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Montana - The Last Best Place



Delila Bruno
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Division

Administrator Bruno is exactly what you would think someone from Montana would be – down to earth with a great sense of humor; hard worker with a passion to help; and of course, will settle an argument with rock, paper, scissors, lizard, Spock. Cue The Big Bang Theory meme!

What are some of the best benefits you gain from NEMA? Networking. Being a part of NEMA is a great way to see how other states do business. We all face challenges and are looking for the best ways to prepare for and respond to disasters in our communities. NEMA gives states a chance to advocate for their needs, but equally important, it allows for an opportunity to listen to each other and find the common threads that we can pull on in order to improve our programs and ultimately make our states safer. I love learning how other states “crack the nut” on difficult issues.

What inspired you to emergency management as a career choice? To be honest, this career found me. Growing up, there wasn’t an emergency management table during career-day as far as I can remember. There has been lot of “growing” in this profession over the last 20 years. We are seeing college educated professionals working alongside lifelong public servants certified through on-the-job-training. At the county level, the emergency managers wear three or four hats. It’s a dynamic time to work in this profession. Personally, I love helping people, and I love working hard. The more I focused on those two things, doors opened and here I am today. I can’t imagine doing anything else.

With your background in managing the Public Health Preparedness Program for Montana, and being recognized with the Governor’s Award for Excellence in Performance in this role; what excites you most on the future of public health and emergency management collaboration? The public health community is so

dedicated. I remember a story about a county public health nurse who was asked to develop a public health emergency plan. She got into her profession because she liked to rock babies, and now she is sitting around a planning table with law enforcement, EMS, and firefighters – the only one without a gun or a badge. But she did it. She built a public health emergency plan that her community could count on. I think there is so much we can learn from our public health partners, especially when you see how much detail goes into medical distribution plans. There are a lot of lessons we can learn from their exercise and real events and should lean into their expertise as much as possible.

With Montana taking over as the EMAC NCS this coming March, what caused your team to volunteer to serve in that role? Emergency Managers are problem solvers. And that's what EMAC is all about. The team is excited to help in a truly meaningful way. It will be a heavy lift for a small emergency management agency, but I am confident that the team is up to the challenge. Jake Ganieany volunteered to serve as the NCS Chair, and I am certain there isn't another person in the nation more committed to seeing EMAC succeed.

When someone finds out you are from Montana (Libby), what question do they always ask you? When I get out of state, no one really knows about Libby. It is a great community and was an unbelievable place to grow up. Montana truly is The Last Best Place. Year-round outdoor recreation is at your fingertips. I am proud to tell people I am from Libby and that Montana is my home.

What is the best thing you've got going on in your life at the moment? My family! I have an amazingly supportive husband. We are watching our two girls grow into independent young ladies with strong values and kind hearts. It's the best!

What's something NEMA members do not know about you? I have binge watched The Office and The Big Bang Theory. I have been known to settle arguments through a game of rock, paper, scissor, lizard, Spock.

The Rules: Scissors cuts paper, paper covers rock, rock crushes lizard, lizard poisons Spock, Spock smashes scissors, scissors decapitates lizard, lizard eats paper, paper disproves Spock, Spock vaporizes rock, and as it always has, rock crushes scissors.

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