

#WinterReady Extreme Cold Summit

Participant Bios

Speakers

Erik A. Hooks

Deputy Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency

In 2021, Erik A. Hooks was nominated by President Biden and confirmed by the US Senate to serve as the Deputy Administrator of FEMA.

The Deputy Administrator assists the Administrator in providing executive leadership of FEMA and ensures all programs and activities are effectively coordinated in preparing for, protecting against, responding to, recovering from and mitigating against the risk of a natural disaster, act of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.

Deputy Administrator Hooks effectively serves as the agency's Chief Operating Officer, providing leadership to approximately 20,000 professionals and executing on an approximate \$30 billion budget.

Deputy Administrator Hooks also serves as the Key Intelligence Official for FEMA, responsible for Homeland Security Information and National Intelligence.

Deputy Administrator Hooks is a voting member of the Homeland Security Intelligence Council (HSIC): The DHS functional advisory body that assists the Chief Intelligence Officer in evaluating and determining the best course of action for the Intelligence Council.

Deputy Administrator Hooks is also a voting member of the Counter Threat Advisory Board (CTAB): The DHS functional advisory body with the responsibility to coordinate efforts related to departmental intelligence activities, policies, and information related to the mission and functions of the department that counters all threats and hazards.

Prior to his service as the Deputy Administrator of FEMA, Hooks was appointed by the Governor of North Carolina as the Secretary of Public Safety and the State's Homeland Security Advisor in January 2017. Secretary Hooks was the sole representative on the governor's cabinet for the state's law enforcement, emergency management, homeland security, and corrections responsibilities. Secretary Hooks retired from state service on Aug. 1, 2021.

Secretary Hooks provided cabinet level leadership to the NC Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Section, The NC National Guard, The NC State Highway Patrol, The NC Alcohol Law Enforcement Division,



FEMA

the NC State Capitol Police, The Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice, the NC Office of Recovery and Resilience, the Governor's Crime Commission, and support divisions within the Department of Public Safety.

Secretary Hooks led the largest state government agency in North Carolina, executing on over an approximate 2.1-billion-dollar budget; leading approximately 27,000 sworn and civilian public safety professionals as well as approximately 12,000 National Guard soldiers and Airmen.

A dedicated public servant, having more than 30 years of law enforcement and public safety experience, including more than 27 years with the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, where he rose to the rank of Assistant Director in 2005, Hooks served in various leadership capacities prior to his appointment as Secretary.

Deputy Administrator Hooks successfully completed the FBI National Executive Institute and the Commandant's National Security Program at the U.S. Army War College.

Deputy Administrator Hooks also served on the Executive Committee of the National Governors Homeland Security Advisors Council and is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the FBI National Executive Institute Associates.

Stephanie Dobitsch

Assistant Administrator for National Preparedness, Federal Emergency Management Agency

Stephanie Dobitsch serves as FEMA's Assistant Administrator for the National Preparedness Directorate. In this capacity, she leads FEMA's effort to provide doctrine, training, education, exercise, and community preparedness support to enhance the capabilities of our partners and communities across the United States and internationally.

Prior to her appointment, Ms. Dobitsch served as the Deputy Under Secretary for the Office of Intelligence and Analysis in the Department of Homeland Security, overseeing the development and delivery of high-quality intelligence tailored to meet the needs of homeland security stakeholders. She has decades of experience working national security issues, serving in a variety of intelligence roles in support of multiple departments and agencies.

Ms. Dobitsch received her Bachelor of Science in International Studies from the University of Scranton. She currently attends Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business as part of the Executive Master of Business Administration program.

Sunny Wescott

Chief Meteorologist, DHS, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

Sunny Wescott is a Federal Emergency Response Official Chief Meteorologist with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) specializing in national extreme weather hazards and climatological studies for impacts to public and private sector key resources.

Wescott has degrees in Homeland Security Management, Public Safety Administration, and Atmospheric Sciences and is a member of the American Meteorological Society and the International Association of Emergency Managers. During her time in the US Air Force as a Lead Meteorologist, Wescott trained on continental and oceanic weather as

the Top Forecaster for her support region and is considered a subject matter expert for multiple climatological events such as drought, wildfires, tropical cyclones, and more. Since 2018, Wescott has provided support to various working groups across the federal government including the Resilient Power Working Group, CISA's Extreme Weather Working Group, the National Disaster Resiliency Council, the Climate Security Council, the National Drought Resiliency Partnership and more.

While previous roles within CISA focused on working with emergency response operations for telecommunications, critical infrastructure, and executive briefing support which integrated her background of operational forecasting from her military experience, Wescott's current role with CISA's Infrastructure Security Division, Assistant Chief of Staff office, enables Extreme Weather Outreach by providing focused reports for regions and critical infrastructure operators before, during, and after disasters.

State, Local, Tribal and Territorial Panel

Sgt. Jenna Clawson Huibgretse

Cultural Liaison Officer, North Dakota Highway Patrol

Sergeant Jenna Clawson Huibgretse is a Public Information Officer with the North Dakota Highway Patrol. Sgt. Clawson Huibgretse has served as a traffic trooper, cultural liaison officer, dignitary protection team member, planning officer, and now as the agency's safety and education and public information sergeant. She has a master's degree from North Dakota State University and multiple certifications in the law enforcement sector. Sgt. Clawson Huibgretse instructs cultural awareness training, tribal jurisdiction, emergency alerts, social media, and public information to law enforcement officers across North Dakota. She also focuses on missing persons cases, mutual aid agreements, diversity recruitment, and more

Kaylynn Gresham

Director of Emergency Management, Oneida Nation

Kaylynn Gresham has worked for the Oneida Tribe Nation in the Emergency Management capacity for more than 17 years, also spending time as a cultural educator. Kaylynn is a member of the Wisconsin Emergency Management Association, and a member of the East Central Regional Incident Management Team for disaster response. Kaylynn has several National Certifications in Emergency Management, a Wisconsin Certified Emergency Management Certification, a Bachelor's Degree in Social Change and Development and a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice Administration. Kaylynn participates regularly in Veterans activities in her community, she served four years active duty in the United States Army.

Vanessa Palange

Community Outreach Coordinator, New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Vanessa Palange is the Community Outreach Coordinator for New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management. In this role, she is responsible for working with communities and organizations across New Hampshire

to promote emergency preparedness. Before joining Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Ms. Palange spent 20 years working as a journalist in multiple newsrooms across the state of New Hampshire.

Ervin “Erv” Portis

Assistant Director, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

Erv Portis runs the day-to-day operations of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). In this capacity, and with support of NEMA Director Craig Strong, Mr. Portis manages the state’s response to emergencies and disasters. He directs the 50+ members of the agency in preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation to all the hazards that affect the state. Mr. Portis was appointed by the Governor to serve on the Governor’s Homeland Security Policy Group and the Climate Assessment Response Committee. He also serves as a state director representative with the National Emergency Management Association, and as the Lt. Governor’s representative on the Governor’s Homeland Security Advisors Council.