President Russ Strickland (MD) convened the Mid-Year Forum and asked Secretary Bryan Fisher (AK) to call the roll. A quorum was declared. Strickland announced a record attendance at the forum with 690 registrations.
Hon. Alejandro N. Mayorkas, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Sec. Mayorkas discussed a range of issues including nation-state threats, combating disinformation, cyber security, climate change, and homeland security grant reform. He announced that the 3 percent minimum spend on homeland security grants has been lifted with the exception of election security. As for the 35 percent Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention (LETP) set-aside, he recommended that if states remain concerned that they give examples of what other areas are not being funded because of LETP.

Hon. Deanne Criswell, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency
Administrator Criswell’s remarks focused on the evolving risks and threats and the need for greater resilience. She announced a FEMA partnership with Argonne National Lab to conduct an emergency management capacity study that will result in a report and tool to assist state and local emergency management in determining their resource requirements. FEMA has hired a Small State Rural Advocate that will help rural jurisdictions navigate FEMA and other federal agency disaster assistance programs. FEMA also plans to increase their regional technical assistance to states for capacity building. Pres. Strickland thanked Criswell for her leadership and proactive approach to improving FEMA programs and assistance to disaster survivors.

David Turk, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy
NEMA Pres. Russ Strickland led a fireside chat with DS Turk. They touched on issues related to the need to increase resilience for energy infrastructure and protect against cybersecurity attacks. Physical security and risk management are key.

The Intersection between Mitigation and Resilience: Erin Sutton, Senior Principal, McChrystal Group; Victoria Salinas, Associate Administrator for Resilience, Federal Emergency Management Agency; Casey Tingle, former director, Louisiana Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness; Will Polk, Lynn Budd, Annie Vest
The panel highlighted key points on the intersection between mitigation, resilience, sustainability, and recovery which form a comprehensive approach to addressing the impacts of disasters. An important point was made that you need to understand a community’s past in order to understand how to proceed in the future. Resilience must be made tangible to communities because capacity at the local level is a challenge.

Disaster Lessons Learned from the Maui Wildfire: James Barros, Administrator, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency; James Joseph, Chief of Staff, Tidal Basin Group
Administrator Barros shared lessons and challenges from the response and recovery to the Maui wildfires including combating misinformation that was challenged through social media by foreign actors; the need to improve sheltering operations, challenges in moving survivors from non-congregate shelters into rental properties while their homes are being rebuilt/repairs, and the lack of data sharing between agencies. Moving forward, Hawaii knows that an all-hazards approach must extend beyond wildfires and include such threats as tsunamis and hurricanes, and homeland defense based on Hawaii’s location.

NEMA Business Session:
Legislative Committee Position Paper on Increased Funding for the Emergency Management Grant Program presented by Chair Shawn Talmadge (VA).
Moved: MI DISPOSITION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY
Second: AZ

Secretary’s Report – Sec. Fisher presented the 2023 Annual Forum General Session Minutes for approval.
Moved: WY DISPOSITION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY
Second: NV

Treasurer’s Report – Robert Ezelle reported on the FY24 Year-to-Date Financial Report. Forty-nine states, DC and 4 territories have paid dues. NEMA has exceeded goals for corporate and individual dues, but slightly behind our targets for organizations and students. Last year, NEMA invested a portion of its fund balance with Baird Trust. The current Baird Investment Revenue is $121,544. Baird investment fees are currently $9,683. The market value of investments is currently $1,473,164. The cash investment is $1,250,000. To date, NEMA has received $2.665 million in federal funding. NEMA would like to thank its federal funders including FEMA, CDC, and DOE. FY25 Membership Dues: Ezelle thanked the membership for supporting the dues increase that took effect on July 1st of this year. It set NEMA on a much more stable financial path for the future. As part of the dues increase approval process, NEMA also approved a policy that allows it to automatically increase membership dues on an annual basis based on the consumer price index. The CPI for 2023 was 3%. In examining the budget and taking into account the dues increase that went into effect this year, plus the increase in forum registration fees, the NEMA Finance Subcommittee felt it best not to increase dues again in FY25. NEMA is in a strong enough financial position to go another year without a dues increase so there will not be one in FY25.

President Strickland closed out the 2024 Mid-Year Forum with a final thank you to all the attendees and sponsors and an invitation to join us for the Annual Forum on October 1-4, 2024 in Baltimore, MD.

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the forum.

Moved: TN DISPOSITION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY
Second: VA