

February 8, 2022

## Service-Oriented Problem-Solvers

In celebration of **EMAC's quadranscentennial anniversary**, there is about to embark a closing of a reign. **Montana Disaster & Emergency Services (DES)** has been the EMAC National Coordinating State (NCS) since 2020.

Emergency Management Assistance Compact



In March they will respectfully pass the baton to Virginia. As the NCS, Montana provided support through EMAC with over 7,000 personnel deployed nationally to assist with disasters that reached the entire spectrum: COVID; wildland fires; hurricanes; tornadoes; winter storms; and severe weather. **Delila Bruno, Director**, MT DES and **Jake Ganieany, Bureau Chief** for MT DES as well as the NCS Lead and Chair of the EMAC Executive Task Force took a moment for a few words on their experience. The EMAC/NEMA team are grateful for their commitment.



**Delila: What made you decide to commit your state as the NCS?** I wish I could take credit, but it really was the passion that Jake and the Montana staff have for EMAC. I was a little hesitant because we are a small operation in a rural state. I didn't know if we would have the bandwidth to support such an important function for the entire nation. But just because we are rural doesn't mean we have any less passion for emergency management or for helping others. It's people like Jake who reinforced to me just how important it is for states like Montana to get involved in serving in national roles like this.

**Delila: In what ways has the experience of being the NCS improved your team?** I would say this experience has made us a better team not only internally, but also with other states. High functioning teams lean on each other for support and know when to ask for help. They follow thru with their commitments and are reliable. Watching these characteristics play out on a nation-wide level is inspiring. It reinforces the fact that the emergency management profession is full of servant leaders.

**Jake: What were your goals as the NCS when you wanted to take on the responsibility?** The goals upon taking over as the NCS were divided into three categories, local, state, and national. I really wanted to encourage the EMAC education of resource providers about the streamlined and efficient process of deploying resources through EMAC. Several Mission Ready Package workshops were conducted in the last year which has really increased the response time. At the state and territory level I wanted to really emphasize the



importance of trainings and exercises. There are very skilled and experienced EMAC Coordinators across the county, and this would not have been possible without their efforts. At the national level I wanted to focus on EMAC for All Hazards, as the west has experienced record-breaking wildland fires in the last five years. This has resulted in thousands of personal deploying through EMAC to assist these states to include our state in August of 2021!

**Jake: What's been your most rewarding experience in the last two years as the Lead? Why?** The most rewarding experience is continuing to learn best practices from all the states and territories that have experienced significant disasters over the last couple years. I also have to say working with the EMAC Staff at NEMA has been truly rewarding as they are some of the most dedicated individuals, I have ever had the pleasure of serving with. Because of their efforts, and the continued modernization of the EMAC Operations System (EOS) it has made all our jobs a lot more efficient.

**Jake: You have been a true advocate of the quality of EMAC, what aspect of the program wins the MVP?** The quality of EMAC that wins MVP is the continued teamwork across the country to make it successful, which ultimately gets the resources to the people that need them the most. There always has been, and always will be a network of dedicated individuals that continue to make EMAC successful.

**Jake: If a state is interested in being more involved with EMAC, what's their first step?** Their first step is to go to <https://www.emacweb.org>! This website will give them everything they need to know to become more involved in EMAC.

**Delila and Jake: What advice do you give to Virginia and any other states that have an interest in the NCS role?**

**Delila-** We all know emergency managers are service-oriented problem-solvers. Jason will be an intricate piece of an incredible network of state coordinators and NEMA staff that are the heartbeat of nationwide mutual aid. A network like that will move mountains to help one another. My advice is to trust the collective team. It takes all of us - large, small, rural, urban, coastal, inland. The EMAC community won't disappoint. And secondly, never underestimate the power of a phone call. Broadcast notifications are great, but the personal touch of a state-to-state phone call never hurts!

**Jake-** The best advice to Jason is to train and exercise as often as you can and continue to build the relationships in states and territories that you have established over your time at the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**You just call out my name  
And you know, wherever I am  
I'll come runnin'  
To see you again  
Winter, spring, summer or fall  
All you have to do is call  
And I'll be there  
You've got a friend**

- Carole King



[nemaweb.org](https://nemaweb.org)

