



North Dakota  
Department of  
Emergency Services

# 2021 **REPORT**



A safe, secure and resilient North Dakota.

# NDDDES OVERVIEW

**T**he North Dakota Department of Emergency Services (NDDDES) falls under the supervision of the Office of the Adjutant General and includes the Division of Homeland Security and the Division of State Radio Communications.

Its vision is to provide for a safe, secure and resilient North Dakota. NDDDES's mission is to provide North Dakota with a central coordinating agency for public safety communications, prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery. This mission is accomplished with about 90 employees in all areas of the department.

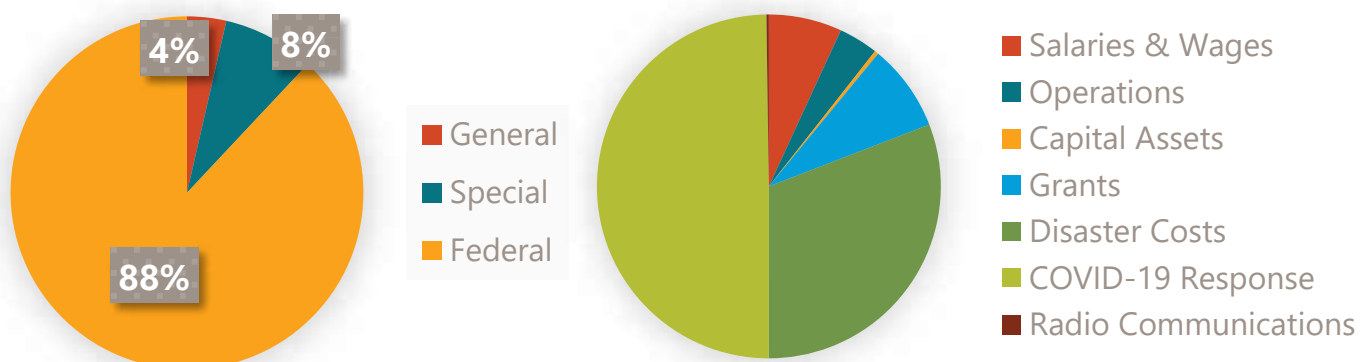
NDDDES provides 24/7 emergency communications and resource coordination with more than 50 lead and support agencies, private enterprise and voluntary

organizations to assist local and tribal jurisdictions in disaster and emergency response activities. Strengthening communities throughout North Dakota, NDDDES administers federal disaster recovery programs and the Homeland Security Grant Program.

The department also manages the State Emergency Operations Center, ensuring a statewide coordinated response to emergencies and disasters, and operates the State Radio communications center, which provides services to all first responders, emergency operations personnel and North Dakota residents. Additionally, NDDDES prepares for, responds to and recovers from natural and technological events while coordinating with local, tribal, state and federal agencies to produce and distribute public safety information.

NDDDES administers federal disaster recovery and grant programs to local jurisdictions. Less than **four percent** of its **overall \$177 million budget** comes from the state's general fund. Through FEMA's Public Assistance Program, NDDDES has coordinated the obligation of more than \$126 million to help reimburse local, state, tribal and non-profit organizations for expenses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as an additional \$15 million for disaster damages caused by severe storms and flooding.

Total Agency Budget: \$177,844,489





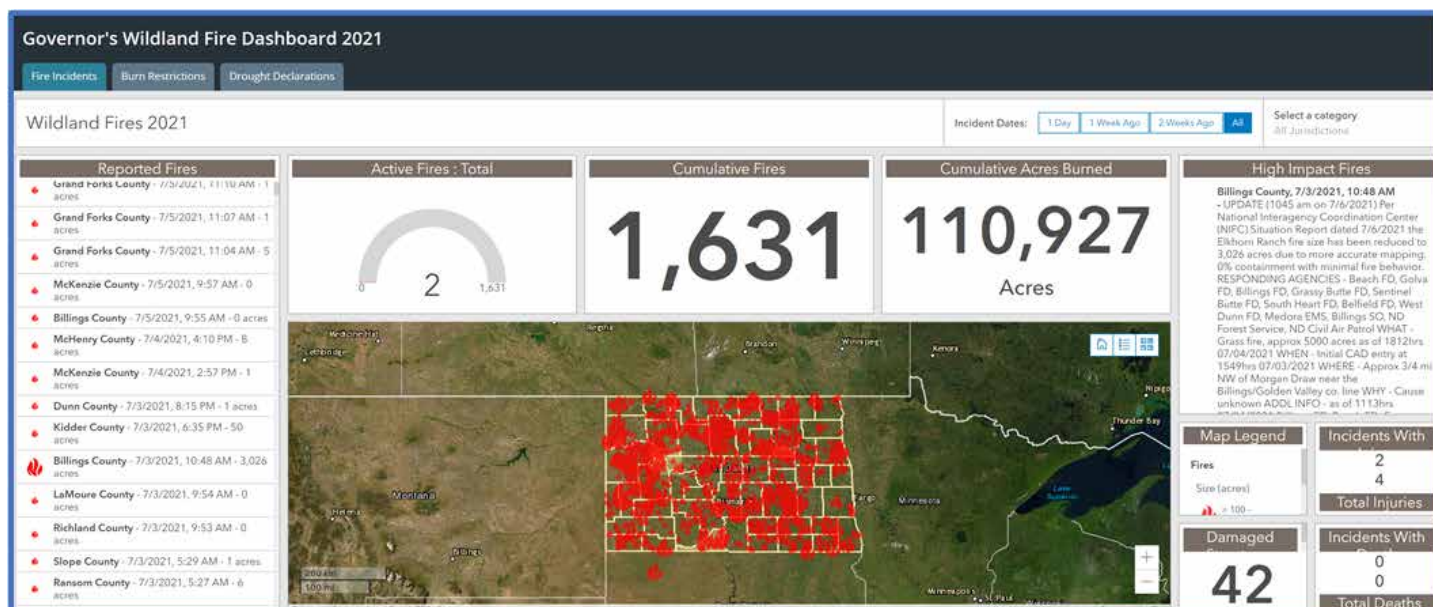
# GIS

**N**DDES's GIS Section is responsible for the creation and continual maintenance of various GIS products, which are used for disaster preparation, planning and response. In 2021, implementation of new GIS technologies, products and delivery of GIS data projects has enabled NDDes to expand solutions used to benefit emergency communications and resource coordination. Some of the technologies and projects implemented to help accomplish those objectives are:

- The GIS section collaborated with the N.D. Department of Health during the COVID-19 pandemic, assisting in federally-required reporting. NDDes aided in efforts to implement and administer daily reporting processes and technologies to submit hospital capacity and utilization data to our federal partners at the U.S. Health and Human Services. Along the way, the GIS Section was instrumental in the state's certification, data collection and daily report submittal processes.
- Continued GIS data development efforts of the

Statewide Seamless Base Map allowed for 20 additional counties across the state to transition to GIS-based, Enhanced 9-1-1 services. To date, 46 total counties have made this transition. These efforts are positioning North Dakota to achieve the ultimate goal of Next Generation 9-1-1 implementation statewide. The GIS Section's role with this project is nearing completion with the few remaining counties to be transitioned in 2022. With new use applications (i.e. census, infrastructure and voting) being realized in public and private sectors, the importance of maintaining accurate authoritative addressing will continue to increase.

- Wildland fires were at historically high numbers across the state in 2021. The GIS Section, for the first time, was able to leverage federal and local data to comprise a Wildland Fire Incident dashboard. Leveraging federal data repositories and local information collections systems with weekly processing workflows, North Dakota's leaders could visualize the full scale of incidents for prudent decision making and resourcing.



NDDes's GIS Section created a Wildland Fire Incident dashboard for in 2021 depicting local and federal data for increased situational awareness.

# PREPAREDNESS

**T**he NDDDES Division of Homeland Security Preparedness Section offers a wide range of services to assist local and tribal emergency managers, responders, state agency partners, certain non-profit organizations and others through the continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating and taking corrective action to ensure effective response to emergency and disasters situations. The Preparedness Section consists of three units: Grants, Training & Exercise and Regional Emergency Response Coordinators. The Grants Unit provides funding to accomplish preparedness tasks to sustain existing capabilities or to close gaps identified through the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) process. The Training and Exercise unit provides training and exercise support and implements the National Qualification System. The Regional Emergency Response coordinators provide technical assistance for planning, development of procedures and protocols and conducting training. They evaluate exercises, as well as act a liaison between the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and local EOCs during real events.

## Grants

The Grants unit in 2021 applied for and received **\$10,985,063** in grant funding from six different federal programs:

**The State Homeland Security Program (SHSP)** assists state, local and tribal efforts to build, sustain and deliver capabilities necessary to prevent, prepare for, protect against and respond to acts of terrorism. Funds from the SHSP in 2021 were used for projects to enhance cybersecurity, the protection of soft targets/crowded places and information, as well as intelligence sharing, addressing emergent threats and combating domestic violent extremism.

**The Operation Stonegarden Program (OPSG)** supports enhanced cooperation and coordination among Customs and Border Protection, United States Border Patrol and federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies to improve overall border security. Funds from OPSG 2021 supported 15 county law enforcement agencies' efforts to secure the United States' border along routes of ingress/egress between Canada and North Dakota.

**The Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP)** is to help strengthen the nation's communities against potential terrorist attacks by providing funding for physical security enhancements and other security-related activities to nonprofit organizations that are at high risk of a terrorist attack. Funds can be used to enhance protection through the installation of physical security enhancements or private contracted security guards. The funds also can be used for security plans, training (such as active shooter training) and awareness campaigns or response exercises. Nine projects, mostly physical security enhancements, were funded in 2021.

**The Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)** focuses on all-hazards emergency preparedness. The program assists state, local and tribal emergency management agencies with implementing the National Preparedness System and supporting the National Preparedness Goal of a secure and resilient nation. EMPG funded projects must support closing gaps or sustaining capabilities identified in the THIRA. The program provided support for NDDDES, as well as 46 local emergency management programs in 2021.

**The Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Program (TVTP)** is new to the state in 2021. Funding is being used to plan and develop a Countering Violent Extremism Program within the N.D. State and Local Intelligence Center (SLIC). This will establish a prevention framework by implementing law enforcement officer and community awareness training to increase societal awareness of the radicalization-to-violence process, and what the threat of targeted violence looks like.

**The Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Program (HMEPP)** assist states, local and tribal governments to develop, improve, and carry out emergency plans within the National Response System and the Emergency Planning and Right-To-Know Act of 1986. It provides funding for training and planning projects that support enhancing response capabilities to transportation-related hazardous materials incidents.

## Training and Exercise

The NDDDES Training and Exercise Program offers a wide variety of courses for first responders, emergency managers, healthcare providers and other response support staff and partners. In 2021, NDDES conducted, facilitated or supported 14 training events, five of which were hosted in a virtual environment online. Two hundred and forty-four students participated in these classes. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, attendee participation in NDDDES-led events was down by about two-thirds. Conversely, NDDES only was able to facilitate about 50 percent of the training events it normally would offer during a calendar year. One of the events NDDDES helped sponsor was CyberCon. The goal of the conference was to unify cybersecurity and critical infrastructure into a conference that would help educate and connect professionals.

NDDDES continues to provide and participate in multi-agency emergency response exercises. Exercises are designed to progress from discussion to the operational demonstration of capabilities. They give participants a safe environment in which to identify planning gaps and capability weaknesses. NDDDES facilitated two exercises in 2021.

Also, in 2021, NDDDES implemented a new training records management system. The new system allows students to register for training, download transcripts and upload training certificates from courses hosted by other entities. Finally, NDDES adopted the National Qualification System in 2021. Unified Command/EOC Position Task Books were developed and State EOC staff and Emergency Management Support Team members have begun the process to become certified, depending on their position within emergency management.

## Regional Emergency Response Coordinators

During the first quarter of 2021, the Preparedness Section assisted with the COVID-19 response effort. Specifically, the Training and Exercise staff led the



*Representatives from multiple state agencies participate in a flood response exercise March 4 at the State Emergency Operations Center at Fraine Barrack in Bismarck.*

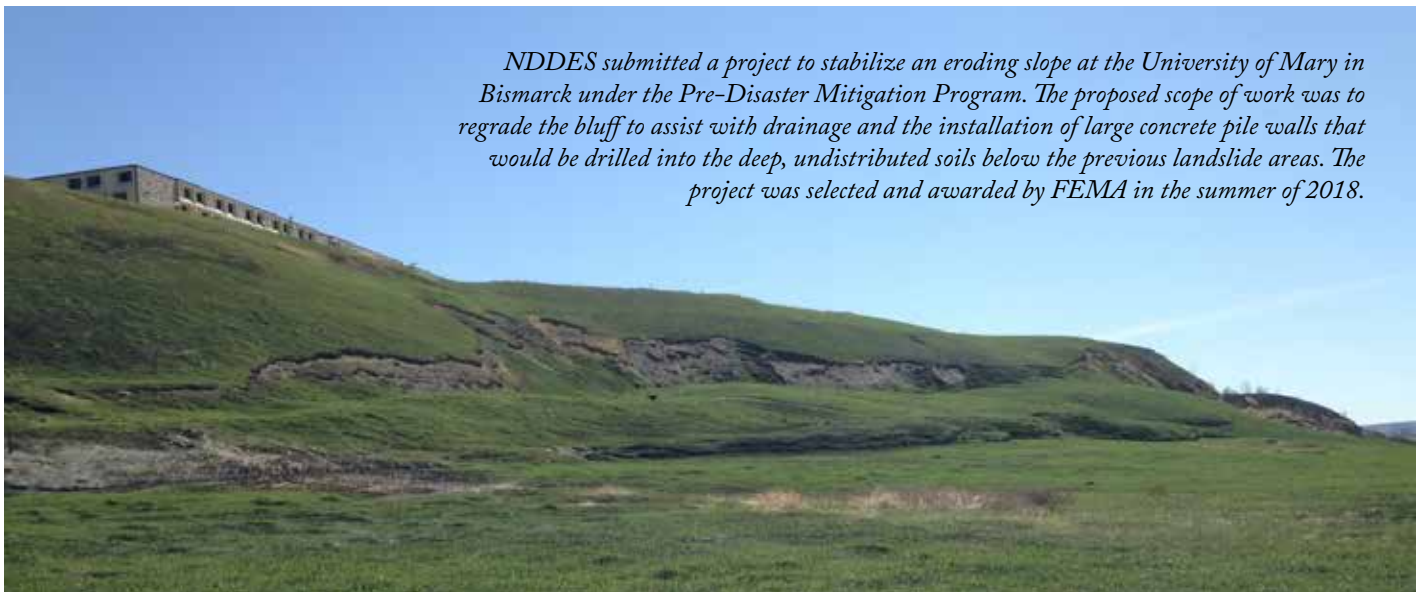
BinaxNOW testing branch within the response with the agency's regional coordinators acting as task force managers to provide testing at congregate and first responder facilities, legislative and state agencies, businesses and North Dakota's University System, as well as private and tribal colleges.

The Emergency Management Support Team deployment guide was modified to create a new umbrella program for the NDDDES Reserve Corps. The mission of the Reserve Corps is to deploy state assets to support planned events. They also can be used in response to local, state, tribal or national emergencies or disasters in the form of technical assistance or mission specific assignments. These personnel are available when resources may be overtaxed due to the nature or significance of an incident. The NDDDES Reserve Corps consists of four teams: The Emergency Management Support Team and the Disaster Recover Response Team, the newly formed Cybersecurity Incident Support Team and the Public Information and Strategic Communications Team.

NDDDES continues to build its relationship with the various regional hazardous materials, technical rescue, bomb squads and special weapons and tactics teams to ensure a state of readiness and preparedness in the event those resources are needed. The agency provides funding for planning, equipment, training and exercises to assist those teams in sustaining or enhancing their capabilities.



# RECOVERY



*NDDDES submitted a project to stabilize an eroding slope at the University of Mary in Bismarck under the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program. The proposed scope of work was to regrade the bluff to assist with drainage and the installation of large concrete pile walls that would be drilled into the deep, undistributed soils below the previous landslide areas. The project was selected and awarded by FEMA in the summer of 2018.*

**T**he Disaster Recovery Section manages and coordinates presidentially declared disaster programs, including public assistance and hazard mitigation. Nationally, North Dakota is one of three states that maintain a “Managing State” status. The Division of Homeland Security assumes disaster program management responsibilities instead of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); however, coordination with FEMA is an ongoing process. The Public Assistance Program is managed under the Managing State concept. This concept, launched by FEMA, gives states with proven track records the authority to manage disaster recovery programs. States that manage disaster programs provide faster delivery of programs at less cost to the taxpayer. When event damages exceed the predetermined per capita threshold, a presidential declaration results and activates federal disaster recovery programs. More than **\$2.4 billion** in disaster recovery assistance have been distributed

to local, tribal, and state entities since 1993.

The normal cost share is 75 percent federal and 25 percent state/local share, however, the COVID-19 disaster event was approved for a 100% cost share from January 21, 2021 to July 1, 2022. Also, due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, President Biden has approved that all disaster declarations that were declared between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2021 would be increased to a 90 percent federal and 10 percent state/local cost share as well.

As the calendar year ends, FEMA-DR-4509-ND (COVID-19) is still open and being used to reimburse state, local, tribal, and certain private non-profit organizations for their eligible COVID-19-related expenses at a 100 percent federal cost share. Under DR-4509, 162 projects have been fully approved and obligated totaling \$129,574,466 to date. The majority of those costs were attributed to the N.D. Department of Health’s emergency response, community testing and vaccination clinic operations.

All large and small projects for DR-4553 (2020 spring flood) and DR-4565 (2020 severe summer storms) were submitted to FEMA for obligation. At this point, both of those disasters are in long-term grant management operations and applicants are working to complete any projects that were identified as “Work to be Completed.” Once all projects have been completed, final expenses will be reimbursed and all projects will be submitted to FEMA for closeout. DR-4613 (2021 severe summer storms) has only one large project still being created for impacts

# HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM

According to PEW Charitable Trusts, an average of \$6.54 is saved for every \$1 spent on mitigation activities in North Dakota. Using that formula, it is estimated NDDDES hazard mitigation projects have prevented more than \$1B in disaster damages.

- Grant #4323 – Flooding – Declared on July 12, 2017 – 10 Projects - \$796,032
- Grant #4444 – Flooding – Declared on June 12, 2019 – 9 Projects - \$2,033,478
- Grant #4475 – Flooding – Declared on Jan. 21, 2020 – 14 Projects - \$2,613,822
- Grant #4509 – COVID-19 Pandemic – Declared on April 1, 2020 – 2 Applications Submitted - \$16,519,859
- Grant #4553 – Flooding – Declared on July 9, 2020 – 14 Projects Submitted - \$1,905,116
- Grant #4565 – Severe Storms and Flooding – Declared on October 2, 2020 – Still Accepting Applications - \$509,660
- Grant #4613 – Severe Storm, Straight-line Winds and Flooding – Declared on September 1, 2021 – Still Accepting Applications - \$620,000 Estimated

to the City of Williston. Once that project is submitted to FEMA, DR-4613 will enter long-term grant management operations as well.

## Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is available to all eligible jurisdictions and private nonprofit organizations after a presidential disaster has been declared. However, eligible applications do not have to be a result of the disaster. The funding is directed to projects that will permanently reduce or eliminate future risk to lives and property, such as home acquisition from floodways and flood plains, lift station repair, sewer system and drainage system upgrades, water retention systems as well as back-up generators, early warning sirens and mitigation planning. The federal cost share is 75 percent; the state's share is 10 percent with a 15 percent local cost share.

## Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program

The Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program is a non-disaster, nationwide, competitive grant program that funds eligible mitigation projects and hazard mitigation planning prior to a disaster event. This program was replaced by the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program in 2020.

## Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities

The Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program was created through the Disaster Recovery Reform Act (DRRA) of 2018. This program replaced the PDM Program to become FEMA's new

non-disaster, nationwide, competitive grant program that can fund eligible mitigation projects and hazard mitigation planning activities prior to a disaster event. The eligibility criteria for BRIC is the same as it was for PDM, however, the primary differences are that BRIC is more focused on large infrastructure projects and BRIC funding is based on the costs of federal disaster declarations. Whereas PDM was funded each year through appropriations, the DRRA authorized that 6 percent of the 6-month value of each disaster declared in the country would be placed in a fund for future BRIC grants. This funding mechanism not only ensures that the program will have funding every year, but with larger disaster events becoming more common, BRIC will generally have more funding available each year than the PDM Program did on average.

For the BRIC Program, projects and funding obtained during this report period were:

- 2020 – 9 Projects totaling \$656,366
- 2021 – Applications Still Under Review – 14 Projects were submitted totaling \$94 million federal share

## Flood Mitigation Assistance Program

The Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (NFIP) is a non-disaster, nationally competitive grant program. Each state receives an annual allocation of funds based on a formula addressing the number of National Flood Insurance Program active flood insurance policies within the state. However, eligible projects may compete for unsubscribed funds. Projects are restricted to NFIP-insured properties and are typically used for home acquisition and relocation proj-

ects. Cost share is 75 percent for the federal government, with 25 percent paid by the state and local jurisdictions. Projects and funding obtained over the period include: 2017 – two projects valued at \$134,329.

### **Repetitive Flood Claims Program**

The Repetitive Flood Claims Program, a subset of the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program, is available to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program that have had one or more claim payments for flood damages. The cost share is typically 75 percent federal and 25 percent state/local. Projects are considered through national competition on what will deliver the greatest return to the National Flood Insurance Fund.

### **Severe Repetitive Loss Program**

The Severe Repetitive Loss Program (SRL), also a subset of the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program, is available to reduce or eliminate long-term risk of flood damage to severe repetitive loss of residential structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program. This also will result in the greatest savings to the National Flood Insurance Fund. SRL properties must have at least four program claims (building and contents) greater than \$5,000 each that cumulatively exceeds \$20,000. Alternatively, properties may have two separate claim payments (building only) that have been made that exceed the market value of the building and at least two of the referenced claims must have occurred within any 10-year period and must be greater than 10 days apart.



*Water engulfs a neighborhood in Minot, North Dakota, June 23, 2011. As many as 10,000 residents, about one-fourth of the city's population, evacuated as the fast-rising Souris River inundated thousands of homes and businesses (U.S. Air Force photo).*



# NDSLIC

The North Dakota State and Local Intelligence Center (NDSLIC) is set up to assist the efforts of the United State government to establish a national network of fusion centers. These serve as the “central hub” for North Dakota’s fusion process and serve as the primary interface between North Dakota and federal governments for information gathering, analysis and dissemination. The NDSLIC Executive Board, set by Executive Order 2007-06, is comprised of the North Dakota adjutant general, the director of the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the superintendent of the North Dakota Highway Patrol, director for the North Dakota Division of Homeland Security and North Dakota Information Technology Department’s chief information officer.

In 2021, the NDSLIC continued its outreach while socializing its mission and capabilities with local, state, federal and tribal law enforcement agencies and private sector partners. The NDSLIC continues to produce tactical and strategic products on the following topics: terrorism (foreign and domestic), narcotics, cyber security, public health hazards, criminal gangs and human trafficking. These products disseminated to the NDSLIC’s partners for situational awareness and planning efforts. In 2021, the NDSLIC completed 15,689 requests for information (RFIs) law enforcement and private sector partners. That represents an 8 percent increase from 2020, when the NDSLIC completed 14,472 RFIs.

The NDSLIC’s critical infrastructure program continues to coordinate protective measures for key infrastructure assets in North Dakota. Staff conduct site assistance visits where infrastructure vulnerabilities are evaluated and discussed to improve the assets’ security posture, emer-

gency planning and incident response. This program also is the link for North Dakota private sector partners to share their information and intelligence with law enforcement and intelligence communities.

The NDSLIC’s Information Liaison Officer (ILO) program continues to recruit, educate and train law enforcement, public and private sectors partners with information and intelligence gathering, reporting and retention. The ILO program plays a vital role in the NDSLIC’s success.

In 2021, NDDDES was selected and awarded a Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s

(DHS) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships office. The TVTP program is meant to build local prevention frameworks that equip and empower local efforts to prevent individuals from radicalizing to violence. It also is intended to intervene with individuals who have (or are) radicalizing to violence. The TVTP program will be developed, implemented and managed by NDSLIC staff for the lifecycle of the grant.



# PLANNING

## MITIGATION PLANNING

### State-Level Mitigation Planning

NDDDES attained a major goal in its mitigation planning and outreach efforts when it achieved Enhanced Status for the state of North Dakota Enhanced Mitigation Mission Area Operations Plan (MAOP) February 2019, exceeding all federal requirements. The planning process, initiated by NDDDES with 84 private sector partners, state, federal and local government agencies, voluntary organizations and the general public comprising the State Hazard Mitigation Team (SHMT), has been serving as a best practice for other states.

The purpose of the plan is to identify the natural and technological hazards and adversarial threats confronting our state and its communities. The plan delves into a robust hazard identification and risk assessment process that analyzes risk, impacts and vulnerabilities presented by natural and technological hazards. Cyberattacks, flooding and severe winter storms were identified as the top three hazards. Based on the assessment, public and private partners developed goals and strategies to help lessen the impacts from those hazards in the future.

More than 100 citizens contributed to the plan, sharing their stories, experiences and concerns about the state's natural and technological hazards and adversarial threats. "Community Coffees," an NDDDES and SHMT initiative, targeted

specific sectors of communities, many of whose voices had never been heard in mitigation planning. They included senior citizens; homeless individuals; disaster volunteers; public and private health care workers; first responders; service providers; individuals with functional and access needs; federal, state, and local elected officials; and local and tribal government employees.

By having an enhanced plan, North Dakota has proven that it is effectively implementing the Hazard Mitigation Assistance program using widespread inter-agency coordination and collaboration across state, local, and tribal governments. Having an Enhanced Status increases available mitigation dollars from 15 percent to 20 percent of total estimated eligible Stafford Act disaster assistance for federally-declared disasters. There are only eleven other states in the nation with enhanced plan status; North Dakota will become the 12th. In addition, North Dakota was the first state in FEMA Region VIII to develop and receive FEMA approval for an Enhanced Mitigation Plan.

### Program Administration by State

NDDDES is one of a few states in the country to have oversight for local mitigation plan review under the Program Administration by States (PAS) pilot

*A storm shelter adorned with a "Wizard of Oz" mural is available to visitors at Harmon Lake in Morton County. The structure was funded through FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program, which was replaced by the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, or BRIC, Program in 2020.*



# STATE HAZARD MITIGATION TEAM RANKED HAZARDS AND THREATS

1. Cyberattack
2. Flood
3. Severe Winter Weather
4. Severe Summer Weather
5. Fire
6. Infectious Disease & Pest Infestations
7. Drought
8. Hazardous Materials
9. Space Weather
10. Dam Failure
11. Criminal, Terrorist or Nation-State Attack
12. Geologic Hazards
13. Civil Disturbance
14. Transportation Incident

project. Under this agreement, mitigation planners review and approve local mitigation plans used by emergency management as blueprints to identify any weaknesses in our communities, fund projects to address those weaknesses and subsequently make our communities more resilient and better prepared for future disaster events. The NDDDES mitigation team provides technical assistance to local and tribal communities developing or updating mitigation plans. While FEMA has sole authority to approve tribal mitigation plans, NDDDES mitigation planners review tribal plans as a courtesy to ensure our tribal nations have eligibility to apply under the state for the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program. As a result of extensive outreach efforts, all North Dakota counties and tribal nations are either developing or have federally-approved, multi-hazard mitigation plans. Jurisdictions achieve federally-approved plans by demonstrating a high level of involvement of local and tribal planning teams to identify hazards and threats; analyze potential consequences; and then develop viable mitigation actions to make communities safer.

## Individual and Households Program

The Individual and Households Program provides funding assistance up to predetermined limits for home damage repair, transportation repair or replacement and funeral expenses. It allows limited funding for crisis counseling, unemployment assistance, and loans from the Small Business Administration. The cost share equates to 75 percent federal and a 25 percent state/local share.

NDDDES Disaster Recovery Staff coordinates with all state agencies and multiple non-government entities by identifying, communicating and delivering individual and household assistance to disaster survivors while augmenting the federal assistance program. Individual Assistance program staff members continue to work with respective

state and federal agencies to identify potential unmet needs through available programs and to inform citizens of available resources to assist with disaster recovery needs for individuals and businesses.

## Mitigation Programs: Conclusion

The Mitigation Program continued collaborations with North Dakota Emergency Management Association, North Dakota Association of Counties, North Dakota League of Cities, North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, North Dakota Recreation and Park association, North Dakota regional councils and others. More than \$222 million have been invested across North Dakota through the various mitigation programs (1993 to 2019).

## Planning Section Achievement for 2021

The NDDDES Planning Section facilitated the annual revision of the state's Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA). The staff also assisted local and tribal jurisdictions with the completion of their THIRA activities. Maintenance of the State Emergency Operations Plan and all its elements continues to occur and reflects operational capabilities and lessons learned from exercises and real-world emergencies/disasters as well as to ensure alignment with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), core capabilities and the National Response Framework (NRF). Planning staff continued work on the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) in preparation for re-certification in 2023. Staff also continued their support of development and maintenance of Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs) for NDDDES and many other state agencies. Incident Action Planning (IAPs) was conducted throughout the disasters for COVID-19, drought and wildfire.



# MITIGATION MATTERS: ANNUAL REPORT EMPHASIZES SMART, EFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

**T**hroughout 2021, the State Hazard Mitigation Team has collaborated and communicated with public and private whole community partners to compile information for the Hazard Mitigation Annual Report and the State Hazard Mitigation Team/State Federal Mitigation Consultation meeting held on Sept. 30. The plan is a true reflection of how the State of North Dakota keeps its mitigation strategy viable. Partners are committed to completing mitigation actions.

Team members being Kathleen Donahue, Katie Leitch, Justin Messner, Roxanne Anderson, Todd Joersz, Hope Brighton, and Carl Meyer carefully collaborated the agencies to be highlighted, interviewed, and articles written to highlight the key aspects of the statewide mitigation strategy. The 2021 report focused on Smart, Efficient Infrastructure, one of Governor Doug Burgum's Main Street Initiative pillars, and featured spotlights on Main Street, flood resiliency and floodplain management tools, and several other key transportation priorities.

One example of interagency collaboration was highlighted in the Hazard Mitigation Annual article and is the federal and state-chartered program known as the Silver Jackets. There is an impressive amount of collaboration within the group itself showing just how much can be done with clear communication and collaboration. Silver Jackets projects use analytical data to support the development of smart, efficient infrastructure to reduce natural hazards with a special focus on flooding. Some of the highlighted projects include the ND Probable Maximum Precipitation (PMP) Analysis, ND LiDAR Acquisition, ND Risk Assessment Map (NDRAM) Enhancement, and the Missouri River Basin non-stationarity study. All of these projects



are done in collaboration with other entities and stakeholders within the region creating an effective product.

“The North Dakota Hazard Mitigation Progress Report is a powerful way to highlight and showcase outcomes of state agency and stakeholder partnerships and investments. It connects the dots on implementation of the State of North Dakota Enhanced Mitigation Mission Area Operations Plan (MAOP) and other planning initiatives,” said Logan Sand, acting senior community planner with FEMA Region VIII. “Unfortunately, we often don’t take the time to celebrate our collective or individual mitigation successes. However, the North Dakota Hazard Mitigation Annual Progress Report is a great resource to accomplish exactly this. It’s the much-deserved recognition of all the hard work partners are putting into creating a more resilient North Dakota.”

Each year the report builds on the story of how North Dakota continues to prioritize mitigation, and take tangible steps to building statewide, tribal nation and community-level resilience. In addition, the report includes key resources for building resilience, which we know starts locally.

The North Dakota Hazard Mitigation Progress Report 2021: Smart, Efficient Infrastructure can be found at <https://bit.ly/2Zxu4vy>

# NDDDES STAFF EARN 'TREES AWARD' FOR WILDFIRE RESPONSE OPERATIONS

**N**DDES was recognized Oct. 30 for its contributions to a “whole government” response to an active wildfire season in 2021. The agency was presented the Trees Award during the 31st Trees Bowl, sponsored by the North Dakota Forest Service and North Dakota State University, at the FargoDome.

The Trees Awards recognize individuals, organizations, and agencies who contribute in an outstanding way to forestry activities. Forestry activities can include: fire mitigation, protection and suppression; tree planting, preservation, or maintenance; community forestry efforts; forest or fire management practices; or environmental education. For its efforts, NDDDES received the Excellence in Government Award while former Homeland Security

Director Cody Schulz was presented the Distinguished Leadership Award for his role within the wildfire response's Unified Command.

In a letter to the team at NDDDES, State Forester Tom Claey's wrote, “This award is presented to an agency or division, at any level, that exhibits extraordinary effort and dedication in the conducts of programs and projects that result in a significant benefit to forestry.”

Representing NDDDES, and invited to attend the event, were Sean Johnson, Eric Upton, Eric Jensen (not pictured) and Amy Anton. The group was recognized on the field during half-time of the NDSU football game against Indiana State and presented with a plaque by NDSU President Dean Bresciani and Claey's.



*From left to right, Eric Upton, Amy Anton, Sean Johnson and Cody Schulz accept the Trees Award for “Excellence in Government.”*



# RESPONSE

**N**DDES continues to invest heavily in improving its response plans and working with other state agencies to ensure all-hazard response readiness. Some examples of collaboration with state partners in 2021 includes:

- Coordinated with the N.D. Highway Patrol and a local law enforcement working group to initiate development of a statewide law enforcement capability for civil disturbance incidents within North Dakota.
- Coordinated with the N.D. Forest Service and National Weather Service to develop a state Fire Danger Index rating solution to replace the U.S. Forest Service Fire Lab product we previously relied on for determining the daily fire danger index. Local and tribal burn bans were tied to this methodology.
- Initiated development of a Cyber Incident Support Team program modeled after NDDES's current Emergency Management Support Team, which will be able to be deployed to assist public and private sector partners in response to a cyber security-related incident.
- Coordinated with the N.D. Departments of Environmental Quality, Mineral Resources (Oil and Gas Division) and Agriculture to develop and implement a new State Unified Hazardous Materials Spill/Release Reporting System ([www.spill.nd.gov](http://www.spill.nd.gov)). This simplified system provides industry and the public a one-stop option for reporting hazardous materials spills/releases instead of having to report to multiple agencies.

## State Emergency Operations Center

State Emergency Operations Center Operations (SEOC) and planning staff maintain the SEOC and provide 24/7 response coordination with federal, state and volunteer agencies, local/tribal governments and private entities. Together, the groups provide required resources



*NDDES assisted in facilitating training with the North Dakota Forest Service and providing equipment for members of the North Dakota National Guard in May so the Soldiers could support the state's response to wildfires in 2021.*



and assets, compile initial damage assessment information, evaluate information to determine the potential for state and federal declarations and handle requests for assistance. They also produce and distribute documents and reports useful to emergency and disaster operations. Staff members coordinated state response for wildland fires; hazardous material spills; potable water shortages; missing persons; Amber, Silver and Blue Alerts; downed/missing aircraft; train derailments; flooding; severe winter storms; tornadoes; power outages; hail; rain and high-wind storms that produced significant property damage and threatened lives. Examples of larger incidents during the year include:

### **June 7-11, 2021 – Severe Summer Storm/Overland Flooding**

Storms produced tornadoes, up to baseball-size hail, damaging winds of up to 93 miles per hour and torrential rainfall that led to overland flooding, which was exacerbated by dried-out, nearly impermeable topsoil.

Gov. Doug Burgum requested a presidential major disaster declaration for the series of storms that resulted in more than \$2.3. million in damage to roads and other infrastructure. Eight counties were included in the request: Burke, Divide, Emmons, Grant, Kidder, LaMoure, Sioux and Williams.

### **March 15, 2020 – April 30, 2021 – COVID-19 Response**

The State Unified Command team was originally stood up on March 15, 2020, to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the incident command structure, the N.D. Department of Health (NDDOH), N.D. Department of Emergency Services and other state, local and tribal agencies collaborated to develop effective structures, processes and resources for the state's whole-of-government response to the pandemic.

When active COVID-19 cases began to decline and the ND Smart Restart was launched, the Unified Command was scaled back in June 2020 and transitioned primarily back over to the NDDOH with NDDDES in a support role. Due to an increase in the COVID-19 positivity rate and uncertainty caused by large community events; expanded business activity and the restart of school; along with the possibility of a vaccine launch later that year, the changing environment required a whole-of-government response and holistic incident management. For that reason, the Unified Command was expanded in late August 2020.

NDDDES staff spent most of their time engaged in COVID-19 response-related activities to include testing, staffing, school reopening, logistical coordination, incident action and contingency planning, incident management facilitation and participation in daily meetings. On April 30, 2021, the Governor lifted the state emergency



at which time the State Unified Command was decommissioned and transitioned back to the NDDOH.

### **2021 Drought and Wildland Fire Season**

Fire season in North Dakota, which typically begins in April, began early in 2021 with the Windy Fire, near Lemmon, South Dakota, on Jan. 14. It burned approximately 7,000 acres on the North Dakota side of the border and 10,000 acres on the South Dakota side. As of Aug. 18, 2021, North Dakota had experienced more than 2,000 fires burning over 120,000 total acres; this is compared to just over 900 fires for a total of about 12,000 total acres in 2020. Historic drought conditions only increased the size and intensity of fires in 2021.

NDDDES participated in State Wildland Fire and Drought Unified Command through which staff collaborated with the N.D. Forest Service, N.D. Department of Agriculture and other state, local and tribal agencies to coordinate preparedness and response-related activities.

Some dramatic improvements leveraging technology, however, were generated during NDDDES's involvement in response operations. One of those innovations was a GPS-configured wildland fire dashboard that provided

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leaders, planners and firefighters with better situational awareness. It was the first time data could be compiled through reports from local emergency managers and 9-1-1 calls, as well as historical data from the Integrated Reporting of Wildland-Fire Information (IRWIN) system used by fire departments.

NDDDES also initiated a program to augment the state's firefighting capabilities and resources by creating a wildland task force for the state. The task force concept was adopted to allow local fire departments the ability to respond outside their jurisdictions, if needed. Departments that volunteer will coordinate directly with the Forest Service to preposition personnel and equipment for any potential state wildfire suppression missions.

NDDDES also partnered with the N.D. Forest Service and N.D. National Guard to train a cadre of Soldiers to augment the Forest Service and bolster their resources.

#### Large Fire/State Support Activities

- Windy Fire (January 14) – 7,000 acres on N.D. side/10,000 acres on S.D. side
- Medora Fire – 3,000 acres
- Horse Pasture Fire – 5,000 acres
- Roosevelt Creek Fire – 4,603 acres
- Mandaree Fire – 9,803 acres
- Manning Fire – 1,800 acres

#### Emergency Management Assistance Compact Support

The staff trains, facilitates and evaluates resource requests from other states through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), a state-to-state mutual aid agreement, of which North Dakota is a member. During the year, North Dakota deployed the following resources via EMAC:

- Montana Wildfires – Wildland firefighting boots from NDDDES cache
- California Wildfires – MQ-9 Crew Support from N.D. Air National Guard
- Louisiana Hurricane Response – Structural firefighters from Williston, Dickinson and Bismarck Rural Fire Departments



# WILDLAND FIRE TASK FORCE ESTABLISHED TO BOLSTER FIRE-FIGHTING RESOURCES

**A**s hot weather and dry conditions provided ample fuels for an active 2021 wildfire season, the North Dakota Forest Service and NDDDES initiated a program to augment the state's firefighting capabilities and resources. In summer 2021, personnel and equipment from the Williston and Kindred fire departments and Dickinson Rural Fire Department were on standby to provide state support for wildfire response alongside the Forest Service as part of a wildland fire task force.

The task force concept was adopted to allow local fire departments the ability to respond outside their jurisdictions, if needed. Departments that volunteer coordinated directly with the Forest Service to preposition personnel and equipment for any potential state wildfire suppression missions.

"The rapid development of the North Dakota wildland fire task force once again highlights our state's creativity and willingness to help one another in a time of need," said State Forester Tom Claeys. "We greatly appreciate fire departments working together to enhance firefighter and public safety."

Fire departments generally could volunteer to be assigned to the wildland fire task force for weeklong increments consisting of 12-hour shifts. The length of those assignments could be extended up to 21 days, however. The Williston and Kindred fire departments and Dickinson Rural Fire Department demobilized in July after 11 days on standby.

Under the wildland fire task force, the Williston Fire Department had the chance to respond to a fire July 26 in an area east of Williston. The fire, estimated to be about 50 to 100 acres, was rekindled from a fire earlier in the day within the Williston Rural Fire Department's district. Both Williston Rural and the Williston Fire Department were able to work with one another to suppress the fire.

"It's been a great opportunity; I just think it's a great thing for our state," said Clint Bates, captain with the Williston Fire Department. "I'm originally from the West Coast, and then I was in Montana before I came up here, and the departments I've worked for in the past have had a strong relationship with their states. I think it's really important for

*In 2021, North Dakota experienced more than 2,400 fires burning more than 125,600 acres.*



our state to grow this program so that we have these resources to do this."

Bates was part of a North Dakota task force that supported the wildfire response in western Oregon in September 2020. The group included 17 firefighters from the Minot, Williston, Grand Forks and Fargo fire departments and was assembled after sourcing and coordination through NDDDES and the Forest Service. North Dakota has a long history of providing EMAC (emergency management assistance compact) support to other states. This summer, however, drought conditions have required more robust support to manage wildfire activity in North Dakota.



# NORTH DAKOTA FIREFIGHTERS RETURN FROM HURRICANE IDA SUPPORT MISSION

A group of 15 firefighters from the Williston, Williston Rural, Bismarck Rural and Dickinson Fire Departments returned Sept. 20 after two weeks supporting Hurricane Ida recovery efforts along the Gulf Coast. Gov. Doug Burgum approved an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) request earlier in the month from the state of Louisiana, allowing North Dakota's firefighters to assist with structural fire suppression missions there.

After traveling more than 1,800 miles, the first North Dakota team began its mission earlier this month by being assigned to the volunteer fire department in Lockport, Louisiana, south of Baton Rouge. While there, the team responded to carbon monoxide calls, fire alarms and structure fires. They also assisted local communities with tree clean-up and debris removal and unloading supply trailers.

A second team departed Williston, North Dakota, three days later and, combined with a crew from Dickinson Fire Department, traveled to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) basecamp in Baton Rouge. The team was assigned to the Schriever Fire Department, about 80 miles south of Baton Rouge and west of Lockport.

"Thank you to all the members of the two North Dakota teams. We are beyond proud of what they have done and are thankful for the partnerships created," said Williston Fire Chief Matt Clark. "This was an incredible effort by all parties involved and we are happy to welcome them home."

Before traveling back to North Dakota, the first team of firefighters was able to visit with a long-time Lockport resident with family and friendship ties to North Dakota. Missy Lirette and her husband evacuated for Hurricane Ida. When she returned home on Saturday and heard the team might still be in town, Lirette rushed to the Lockport Volunteer Fire Department to meet them and take some pictures with the team.

"My heart almost exploded with joy at getting to meet them and thank them for helping our community," Lirette said. "They are wonderful people [and] they are all wearing Lockport Volunteer Fire Department shirts today. Thank you, North Dakota for coming to Louisiana's rescue."

North Dakota's volunteer firefighter team was assembled after sourcing and coordination through NDDDES. North Dakota has a long history of providing EMAC support to other states. Since 2005, DES staff have supported response agencies through EMAC during disaster events in six locations, including: Louisiana (2005 hurricane), Mississippi



*Above, Lydia Citta, of the Bismarck Rural Fire Department, holds two puppies she helped rescue during an emergency call in Louisiana. Top right, from left to right, Captain Justin Champion embraces his wife, Jessica, while FF/EMT Colton Gutknecht enthusiastically hugs fellow FF/EMT Hunter Voss upon their return from Louisiana. Bottom right, Lockport resident Missy Lirette take a group photo with the Williston and Williston Rural Fire Department crew. Lirette has family and friendship ties to North Dakota.*



(2011 flooding), Puerto Rico (2017 hurricane), Florida (2017 hurricane), Hawaii (2018 volcano), Oklahoma (2019 flooding/tornadoes) and, most recently, Oregon (2020 wildfires).

An EMAC is an emergency response mechanism that allows states to send personnel, equipment and commodities to assist with response and recovery efforts in other states.

“I could not be prouder of the work the North Dakota teams have accomplished during this mission. I would like to say thank you to all the volunteers for their hard work, dedication and sacrifices made while being deployed,” said Bismarck Rural Fire Chief Dustin Theurer. “We are happy to welcome these crews home and are glad everyone is home safe and sound.”







*Maj. Gen. Al Dohrmann, N.D. Department of Emergency Services director, presents Jill Monroe with a commander's coin upon her retirement from State Radio after more than 30 years of service.*

### **Division of State Radio**

The Division of State Radio provides and maintains statewide public safety communications capability. It delivers voice and mobile data communications through a system of 45 towers throughout North Dakota. Through its statewide communication network, the Division of State Radio serves as a strong partner to the Division of Homeland Security in resource coordination efforts to save lives and protect property during natural or manmade disasters.

The division is the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the North Dakota State public safety agencies, including the North Dakota Highway Patrol, Game and Fish, Bureau of Criminal investigation and Department of Corrections. In addition, State Radio is a resource for federal agencies, such as the U.S. Marshals Service, Federal Probation Service and Federal Bureau of Investigation.

State Radio serves as the 9-1-1 answering point for 25 North Dakota counties and executes all communications and dispatch requirements for law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services. State Radio maintains a staff of 32 communication specialists and seven support staff. The current staffing level in the communication center is seven

per shift with a minimum of five communication specialists on duty 24/7. State Radio provides primary backup services for 16 of the 21 other local and regional answering points. If one or more PSAPs experience a failure, all 9-1-1 emergency calls can be rerouted to State Radio.

State Radio is the state's designated Federal Criminal Justice Information Services System Agency for the FBI National Crime Information Center. These systems link all law enforcement agencies nationwide and international partners to an information-sharing network about criminal activity (missing persons, wanted by law enforcement persons, stolen vehicles, etc.).

State Radio also manages the North Dakota Law Enforcement Telecommunications System [www.ndguard.nd.gov](http://www.ndguard.nd.gov) 57 (NDLETS), and National Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (NLETS). Each system links together and supports every state, local and federal law enforcement agency. It also supports justice and public safety agencies for the purposes of sharing and exchanging critical information. Each of these systems — NCIC, NLETS and NDLETS — provide data to law enforcement that is crucial to their every duties. North



Dakota State Radio also is responsible for training and auditing all law enforcement agencies that have access to any of the three systems.

Since March 9, 2010, State Radio and the North Dakota Highway Patrol began operations with a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system that has improved efficiencies and recordkeeping within the dispatch system. Local agencies have connected to the CAD to share the infrastructure. In 2016, the CAD software was updated to a new version providing additional functionality to the system for multi disciplines.

State Radio, in conjunction with the North Dakota Department of Transportation and other state and local agencies, continues to design and build a statewide baseline map that will provide a common mapping format for the PSAPs, law enforcement, emergency responders and local jurisdictions. This map will greatly enhance the ability of jurisdictions to work together and the initial statewide data structure will be complete.

State Radio has partnered with North Dakota Criminal Justice Information System (ND CJIS) to update the Law Enforcement Records Management System (RMS). With funding provided by the legislature, the RMS is offered at no charge to local and state agencies authorized to use the system. This system continues to grow in popularity and use.

State Radio continues to look to the future to prepare and educate public safety officials of the upcoming changes with Next Generation 911, standards for public safety and other forthcoming federal standards.

Since 2009, public safety communications has undergone several important procedural changes to enhance emergency response through development of the Statewide Communication Interoperability Frequency Management Plan, Signal Operating Instructions and Public Safety Communication General Usage Guide. Final drafts of the frequency plan and the Signal Operating Instructions were facilitated during eight regional meetings, approved by the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee, and published on May 4, 2010. Since publication, these documents have been revised to meet evolving procedures. In 2011, the plans were tested in several exercises designed to meet Interoperable Communication "Goal 2," a federal initiative to test the ability to establish interoperable public safety communications within one hour of an emergency. The recent versions of the plans were updated in 2012.

The Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee was established through Executive Order 2007-17 by Gov. John Hoeven, reaffirmed by Gov. Jack Dalrymple, and placed into law. Its purpose is to coordinate and manage a study to examine a future land mobile radio vision,

Statewide Integrated Radio Network (SIRN). The SIRN vision and governance was clarified during the 65th Legislative Session in N.D.C.C. 37-17.3 and 57-40.6.

The Frequency Plan provides a common set of federal public safety channels available nationally and a common radio standard APCO Program 25 (P-25). In April 2012, the department produced the ND PSC Guide to assist users with radio operations. As training and exercises have become more active, the benefits of the plans have widened the use of the plan.

North Dakota met the Federal Communication Commission mandate that by Jan. 1, 2013, radios operating in the public safety frequencies must be narrow banded. This reduced the operational power megahertz of the radios from 25 MHz to 12.5 MHz. In the near future, the FCC plans to reduce the operational power to 6.25 MHz, which requires digital transmission. State Radio switched two of its primary channels to digital in anticipation of the 6.25 MHz digital requirement and left the primary emergency channel in analog. Transition from analog to digital requires a new operational method. Consequently, the department developed a radio usage guide to assist users.

Since 2009, the department has allocated \$5,096,865 for radio equipment and \$1,254,701 for radio programming. Thirty-six training exercises took place statewide to test communication operations; four were conducted by the department and 32 by local entities.

The following challenges presented by narrow banding have prolonged a smooth transition:

- Reduced range caused by reduced operational power (MHz).
- Digital radio operational changes creating a learning curve.
- Improper equipment programming.

In 2017, during the Dakota Access Pipeline protest, several communication issues were identified. Of concern was the lack of training/use in Land Mobile Radio functionality and use, reduced communication in rural areas (coverage gaps), radio routine maintenance to maximize the radio's capabilities.

By using a secure broadband connection (commercial cellular service), some responders relay data to and from responders to dispatch through a Computer Aided Dispatch systems easing radio traffic and digital radio issues.

A federally-funded initiative, FirstNET, will in the future, provide a national broadband system for public safety. It will provide an information relay between response units and support services. The future model will include a handheld device intended to eventually replace the current public safety radio system. In preparation for FirstNET, the entire public safety communication system in North Dakota will be examined.

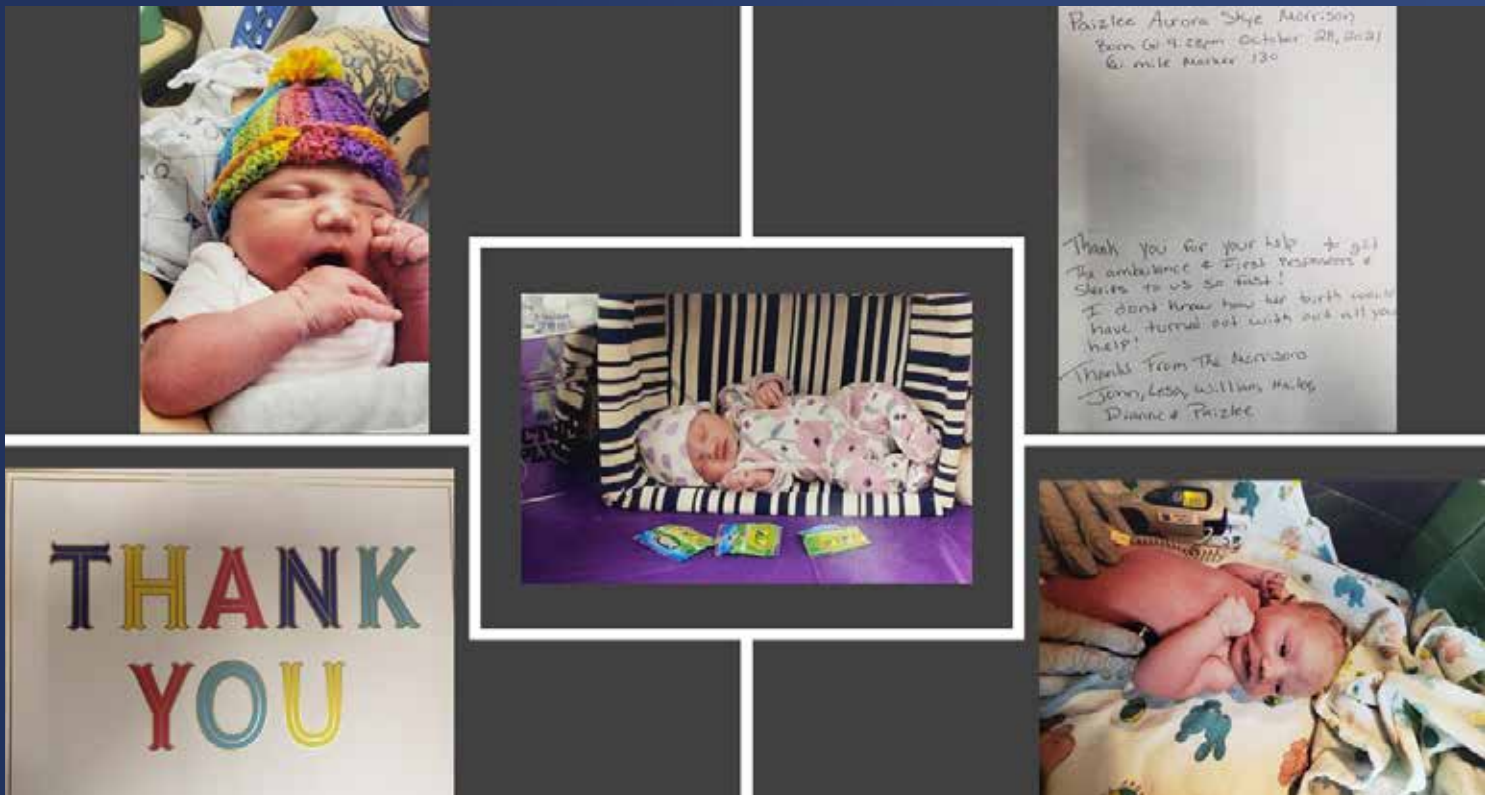
# STATE RADIO RECEIVES 'THANK YOU' FROM NEWBORN'S FAMILY

State Radio Dispatcher Breana Hoynes in 2021 was thanked for her work taking a call on Oct. 28. At about 9:06 p.m., John Morrison was driving his wife, Lesa, to the hospital, as she was in active labor. They were driving from their home in Harvey, North Dakota, to reach the hospital in Minot (about a 73-mile trip). The Morrison baby potentially could be born at any moment. John called 911 to let dispatchers know his location and that he needed an ambulance to intercept them as soon as possible on their route. Breana was on the phone with John for about 20 minutes as they drove, checking on Lesa and the baby's status and reverifying their location, all while keeping John focused and calm. State Radio dispatchers were successful in getting an ambulance to the Morrisons as they traveled on Highway 52, where at mile marker 130, they met up with ambulance personnel. The Morrisons were received safely and the baby,

Paizlee Aurora Skye Morrison, was born just minutes later at 9:28 p.m., at mile marker 130.

"Emergency dispatchers are often referred to as the FIRST first responders. They are there to answer the call when someone might be having their worst day. They are part of a community that saves lives, and sometimes, even help welcome newborns into the world," said State Radio Director Dan Donlin. "Welcome to the world, Paizlee, and congratulations to the Morrison family! And thank you, Breana, for your calm demeanor and skill in making sure everyone was safe and secure!"

Breana and Shanna Johnson, who assisted with dispatching responders, got to meet baby Paisley when her parents and siblings made a special visit to the State Radio Comms Center in December 2021.





## STATE RADIO BY THE NUMBERS



The Division of State Radio coordinates 9-1-1 services as well as emergency medical, fire and law enforcement response for 25 counties in North Dakota. It is the primary dispatch center for the N.D. Highway Patrol and also responds to calls for emergency assistance across the state.



**30**  
Full-Time  
Dispatchers



**4** Dispatcher Crews  
Working  
**12**-Hour Shifts



Services **25**  
Counties  
Across the  
State



In 2021, State Radio  
Fielded Calls for  
**232,210** events,  
including emergency,  
non-emergency, and  
9-1-1 hang-up calls

## STATE RADIO FIELDS HUNDREDS OF CALLS DURING ACTIVE WILDFIRE SEASON

As of May 2021, the NDDES and the North Dakota Forest Service had recorded 1,204 fires burning 94,478 acres in 2021. Those numbers were a considerable increase from 2020 when the state recorded 518 fires burning 9,205 acres.

When wildfires occur, NDDES's State Radio dispatchers are an important part of a response. The crews work together to page the appropriate fire department in each jurisdiction and notify the respective sheriffs' offices. When needed, the dispatchers page ambulance services and neighboring fire departments for mutual aid.

"Depending on the weather, how dry it is and how strong the wind is, we can have multiple fires going on in the same areas. Sometimes, this results in coordinating for additional fire departments to help with additional fires in a fire district," said Brandy Dahlin, State Radio shift

supervisor. "Fire season can be just as busy, if not busier than when we have severe winter storm weather, so we always need to be staffed and ready. These events are in addition to the 'routine' calls we take, as the rest of the world doesn't stop when big events happen."

When State Radio dispatchers receive calls, they log information from the event into CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch), page the responders, keep log times for units responding, and provide any updates they receive to agencies on the ground. Additionally, they will page additional resources, if requested; and log each fire into WebEOC, which is an incident management tool used by the state.

During the period of April 1, 2021 to May 29, 2021, State Radio played a part in responding to and recording information for 210 fires.

N.D. Department of Emergency Services  
Fraine Barracks P.O. Box 5511  
Bismarck, ND 58506

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