



# Still Trailblazing at 35

# NIRMA

Serving County Government



October 19-20, 2023

Younes Conference Center  
North, Kearney, NE



Nebraska Intergovernmental  
Risk Management Association

2022  
Date Since 1988

Pay to the Order of Nebraska County Property Taxpayers \$ 25,000,000.00  
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NIRMA Board of Directors

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# Still Trailblazing at 35

At this year's annual conference, members will celebrate 35 years of locating a new and better pathway to their insurance and risk management needs. It is not an exaggeration to call NIRMA members trailblazers. Charter members came together to form this program in 1988 not knowing exactly where it would lead, but believing it had the potential to yield big rewards. And this belief has proven to be true, consistently, time and time again, with more and more members joining with innovative ideas to strengthen and guide the program forward to ever higher achievements along the way.

The annual Self Defense for County Officials Conference, now in its fifteenth year, has become an essential and favorite part of the journey for NIRMA members. It is the premier opportunity each year to learn about, adapt to, and confront the ever-changing landscape that lies ahead for counties and county-related public agencies.

And it's all a privilege of membership in the NIRMA program. So please plan to join us on October 19 & 20, 2023. We'll share some nostalgia on 35 years of trailblazing accomplishments from working together, and continue charting the course into the years to come.

## Why You Should Go

NIRMA's annual conference is a unique, in-person only event that is worth the challenge of carving out time away from the office. Through interactive discussions with peers and experts on the latest topics, members will improve their readiness, strategies, and tactics for the kinds of liability risks that may lie ahead.

There aren't many, if any, conferences like this one that do not require any registration fee, but allow you to obtain truly worthwhile professional development hours, customized exclusively for the county government sector.

High-quality learning opportunities are interspersed with motivational content focused on improving your overall well-being. There is also important business to be conducted at the Annual Association Membership Meeting, where the election for 4 seats on the NIRMA Directors will be held. See the next page for all the details of what's in store.

Forgoing a virtual component secures members' access to in-demand attorney speakers who can provide valuable legal guidance for county operations. It also allows for cultivating an outstanding in-person attendee experience that includes a top-notch venue, great food, entertainment, and complimentary valuable materials and items to take back home at the end of the two days. Just ask anyone who has attended before.

This will be our second year at the Younes Conference Center North in Kearney, a centralized location that minimizes member travel time as much as possible, while providing outstanding hospitality and amenities.

# Sessions at a Glance



## Wednesday, October 18

**3:00 - 5:00 p.m.**     **Registration Desk Open**  
NIRMA Member IT Help Desk  
*(Origami, Interact portal, eRisk Hub)*

## Thursday, October 19

**7:00 - 10:00 a.m.**     **Registration Desk Open**

**8:00 - 8:30 a.m.**     **Presentation of Colors, Pledge of Allegiance, Opening Remarks**

**8:30 - 9:30 a.m.**     **Keynote Address: *Fire Up So You Don't Burnout* with *Jessica Rector***

**9:30 - 9:45 a.m.**     **Refreshment Break**

**9:45 - 10:45 a.m.**     ***Crisis: Are You Ready?* with *Anthony Huey***

**10:45 - 11:00 a.m.**     **Refreshment Break**

**11:00 - 12:00 p.m.**     ***Employment Law Topics on the Front Burner* with *Pam Bourne***

**12:15 - 1:15 p.m.**     **Buffet Lunch, including a special presentation from Kids Choice, an organization supporting children with a parent who was injured at work**

### CONCURRENT SESSIONS

#### 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Mastering Media Relations

Avoiding Potential FMLA Flare-Ups

Stepping up to the Duty to Intervene

Clearing the Path: Navigating County Road Right of Way Obstructions

#### 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

Running Hurdles: Sovereign Citizens and Pro Se Litigants

Lighting the Way for NIRMA Contact Persons

Packing Heat, No Permit: Understanding LB 77

When the Road to Thrills Leads to a Legal Firestorm

#### 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Hot Legal Topics Impacting NIRMA Members

Sleepless in Nebraska

Mental Health Minefields in Law Enforcement

Reignite Your Safety Committee with NIRMA's Updated Manual

**5:30 - 6:00 p.m.**     **Pre-Banquet Cash Bar Social**

**6:00 - 8:30 p.m.**     **Annual Awards Banquet with Entertainment**

## Friday, October 20

**6:45 - 7:45 a.m.**     **Hot Breakfast Buffet / Registration Desk Open (at 7:00 a.m.)**

**8:00 - 9:30 a.m.**     ***Forget Problems: Think Opportunity, and TRAILBLAZE ON!* with *Dr. Jo***

**9:30 - 9:45 a.m.**     **Refreshment Break**

**9:45 - 10:45 a.m.**     ***Lessons from the Cyber Breach Trenches* with *Matt Meade***

**10:45 - 11:00 a.m.**     **Refreshment Break**

**11:00 - 12:00 p.m.**     ***The Fire Within* with *Rob Keith***

**12:00 noon**     **NIRMA Membership Lunch and Annual Association Business Meeting**

## Wednesday October 18

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

### Registration Desk Open

Stop by the registration desk on the far northwest corner of the pre-function area to pick up your name tag and attendee binder containing paper copies of all conference materials.

### NIRMA IT Help Desk

At a separate table near the registration desk, we'll have staff on hand with laptops to assist you with any of your NIRMA-related technology questions. See how to access a copy of NIRMA's model employee handbook, how to submit claims through our Origami platform, or explore cyber resources via the eRisk Hub, among other possibilities.

## Thursday, October 19

7:00 - 10:00 a.m.

### Registration Desk Open

Conference materials may be picked up at the registration desk. Complimentary coffee and light breakfast items will be available.

8:00 - 8:30 a.m.

### Presentation of Colors

Buffalo County Sheriff's Office Color Guard

### Pledge of Allegiance and Opening Remarks

Craig Nelson, NIRMA Executive Director

Larry Cerny, NIRMA Board of Directors Chair

8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

### Keynote Address: Fire Up So You Don't Burnout



Burnout is like a wildfire—spreading quickly and affecting everything in its path. County officials and employees are being called upon to juggle more things and in different ways. And nationwide, burnout and stress are at an all-time high,

reducing performance, health, and morale. With staff shortages and constant changes, burnout isn't slowing down any time soon. It doesn't have to be that way.

In this powerful and energetic kickoff presentation, Jessica Rector, shares how it's not just about getting out of burnout, it's about staying out of it. Jessica, with her

unique point of view, will guide us through the factors of burnout, creating a better work/life balance, and how to tackle the Burnout Beast.

#### Learning Keys:

- Identify the #1 contributing factor of burnout and what you can strategically do to eliminate it.
- Determine how burnout transfers to and hurts other areas of your work and life and how to stop it.
- Demonstrate on-the-spot strategies to cut mental exhaustion and burnout and return to work recharged and hopeful, instead of feeling helpless.

9:30 - 9:45 a.m.

### Refreshment Break

9:45 - 10:45 a.m.

### Crisis: Are You Ready?



Don't let years of hard work get destroyed in 30 seconds. It doesn't matter where you are, a crisis is always waiting to happen. A catastrophic weather event? A law enforcement use of force incident with a tragic ending?

An active shooter event in a public building? An official suspected of embezzlement or other crime? Maybe tomorrow, maybe next year or even later, you can't be sure what it will be or when it will strike. And the old adage, perception is reality, has never been more true than in today's hyper-critical and social media-driven world. Anthony Huey's 25-year career has focused on communicating clearly - as a news reporter and

senior editor, crisis management specialist, media relations consultant, and executive speech coach. He'll offer pragmatic tools, tips, and techniques you can use immediately to prepare for a crisis and preserve your constituents' and taxpayers' trust.

#### Learning Keys:

- Arm your county or agency with a crisis response framework.
- Overcome the biggest mistakes that are often made when communicating about a crisis.
- Understand how to win in the court of public opinion.
- Discover how to buy time and control the narrative when things get tough.

10:45 - 11:00 a.m.

### Refreshment Break

## 11:00 -12:00 p.m. **Employment Law Topics on the Front Burner**



Pam Bourne, an attorney at Woods Aitken LLP and a longtime NIRMA partner, can always be counted on for a frank, enlightening, and practical discussion about the latest labor and employment law developments, and this session will

be no exception. Her 2023 update will include hot topics like the EEOC's new statistics and enforcement plan, fresh federal legislation like the PUMP Act, news on retaliation claims, the uptick of cannabis use in the workplace, and even more. It's a dizzying task to stay informed in this area, so let Pam relieve some of that burden and give you the

essential nuts-and-bolts in her trademark lively, interactive, and easy-to-understand style.

### **Learning Keys:**

- Strengthen your knowledge of new labor and employment laws and how they apply to your workplace.
- Ensure you are fulfilling your legal responsibilities as a manager when it comes to the latest HR-related developments.
- Hear Pam's personal stories and experiences from answering the NIRMA HR Help Line.

## 12:00 - 1:15 p.m. **Buffet Lunch**

## 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

### **Mastering Media Relations**

Today's leaders realize that communication to many different audiences is part of strong leadership. On the heels of his general session address, Anthony Huey will return for this breakout session workshop to convey more specific tools on how to conduct an effective news interview and get the right message across in media platforms in a clear way, while avoiding unnecessary complication of any later claims or litigation that can arise from newsworthy events.

### **Learning Keys:**

- Control negative body language and overcome nervousness when being questioned.
- Become a better spokesperson for your office or team.
- Address any question and gain "think time" or mitigate damage when needed, using Anthony's proven response techniques.

### **Avoiding Potential FMLA Flare Ups**

Labor and employment law attorney Pam Bourne will return for this session, joined by her colleague and fellow attorney Ashley Connell, also of Woods Aitken LLP, to tackle in greater depth one of the most popular question topics of the regional seminars they presented in April for NIRMA—the Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Never fear, this will not be a stale recitation of the law, they will present the subject matter through a jeopardy-style interactive game to effectively teach how to mitigate risks of liability in this area.

### **Learning Keys:**

- Find out where to get the newly updated required workplace poster on FMLA rights and how it has changed.
- Learn the answers to frequently asked questions Pam and Ashley received at their recent state-wide seminars, and that they hear via the HR Help Line.
- Explore the consequences of noncompliance with the FMLA and some of its traps for the unwary.

### **Stepping up to the Duty to Intervene**

This session is intended especially for our county law enforcement personnel. The purpose of the course is to train, encourage, and empower law enforcement personnel to actively intervene when needed to prevent colleagues from committing policy or procedure mistakes or unprofessional, unethical, or criminal conduct. The affirmative duty to intervene is not just a legal mandate and a trending topic of claims and litigation nationwide, it is critical for officer safety and wellness and building trust with local citizens. Officer PJ Lensing of the City of Lincoln Police Department will tackle this difficult and timely topic.

### **Learning Keys:**

- Master the sometimes subtle signs that a fellow officer is losing control or becoming overly agitated by the stress of an incident.
- Discover tactful and respectful ways to approach and redirect fellow law enforcement officers, even superiors, in the heat of the moment to alert them and change the course of the encounter when they may be overstepping legal boundaries.
- Determine how you can mitigate or avoid the risk of potential liability for a duty to intervene claim.

## Clearing the Path: Navigating County Road Right-of-Way Obstructions

In this session, NIRMA Road Safety Specialist KC Pawling will discuss some of the thorny issues that arise in claims involving the county road right-of-way. These include proving what area it encompasses, duties of maintenance, and especially addressing obstructions that may exist within the right-of-way and why this is important. He'll cover issues associated with constructive notice, working with landowners to alleviate risks, and managing potential hazards. This presentation comes complete with pictures of real-world examples from the collective NIRMA member claims experience.

### Learning Keys:

- Gain ideas from discussion with colleagues about how to manage various kinds of right-of-way intrusions.
- Acquire an understanding of what kind of claims and litigation are experienced by NIRMA members involving county road right-of-way, and the kinds of evidence needed to defend them.
- Receive practical advice and model forms and agreements to address right-of-way issues.

## 2:45 -3:45 p.m. **CONCURRENT SESSIONS** (Choose 1 of 4)

### Running Hurdles: Sovereign Citizens and Pro Se Litigants

Two particular groups of people can make already burdensome litigation even more challenging and costly to defend—those who contend they are not subject to our laws and those who are attempting to navigate them on their own, without training. The sovereign citizen movement is ever-growing, and the pro se docket has exploded in recent years. Patrick Guinan, attorney with Governmental Law, LLC, will explain how these litigants are managed in and outside of the court system, and best practices for county officials confronted with them. He'll also share personal experiences about the patience and techniques it can take to conclude these matters in a favorable manner.

### Learning Keys:

- Identify what to do when confronted with papers by a pro se litigant or sovereign citizen and how important it is to take them seriously.
- Learn about some of the laws that protect pro se litigants, and how the law seeks to curb abuses of the court system and frivolous litigation.
- Hear eye-opening outcomes of some pro se and sovereign citizen cases, including the Rick Hill lawsuit against all 93 Nebraska counties & election commissioners.

### Lighting the Way for NIRMA Contact Persons

NIRMA Contact Persons are designated by a member county or agency to serve a multitude of important functions and they are relied upon to serve as the primary liaison between the member and the staff who serve the program. It's important they have a solid understanding of both the "hows" and the "whys" of NIRMA's day-to-day operations. This session will be a chance for contact and other interested persons to interact with a panel comprised of Risk Manager & Underwriter Larry Pelan, Senior Systems Engineer Tod Thieman, Claims Managers John Christensen and Denise Hardison, and Administrative Assistant Shawna Lammers. Loss prevention staff may also be available. Discussion will center on pool services and resources, property schedules, using the Origami claims software, and other aspects of working together toward optimal claims experience in both the property/liability and workers compensation areas.

### Learning Keys:

- See a demonstration of key features of NIRMA's Origami risk management information system, with the ability to ask questions.
- Openly communicate about any member challenges experienced in the role of a contact person and come away with solutions.
- Receive a refresher on some of the ways that NIRMA contact persons can help staff and maximize their county or agency's benefits of NIRMA membership.

## Packing Heat, No Permit: Understanding LB 77

LB 77, which opened the ability of many to carry concealed handguns without a permit, was one of the most hotly contested and controversial bills of the last session of the Nebraska Legislature. But now that the political dust has settled and the new law is in effect, it's time to examine the final version and practical implications for law enforcement operations. Todd Duncan, NIRMA's Law Enforcement and Safety Specialist, will review the new definitions and key provisions, including consideration of legal restrictions that still remain, officer safety, reciprocity, and related issues.

### Learning Keys:

- Ensure you understand what has changed and what has not changed after the effective date of LB 77 on September 2, 2023.
- Consider how to approach various scenarios that law enforcement and citizens may confront under the new law.
- Evaluate the distinction between State legislation and Constitutional law on this topic.

## When the Road to Thrills Leads to a Legal Firestorm

Everyone has done it. A group of teenagers get into a car when the driver decides to do something no one expects. The result—tragedy. There are psychological, monetary, and other drivers that often cause people to go to great lengths to probe every potential factor that might have somehow contributed to the loss of young lives. Too often, road conditions and operations are inevitably caught in those crosshairs. Counties need to understand how finely hairs are parsed in the post-accident litigation process. Attorney Robert Keith from the Omaha law firm Engles, Ketcham, Olson & Keith has seen it firsthand. He'll examine how nuances like signage, road design, speed, timing of maintenance, and communication about potential defects can impact litigation. He'll also shine a light on some of the lawyering tactics he's seen used by the other side to manipulate the facts, making cases like these all the more challenging, costly, and burdensome.

### Learning Keys:

- Study a hypothetical case involving a tragic car crash for lessons that can be applied to your road operations.
- Identify areas of your road operations that could be improved to better position your county to defend potential litigation.
- Develop an improved awareness of how factual evidence may be twisted by attorney tactics.

## 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. CONCURRENT SESSIONS *(Choose 1 of 4)*

### Hot Legal Topics Impacting NIRMA Members

Putting out fires, both those that are urgently spreading and those that are slow-burning, is part of the everyday routine for the attorneys who respond to NIRMA's Legal Link service and defend many member claims that enter into litigation. Jeff Kirkpatrick with Governmental Law, LLC, is well versed in the types of claims that are trending and the factors that influence whether they can be favorably resolved, including social inflation, a decline in civility, sovereign immunity protections for local government entities and employees, and the shifting judicial attitudes toward pretrial summary judgment motions. Jeff will share his insight on these issues, to keep you up to date on the current litigation climate that counties must confront.

### Learning Keys:

- Grasp some of the intangibles that may drive whether a claim can be successfully defended, and at what cost.
- Obtain a fuller understanding of how sovereign immunity, and particularly the discretionary function exemption in the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act, can protect you from liability.
- Study notable case law examples that illustrate how the courts may handle future claims.

### Sleepless in Nebraska

Sleep rules every moment of our lives, yet it is overlooked and underutilized as an aspect of health in American lives. Both adults and children are sleeping far below the recommended hours. A staggering 73.7% of Nebraska high school students report getting less than 8 hours of sleep each night while 31.1% of Nebraska adults are getting less than 7 hours! Hannah Guenther is a Food, Nutrition, and Health Extension Educator for the University of Nebraska. She began her career in Extension in 2018 after leaving her Family and Consumer Science classroom and holds a master's degree in education. Choose this session and allow Hannah to help you get ready to sleep better tonight.

#### Learning Keys:

- Learn research-based facts about why sleep matters, current recommendations, daily habits that interfere with a good night's sleep, and the detrimental effects a lack of sleep can cause.
- Gain a better understanding of the impact of sleep habits on mental health and how to mitigate risk of developing mental health disorders through adequate sleep.
- Pick up new sleep tips and tricks to customize your own routine for better sleep.

### Mental Health Minefields in Law Enforcement

Untreated mental illness of arrested and incarcerated persons can manifest in severe danger to both those individuals and the law enforcement personnel who take them into custody. A misstep in a chaotic moment can lead to tragic results, as well as claims and potential liability for sheriff's offices. Jeff Bliemeister speaks from a strong foundation in law enforcement leadership, having served as Chief Deputy of the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office before his four years as Chief of the Lincoln Police Department. He's been faced with decisions in the field personally, and has helped guide other officers in this challenging area. He'll join our group to talk about some of his lessons learned along the way.

#### Learning Keys:

- Analyze the pros and cons of various formal and informal reactions to arrestees and inmates who behave in ways that seem erratic and unstable, and how to exercise sound discretion in responding to law enforcement calls involving mentally ill individuals.
- Explore the movement toward collaborative agreements between law enforcement agencies and mental health professionals or agencies.
- Unravel the legal requirements for the option of emergency protective custody and some of the legal implications for how this process is handled.

### Reignite your Safety Committee with NIRMA's Updated Manual

A friendly "tap on the shoulder" is sometimes just what is needed to remind us of important tasks. That's part of what Chad Engle, NIRMA's Loss Prevention Manager and Safety Specialist aims to do at this session, where he will provide a refresher on the legal mandates that require counties to maintain Safety Committees, and what those committees need to be doing to effectively reduce claims, manage liability risks, and avoid employee injuries. He's even given NIRMA's Model Safety Committee Manual a comprehensive update and a fresh look to assist members with channeling more energy toward accomplishing everyday safe workplace practices and new initiatives.

#### Learning Keys:

- Familiarize yourself with the legal requirements for County Safety Committees, Nebraska Revised Statute §48-443 and Nebraska Administrative Code Title 230, Chapter 6.
- Review the handbook's guidance relating to the formation, development, and operational responsibilities of a safety committee.
- Participate in a roundtable discussion regarding problems and solutions for member county and agency safety committee stakeholders.

5:30 - 6:00 p.m.

### Pre-Banquet Cash Bar Social

6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

### Annual Awards Banquet with Entertainment



Enjoy delicious food and drink and reflect on the journey of NIRMA members that brought us to our 35 year milestone, and then kick back to relax and laugh with Jeremy Nunes, a comedian and former small town mayor who can truly commiserate with the trials and tribulations faced by those in public service.

# Friday, October 20

7:00 a.m. **Registration Desk Opens**

6:30 - 7:45 a.m. **Hot Breakfast Buffet**

Don't miss the expansive complimentary hot breakfast, this is not your typical hotel fare!

8:00 - 9:30 a.m. **Forget Problems: Think Opportunity, and TRAILBLAZE ON!**



JoAnne Owens-Nausler knows a thing or two about trailblazing—she was instrumental in efforts toward the adoption of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities. Fifty years later, she has lived and seen the impact of these laws that came from people who set out to solve a problem by creating an opportunity. Likewise, she'll help us celebrate how NIRMA's members have charted a path in this pooling association, overcoming obstacles along the way to build sustained success. For Dr. Jo, as she is affectionately known, one of her biggest passions has always been helping others to be a healthier and happier version of themselves. Now a nationally recognized speaker and masterful motivator, Dr. Jo's contagious,

energetic, positive attitude will help us all to see the benefits of coming together at this conference to laugh, learn, share, and reflect on a vision realized, and how healthy, active living can help us to maximize the years to come.

**Learning Keys:**

- Attain ideas for adjusting your pace and locating a detour in the face of adversity to ultimately stay on course.
- Absorb the fundamental premise that prevention is the best insurance.
- Explore the benefits of finding humor in situations after coping with stressful events.
- Reminders from Dr. Jo's world of animals and education about S-E-R-V-I-C-E and responding to difficult human behaviors in stride.

9:30 - 9:45 a.m. **Refreshment Break**

9:45 - 10:45 a.m. **Lessons from the Cyber Breach Trenches**



It takes a voice of experience to cut through the alarm created by a ransomware or other cyber breach incident. Matt Meade is just such a voice, as a breach coach available to assist NIRMA's members via the eRisk Hub. Matt

is an attorney and partner with the law firm of Eckert Seaman Cherin and Mellott, LLC and is the Chair of the firm's Cybersecurity, Data Protection and Privacy Group. Matt regularly conducts and facilitates cyber tabletop exercises designed to test the incident response team's ability to manage and respond to data breaches. In this interactive session, he'll share some of his real-world lessons from the trenches in working with local

government entities and how your county or agency can be better prepared to manage the twists and turns of incident response.

**Learning Keys:**

- Hear how to navigate through security incident investigations.
- Learn about legal notification requirements to individuals and regulators in the event of a cyber beach.
- Discover some of Matt's tips for laying the right groundwork to properly respond to regulatory inquiries and mitigate potential litigation.

10:45 - 11:00 a.m. **Refreshment Break**



**11:00 -12:00 p.m. The Fire Within**



It can be easy, especially in long term public service roles, to fall into a pattern of just getting by, disenchanted, the days going by in a blur, hoping others will fix what's wrong, or just resigning to put up with the way things are. And those

who come in new are often cautioned not to rock the boat of "this is the way it's always been done." It's a trap. But you can get out of it if you focus on *you* as the solution. Attorney Robert Keith from the Omaha law firm Engles, Ketcham, Olson & Keith will return for a dynamic closing session to explain how there are two sides to the workplace culture coin: you learned in NIRMA's April Spotlight Seminars about the value of investing in your leaders so that counties can be an employer of choice, now hear from Rob about investing in yourself as an

interconnected way of building a cohesion at work and in your life generally. No matter your position or job role or what challenges you are dealt, you can make your own rewards at work and find ways to rekindle your work ethic at an individual level. Discover ways to bridge generational divides, adapt, and dream your way to making your work count.

**Learning Keys:**

- Think about your own "why," and how you can use it to find joy in your work.
- Learn about how different generations think and how they can drive each other to be better.
- Become inspired to contribute as an individual to your workplace culture.
- Return home motivated with a positive mindset.

**12:00 noon NIRMA Membership Luncheon, Annual Association Membership Meeting**

The conference concludes with one final wonderful meal followed immediately by the NIRMA annual membership meeting where members' presence is critical to conduct important business of the Association, including the election of NIRMA board members, the distribution of any dividends to eligible members, and the drawing for some special door prizes.

# Where To Go

Ample free parking is available surrounding the Younes Conference Center North and attached Crowne Plaza Hotel, located at 707 Talmadge Street, Kearney, NE 68845. Entrances to the Conference Center are located on the the exterior of the building next to each parking surface, or by walking through the Crowne Plaza hotel, to the right of the front desk past the boutique and restaurant, continuing all the way through the pre-function area to the NIRMA registration desk at the far end.



Be sure to visit the registration desk in the northwest corner of the conference center on your arrival to pick up your name tag, binder with conference materials, and NIRMA's gift to you for attending. The registration desk will be open from 3:00 to 5:00 Wednesday evening and starting at 7:00 a.m. Thursday and Friday mornings.

The General Sessions and meals will be held in the Silver block of conference rooms, while some concurrent sessions will be held in the Gold block of conference rooms. Attendees should look for room assignments and a layout map in the conference binder distributed on site at the registration desk.

# See These Top-Quality Speakers

## Jeff Bliemeister

Safety and Security Manager,  
Bryan Health Systems  
Former Chief of Police,  
City of Lincoln  
*Lincoln, NE*

## Pamela Bourne

Attorney  
Woods Aitken LLP  
*Omaha, NE*

## John Christensen

NIRMA Property/Liability  
Claims Manager  
*Lincoln, NE*

## Todd Duncan

NIRMA Law Enforcement and  
Safety Specialist  
*Lincoln, NE*

## Chad Engle

NIRMA Loss Prevention  
Manager and Safety Specialist  
*Lincoln, NE*

## Hannah Guenther

University of Nebraska  
Extension  
*West Point, NE*

## Patrick Guinan

Attorney  
Governmental Law, LLC  
*Lincoln, NE*

## Denise Hardison

NIRMA Workers' Compensation  
Claims Manager  
*Lincoln, NE*

## Anthony Huey

President, Communicate  
Clearly  
*Savannah, GA*

## Robert Keith

Attorney  
Engles Ketcham  
Olson & Keith, PC  
*Omaha, NE*

## Jeff Kirkpatrick

Attorney  
Governmental Law, LLC  
*Lincoln, NE*

## Shawna Lammers

NIRMA Administrative  
Assistant  
*Lincoln, NE*

## PJ Lensing

Lincoln Police Department  
*Lincoln, NE*

## Matthew Meade

Attorney/Partner  
Eckert Seamans Law Firm  
*Pittsburgh, PA*

## Dr. JoAnne Owens-Nausler

Consultant, Speaker, Author,  
Motivator  
*Denton, NE*

## KC Pawling

NIRMA Road Safety and  
Loss Prevention Specialist  
*Lincoln, NE*

## Larry Pelan

NIRMA Underwriting and  
Risk Manager  
*Lincoln, NE*

## Jessica Rector

CEO, Blaze Your Brain  
International  
*Haslet, TX*

## Tod Thieman

NIRMA Senior Systems  
Engineer  
*Lincoln, NE*

## Registration and Other Details

### Registration

Conference registration is free, but registrations must be submitted in advance through the NIRMA website - [nirma.info](http://nirma.info). Registration is exclusive to NIRMA members and pre-approved partners.

Click on the registration button on the Home page of the website, go to the Events page, or use the QR code. If you are registering multiple individuals, you must submit a separate registration for each.



During the online registration process, you will be prompted to select the sessions and meals you plan to attend, and to identify any dietary restrictions.

You will receive an automated confirmation email verifying the registration has been received. The registration deadline is **Wednesday, October 4**.

### Cancellation Policy

In keeping with NIRMA's long-standing tradition, there is no registration fee for member officials and employees to attend the conference. But please be aware that in accordance with a policy adopted by the NIRMA Board of Directors, a member who registers but fails to attend without providing NIRMA sufficient advance notice of their cancellation will be billed in the amount of \$50. This is due to the costs associated with presenting the conference including printing materials and meal guarantees. In the event you need to cancel your registration, please telephone the NIRMA office at 800.642.6671 no later than **Friday, October 13** to avoid being billed a no-show fee.

### Hotel Reservations

We've pre-arranged a room block at the Crowne Plaza Hotel connected to the Younes Conference Center North for attendees who require overnight accommodations and wish to stay on site. Reservations are on a first come, first served basis, and the discounted group room rate is \$121.95. You are encouraged to make your reservation as soon as possible, as reservations made after September 18 will be subject to availability. To make a reservation, use the QR code to register online, or call the Crowne Plaza at 308.238.7000, and specify that you are attending the NIRMA Conference and wish to use our discounted group room rate.



Alternative hotels within walking distance of the conference center include the Hampton Inn, Fairfield Inn & Suites, Candlewood Suites, Comfort Inn, LaQuinta Inn, and the Holiday Inn & Conference Center (contact each facility directly for rates and availability).

### Continuing Education Credits

NIRMA has submitted requests to several State agencies and professional associations seeking pre-approval of continuing education hours for attendees who are required to meet mandatory annual training requirements, including county attorneys, sheriff's office personnel, county clerks, clerks of the district court, and highway superintendents. A certificate of attendance for these purposes will be available in the conference binders.



Serving County Government

PO Box 85210  
Lincoln, NE 68501-5210

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FIRESPRING

# Still Trailblazing at 35

**October 19-20, 2023**

Younes Conference Center North - Kearney  
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*presented by*

