffalo County to report for the month of July. Thunderstorm Watches were on July 3<sup>rd</sup> at 16:50, July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 14:52 and July 31<sup>st</sup> at 17:36. Thunderstorm Warnings were on July 8<sup>th</sup> at 03:33 and 04:23, July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 14:20 July 24<sup>th</sup> at 21:02, and July 31<sup>st</sup> at 19:42, 20:01 and 20:21. The storms produced damaging winds, flooding, hail and possible tornadic activity during the month. Damage reported in Buffalo County included trees down, a 2 stall garage torn from a house and roof damage from high

winds and possible tornadic activity as well as two turned over vehicles on the Interstate at Mile Marker 261 near the same location of the house damage. Also reported was over flowing creeks and rivers from flooding rains and extensive crop damage due to hail.

## August

There were 3 thunderstorm watches, 3 thunderstorm warnings in Buffalo County to report for the month. Thunderstorm Watches were on August 4<sup>th</sup> at 01:07, August 06 at 21:11 and August 9<sup>th</sup> at 05:13. Thunderstorm Warnings were on August 4<sup>th</sup> at 01:51 and 02:29, August 9<sup>th</sup> at 05:27 and August 16<sup>th</sup> at 00:25. There was no significant damage reported with these storms.

## Nov

A Semi Trailer went off the road into a steep ditch south of Ravenna. The Trailer Semi was hauling cheese; there was a small fuel leak that was mostly contained, less than 25 gallons was spilt onto the ground into the ditch but not into a waterway. The trucking company's clean up crew was out to clean the spill after the semi was removed. This was not a reportable quantity to the state agencies no further action was taken from the Emergency Management office.

## Dec

There were 2 winter storms to report for the month of December. The first on December 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, this storm had winds up to 30 miles per hour and left anywhere between 8 and 12 inches of snow within the region and the Kearney area. The second winter storm had much higher winds with up to 50 mph gusts and sustained winds of 35 mph plus. This storm was wide spread across the central US and Nebraska. Nebraska saw snow amounts ranging from 3 to 20 inches in areas. The Kearney area saw amounts in the 3 to 4 inch range; however the winds were the biggest concern, creating blizzard conditions for Buffalo County. This storm lasted for 4 days from December 23<sup>rd</sup> to early Sunday morning, December 27<sup>th</sup>.

## **PROJECTS 2009**

- The new Emergency Operation Center became a reality in 2009. The new EOC was built in the basement of the justice center. I was appointed as the Project Manager for this portion of the project. And EOC taskforce worked to develop and help design the EOC as well as insure the right technology and equipment is put in the EOC. The trips to visit other EOC in the Midwest proved to be invaluable to gather ideas for layout, design and technology for the Buffalo County / City of Kearney EOC. Grant funds from the 2008 EMPG and the contributions from the City and the County has made the

EOC project a reality. Much of the work still needed to be completed at the end of 2009; however most of the equipment, technology, and furnishings have been purchased, and completion of the room is the only thing that prevents these items from being put in place. Work will continue on this project through 2010. It is hoped to have the EOC ready before the KADS full scale exercise and the severe storm season.

- CNRI (Central Nebraska Regions for Interoperability). Great progress continues to be made within the CNRI project. The Paraclete System is now spreading across the state of Nebraska, more and more counties have come on board as the year has gone by. The State Patrol has the system in place. The regions are strategically placing the system in counties so that each county in Nebraska will not need the system--regions will share the system with specific counties taking the lead. We continue to wait on the final phase of the interoperable communications project (State wide Mutual Aid Channels). This project came to a standstill when it was taken over by the State of Nebraska and the office of CIO. Many things have been changed and or modified within the project. This project has now changed hands again and now falls under the N-COR group, an executive committee appointed by the Governor. The final draft of this plan has been changed many times over the last year; hopefully with N-COR in charge of this project, it will now take off and be completed in 2010.

Mutual Aid frequencies are going to work for all players within the state of Nebraska. The User group and Policy group continue to meet every other month to work out issues and develop protocols for the use of the system.

- DCC (Dialogic Communications Corporation) Public High Speed Notifications. The high speed notification system is up and running well. With only one issue to report during the last year, the system was shutting itself down and not reporting during a self diagnostic check. This was due to a bad UPS. I have spent some time promoting this system to groups and agencies with in Buffalo County. Additional fire departments are starting to use the system, and the MRC and COAD groups are now using it for notifications. Additional training has been provided to those that use the system as well as drills conducted over the last year to improve the proficiency of the user. There are over 1000 individuals in the Communicator at this time with more than 47 notification groups. Bi-annual updates continue for the GEO-CAST system with updated addresses and locations to stitch phone numbers to the mapping. This ensures proficiency and accuracy for the system.
- All of the 2009 Tier II reports were sent to this office; all reports were logged and submitted to the SEPC.

- The (SCPET Region) South Central Planning Exercise and Training Region continues to be active. 4 scheduled regional tabletop exercises were completed 2009 in which Buffalo County Emergency Management sponsored. There continues to be a great deal of planning conducted for communications, exercise development, 2008 2009 and 2010 grant guidelines, regional governance, etc. The group continues to work with the NEMA and the Public Policy group to conduct a regional exercise and continued planning efforts within the SCPET region.
- Mobile Response / Communications vehicle has responded to 5 events both planned and unplanned over the last year. This unit could have and should have been used more for other emergencies particularly on the fire side of the response system. There have been a number of trainings in this unit for dispatcher, fire and law enforcement over the last year, this training will be ongoing to expand trained personnel and agencies and its usage.
- The Buffalo County Emergency Management continues to sit on the steering committee for TRIMRS which covers a 21 county area, and the MRC (Volunteer Medical Response Corps) and the Hospital to Hospital communication project that were stated in 2008 continued in 2009. Much work has been completed in these areas over the last year with additional protocols and procedures and strategic plans being developed for the MRC and funding acquired to move forward with the communications projects for the hospitals. The MRC continues to grow with now over 50 volunteers. Buffalo County continues to conduct all back ground checks on MRC volunteers and provides notification to the group as an in-kind donation. The Regional Mass Fatality plan has stalled over the last year with the onset of the H1N1 virus and all the work that has been put toward education and vaccination of the public. It is expected that the Mass Fatality plan will be readdressed in 2010.
- (NIMS) National Incident Management Systems compliance continues to be a full time project for the Buffalo County Emergency Management office. This office continues to work with all first responders as well as appointed and elected officials to maintain (NIMS) compliance. After the 2009 state audit for the 2006 grant, it was suggested that Buffalo County Emergency Management start a single excel spread sheet tracking all of the first responder NIMS training. This was completed to track training in the IC 100, 200, 700 and 800 as well as tracking new members and members that have left the departments, to keep an accurate account of who has and has not yet completed training. In addition this office has developed a NIMS reminder post card that is sent out to each of the agencies to make sure that this information is being delivered to this office. Most all responder agencies are at 85 to 95 % trained in NIMS. Through the implementation of these two documents, it is felt that we have met the NIMS standard and compliance in

Buffalo County. Volunteer organizations, large businesses, and schools are being targeted by Homeland security to become NIMS compliant. This continues to be a huge undertaking by this office and could be a full time passion just making sure all agencies are and stay compliant. It is still up to each agency to decide if they wish to continue to stay compliant within the NIMS standards.

- The COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disasters) is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year. The Safety Fair in August of 2009 was once again a huge success. We continue to find things that we can improve on and make the Fair a better experience and success for the future. The COAD is a great asset to the Emergency Management Agency. We have and will continue to rely heavily on the volunteers and community organizations of this group during large scale events within Buffalo County. A spontaneous volunteer program/procedure guide has been put together by the Emergency Management office and the United Way with input from the rest of the COAD group. In addition a tabletop exercise for volunteers and active organizations within COAD was conducted involving a railcar chemical release with mass evacuations and casualties for this group.
  
- NCOR (Nebraska Council of Regions) was a Governor's Executive appointed group in 2008 which I am appointed to. The NCOR is responsible for the State Wide Communications Plan, Regional Communications, and the development of State wide Mutual Aid Channels protocol and procedures. After a year, a lot of conversations on these venues, and the placement of the RFP for the Wireless backbone for the regions and the state, it was contested so it was rewritten and put back out for bids. This has been time consuming. This group should be much further than where it is at this point. However working groups at many jurisdictional levels have visited and revisited finalized plans that had been developed and frequencies that had been put in place in the finalized mutual aid plan have been changed several different times. Hopefully within the year 2010 this group will see some progress.

## **Long Term Projects Started/Continued in 2010**

- CNRI (Central Nebraska Regions for Interoperability) now a statewide project
- COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disasters) Safety Fair
- TRIMRS (Tri-City Medical Response system)
- Regional Hospital Communication
- Regional Mass Fatality plan
- MRC (Medical Response Team)
- NIMS (National Incident Management System)
- Buffalo County Mitigation Plan
- Recovery Unit

- SCPETR (South Central Planning Exercise Training Region) 15 county Area
- New Emergency Operation Center and back up communication center
- NCOR (Nebraska Council of Regions)
- Identification of the Special Needs and Vulnerable Population groups
- H1N1 education
- New tower project
- Emergency preparedness education campaign
- PR2C mapping tools for EOC and response vehicle

## **Reports/ Emergency Manuals/Plans/SOG/SOP and MOU's**

Below is a list of reports, Emergency manuals, plans and MOU's that have either been created or updated throughout the last year.

### **Plans or reports written and reviewed**

Monthly EM reports

EMPG quarterly

Debris plan

Mass Fatality

TICP (Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan)

SCIP (State Communications Interoperable Plan)

Virus Protections

LEOP (Local Emergency Operation Plan)

Severe Weather Siren protocol

Dam Failure plans

Protocol for the Med-4 TRIMRS channel

MOU for RYDE transport and Kearney Public Schools buses

After action report on 4 county table top exercises completed and compiled by this office for the SCPET region

### **2009 Exercises**

- ✓ DCC Dispatch Proficiency Training
- ✓ Decontamination Shower exercises
- ✓ Statewide Tornado drill was conducted in Buffalo County
- ✓ Severe Weather Spotter training was conducted for spotters in Buffalo County
- ✓ 4 Regional Table top exercises were conducted on a Hazmat Train derailment
- ✓ COAD table top exercise
- ✓ Training and exercise / testing the Hazmat ID system
- ✓ School emergency plans / checklists Training
- ✓ Hazmat Decontamination Shower Exercise for Fire/EMS
- ✓ Amateur Radio ARES Full Scale Exercise
- ✓ Pipeline explosion table top exercises

## **Annual Goals**

Below are the goals for the past year and the upcoming year. The Buffalo County Emergency Management is pleased that many of the goals for the 2008/2009 year were met, and it is anticipated reaching and accomplishing all the goals set for the 2010 year. Goals that were not met in 2009 will continue to be goals for 2010.

### **Goals 2009**

1. Work with the SCPETR to develop and conduct Incident Management Interoperable Communications Training at the end user level. This training will be conducted for the all Fire, EMS, and Law Enforcement Agencies.
2. Conduct a Full Scale exercise for the CNRI region and test the interoperability of the communications system.
3. Conduct more educational classes, trainings, and talks on emergency management and emergency preparedness to local groups through radio, television, and other large media type events.
4. Hold a number of workshops for the Interoperable Communications System for administrators and communications supervisors within the region.
5. Move forward to have in place and operational the Mutual Aid frequencies within the CNRI region.
6. Get approved to be a Storm Ready County from the National Weather Service; the application is in at this time, we are now waiting for approval.
7. Work to improve the Buffalo County Hazmat team through training exercises, conferences, and equipment.
8. Buffalo County Emergency Management will work with local jurisdictions and the Regional NRD in the development of a Mitigation Plan. This was started in 2008 and will be completed by mid 2010.
9. Continue to work toward a completed fully operational EOC by the beginning of 2010.
10. Identify and document at least 80% of the Special Needs Populations within Buffalo County including but not limited to schools, Nursing homes, Daycare Centers, agency and privately owned homes.

## Goals 2010

1. Complete a successful Full Scale exercise in 2010.
2. Hold three table top exercises in 2010.
3. Complete the EOC/backup communication center before the end of severe weather season in 2010.
4. Bring at least 6 more hospitals on line with the Med-4 channel and or the Satellite radios.
5. Implement the Mapping tools into everyday Emergency Management operations.
6. Continued education on Paraclete communications and planning tools.
7. Receive grant funding for continued Public Emergency Preparedness education campaign.
8. Have in place and operational the Mutual Aid frequencies within the CNRI region by the end of the year.
9. Review and revise plans and SOP's for large scale Emergency Management events, i.e. debris management, mass fatality/casualty plans, etc.
10. Continue training in the operation of the new EOC for elected and appointed officials for the city of Kearney and Buffalo County.

