



**NEMA 2026 Annual Forum
Statehouse Convention Center
Little Rock, Arkansas
October 19-22, 2026**

Draft Agenda (8.27.26)

Monday, October 19

Pre-Meetings are closed and not included in the registration fee:

8:30 am - 4 pm	EMAC Executive Task Force (closed)	Marriott Ballroom C
8:30 – 10:30 am	Deputy Directors Meeting (closed)	Caraway
1 – 2:30 pm	NEMA IA/PA Subcommittee (closed)	Fulton
3 – 4:30 pm	State Hazard Mitigation Officer Subcommittee (closed)	Caraway

8 am – 4 pm	Registration	Toltec
10-11:30 am	Legal Counsel Committee	Fulton
11:30 am - 1:30 pm	Buffet Luncheon	Governor’s Hall 4
12 – 8:30 pm	Exhibitor Set-up	Wally Allen Foyer
1-2:30 pm	NEMA Board of Directors Meeting	Marriott Hotel Ballroom A
3 – 4:30 pm	State Director Executive Session (closed)	Marriott Arkansas Ballroom

Tuesday, October 20

7:15-8:30 am	Continental Breakfast	Wally Allen Foyer
7:30 am – 3:30 pm	Registration & Exhibits	Toltec
8:30 -11:45 am	General Session • Welcome and Call to Order • Pledge of Allegiance • Roll Call of the States	Wally Allen Ballroom
8:45 am – 9 am	Welcome - Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders (invited)	
9:05 – 9:40 am	Hon. Cameron Hamilton, Administrator Federal Emergency Management Agency	
9:45 – 10:15 am	Ken Graham, Director, National Weather Service	
10:15– 10:30 am	Break	
10:30 – 10:55 am	Beyond the Final Whistle: Lessons from the NEMA FIFA 2026 World Cup Task Force Dawn Brantley, Task Force Chair and Director, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency	
11 am – 12 pm	This Land is Whose Land? National Security and Foreign Land Ownership	

This panel will examine the homeland security and emergency management implications of foreign governments acquiring large parcels of land across the United States. Panelists will explore potential risks to national security, critical infrastructure protection, supply chain resilience, and impact to state and local preparedness, especially when foreign-owned property is located near military installations, energy facilities, transportation corridors, communications infrastructure, or other sensitive assets. The discussion will also consider the challenges these acquisitions present for state and local governments, including information sharing, threat assessment, land-use planning, and coordination with federal partners to identify and mitigate emerging security risks.

Moderator: Center for Naval Analysis

Panelists:

- Wes Ward, Secretary, Arkansas Department of Agriculture
- Lynn Budd, Director, Wyoming Department of Homeland Security

11:30 am – 1:30 pm	Buffet Luncheon	Governor's Hall 4
1:30 – 2:45 pm	EMAC Committee	Wally Allen Ballroom
2:45 - 3 pm	Break	Wally Allen Foyer
3 – 4:15 pm	Homeland Security Committee	Wally Allen Ballroom

Wednesday, October 21

7:30 - 8:30 am	Continental Breakfast	Wally Allen Foyer
7:30 am – 3:30 pm	Registration & Exhibits	Toltec
8:30 – 9:45 am	Preparedness Committee	Wally Allen Ballroom

8:30 – 9:30 am Workshop: AI for Disasters and Emergencies

As states take on more emergency management responsibilities and the capabilities of artificial intelligence (AI) continue to grow, it has become critical to build readiness to adopt and implement AI across the emergency management (EM) community. This workshop—funded through the Markle Foundation's AI for Disasters + Emergencies Initiative (AIDE) and delivered by RAND—will provide an overview of the AI-enabled product landscape and features used in EM. The workshop aims to help learners recognize what these tools do, how they work at a high level, and where they fit into EM workflows.

Presenters: Glen Woodbury, RAND; and Leah Dion, RAND

10 – 11 am	Workshop: AI for Disasters and Emergencies (Repeat)	
10 – 11:15 am	Response and Recovery Committee	Wally Allen Ballroom
11:20 – 11:45 am	Speaker	Wally Allen Ballroom
11:45 am – 1:15 pm	NEMA Awards Luncheon	Governor's Hall 4

1:30 – 2:15 pm	Cooperative Continuity: Strategies for Faster Restoration and Stronger Rural Power Systems	Wally Allen Ballroom
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As federal disaster support may decline or become less predictable in the future, rural electric cooperatives must strengthen their resilience planning to ensure faster recovery, reduced outage impacts, and more resilient power delivery. This session explores practical, cooperative-driven strategies to prepare before disasters, harden critical assets, and accelerate restoration when resources are constrained. We'll also discuss the role of emergency management as a critical energy sector partner.

Moderator: Cris McCombs, Regional Client Services Director, Hagerty Consulting, Inc.

Panelists:

- Kelli De Mello, Director of Regulatory Affairs, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
- State Rural Electric Cooperative
- Eric Gibson, Director, Kentucky Emergency Management

2:15 – 2:45 pm	Networking Break	Wally Allen Foyer
2:45 – 4 pm	Resilience Committee	Wally Allen Ballroom
4:30-5 pm	State Director Action Meeting (closed)	Yell
6 pm	Past Presidents Committee (closed)	Capital Hotel
7:30 pm	Exhibitor tear-down	Wally Allen Foyer
<u>Thursday, October 22</u>		
7:30 – 8:30 am	Continental Breakfast	Wally Allen Foyer
7:30 – 10 am	Registration	Toltec
8:30 – 9 am	Reimagining Emergency Management: Pennsylvania’s Bold Path Forward	Wally Allen Ballroom
<i>Pennsylvania’s Executive Order to modernize emergency management provides a forward-looking approach to strengthening statewide coordination, clarifying responsibilities, and ensuring the Commonwealth is prepared to meet today’s evolving and increasingly complex threats. Learn more about this state model practice.</i>		
Presenter: Randy Padfield, Director, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency		
9:15 – 10:30 am	Private Sector Committee	Wally Allen Ballroom
10:45 am – 12 pm	Legislative Committee	Wally Allen Ballroom
11:30 am – 12:45 pm	Buffet Lunch	Governor’s Hall 4
1 – 1:30 pm	Closing Business Session • Reports by Officers • Voting on NEMA Committee Position Papers • Election of Officers • Remarks by Incoming President Marc Pappas (RI)	Wally Allen Ballroom
2 – 4 pm	State Director Executive Session (closed)	Marriott Hotel Riverview Room