

Head for the hills during national disaster—defense officials

By Kathy Chenault

A test pattern appears on the television screen, accompanied by a continuous, high frequency noise. After 60 seconds, an announcer identifies the station, but he doesn't conclude with the usual, "This was only a test."

This time, the announcer says the national security of the United States has been threatened and citizens of metropolitan communities and designated target areas should prepare to evacuate.

These citizens would be acting in accordance with the crisis relocation portion of the nuclear civil protection program.

A change of emphasis concerning national protection has taken place since the late 1960s and early 70s, resulting in a two-fold plan to provide protection from the effects of a nuclear weapons attack.

THE FIRST OPTION, community shelter planning would be used only if little or no warning were given before an attack, said Dennis Kumm, assistant coordinator of emergency services for the Lincoln-Lancaster County Civil Defense Agency. "Community shelter planning would include updating fallout shelters for protection during immediate disasters," Kumm said. "It also involves putting out emergency public information on what to do and where to go if people have to seek shelter on short notice."

The primary emphasis is placed on the second option, a process of relocating people who live in predetermined high-risk target areas, according to Kumm.

"Because of the worldwide arms situation, a surprise nuclear attack against the United States is considered unlikely," he said.

"WE FIGURE WE would have a short amount of time—a couple of days—warning before an attack takes place. With satellites and reconnaissance, we think we'll be able to tell when nations are preparing to attack and we'll have enough time to evacuate people from the target areas would John Tracy, a nuclear civil protection planner with the Nebraska Civil Defense Agency, said the process is designed to get people as far away from a blast as possible.

"Most of the shelters in cities aren't blast shelters, they are fallout shelters. The actual number of people who would survive a blast would be low," Tracy said. "That's why we're more interested in the relocation plan."

Target sites are divided into three categories depending on their strategic importance. Category 1 targets are offensive military bases, Category 2 targets are other military bases or major industry sites, and Category 3 targets are population centers.

THERE ARE FOUR areas of the state considered high-risk and the state civil defense agency is working on finding host areas to move people to in a national crisis.

Nebraska's only Category 1 target is the Warren Air Force Base located in the southwest Panhandle region of the state. Tracy said plans currently are being made to ensure there is enough shelter space and food and water resources in the five counties designated as the host area.

Omaha is the state's only Category 2 target site. Tentative plans have been made to move residents of Douglas and Sarpy counties to host areas to the west along Interstate 80 and to some areas to the north and south of the state's largest metropolitan area.

RESIDENTS OF LINCOLN, a Category 3 target site, would be hosted in nine counties to the west as far as Hastings and to the south into Gage County.

The state's other Category 3 target site is located in Dakota County because it is across the state border from Sioux City, Iowa, considered a metropolitan area. Dakota County residents would relocate to the west in Cedar and Dixon Counties.

Tracy said the most important aspect of the relocation system would be coordinating efforts of the defined target sites with local government officials in the host areas.

"We're talking about making provisions for about half the state's population," Tracy said. "We have to make sure there are enough resources for these people in those areas."

TRACY SAID THE decision to evacuate people from the target areas would come from the national government. He added that on a national level it would take 72 hours to relocate people to host areas, but only about one half as long to complete the process in Nebraska.

"In this part of the country we would have no problem relocating people in 36 hours," Tracy said. "The reason for this is that we are keeping the ratio of people being relocated to people in host areas as low as possible."

Both Kumm and Tracy emphasized that crisis relocation is a voluntary plan.

"No one will be forced to evacuate," Kumm said. "There will always be some people who don't want to leave their homes, but I think the majority of the population will choose to relocate for their own safety."

HE SAID THAT not all people will choose to go to the designated areas. "There will be a large percentage of people who will go stay with relatives and friends in safe areas. Some key people such as law enforcement officers and utility service people also will stay in town."

Unorthodox cellar is shelter from nuclear storm

By Brenda Moskovits

It looks like an ordinary basement—a repository for forgotten and seldom-used items, among them a green couch, a standing lamp, two coffee pots, two vacuum cleaners, some unmatched luggage, a stack of back issues of *National Geographic Magazine*, a black and white portable television set and an ironing board.

Peering around the corner to the laundry room it seems equally ordinary: a washer and dryer, a furnace and humidifier, a hot water heater, a water softener, a sink, a toilet and an old wringer washing machine.

But the eastern end of the laundry room at 4701 High St. in Lincoln differs from most. Sandwiched between two wooden storage closets is a passageway. A sharp right turn and then a left reveals a 10 by 20 foot room encased in 8-inch thick concrete block walls, a poured concrete floor and even a concrete ceiling over the rafters.

THIS IS LINCOLN attorney Richard Vestecka's civil defense shelter, where he and his family would retreat during a nuclear attack to escape radioactive fallout. It houses a two-week supply of food and water for four people.

Vestecka added it to his home about 20 years ago while he was civil defense director for Lincoln and Lancaster County. It cost about \$800.

"This was shortly after Sputnik," Vestecka explained, when Americans began worrying about a possible nuclear attack from the Soviet Union.

"I was a civil defense director and I was telling people they should have a shelter wherever they are. They sure wouldn't listen if I didn't have a shelter myself."

Vestecka said he went as far as trying unsuccessfully to have a legislative bill and

city ordinance introduced that would require builders to include the shelter in new buildings.

Since then, civil defense strategies have shifted from personal to community shelters, he said. Even so, he still maintains "you need shelters everywhere," because notice of a nuclear attack could be as short as 15 minutes.

INTEREST IN HOME shelters peaked during the Berlin and Cuban Missile Crisis, but has since disappeared, he said.

Vestecka doesn't comment on the probability of having to use the shelter for its intended purpose, acknowledging that his family has used it only for tornado warnings and they often store liquor there.

"The possibility of it happening is there and it's still there," he said. "We're in the battleground with our missile capability and our nuclear capability. We have the capability to exterminate the human race."

"It's like fire insurance only on a more basic level."

He said a Lincoln Air Force base which operated until 1966 contained B-47 planes with nuclear warheads "that could be used to attack Russian cities," making Lincoln a target for nuclear attack. The Air Force is presently discussing reopening the base.

An air defense missile station on Highway 33 between Lincoln and Crete which contains missiles "to stop purported nuclear missiles from Russia from hitting Lancaster County" also points to the nuclear reality, Vestecka said.

HE EXPLAINED HOW the shelter was constructed. First, "we selected the place with the maximum below-ground level."

The east end of the basement is 1 to 2 feet underground.

The contractor then set up sawhorses, laid plywood over them and then put 1-

inch steel bars over the wood. Large jacks, similar to those used to raise a car to change a tire, were placed under the sawhorses.

Ten inches of cement were then poured over the wood and steel and allowed to dry for a week. The jacks then were raised, lifting the reinforced concrete sheet to the ceiling. Concrete blocks were stacked and mortared together along two walls to wedge the sheet against the rafters.

Two staggered concrete block walls were built at the entrance, buffering the shelter against radioactive fallout, which like light, cannot travel around corners.

Nor can fallout travel through 8 inch concrete. (It takes 12 inches of brick and 16 inches of wood to afford the same protection, he said.)

A HAND-CRANKED, filter air pump is built into one wall to bring fresh air into the shelter. An airexhaust to outdoors is stuffed with black cloth to keep out the cold. A bare bulb is wired to the ceiling.

Four sleeping bags, four folding chairs, a 5-gallon water canteen and covered buckets for human waste disposal are situated inside or directly outside the shelter.

Two four and one-half pound cans of General Mills MPF, Multi-Purpose Food sitting on a shelf will nourish four people for two weeks, Vestecka said. MPF is a heavy, protein-enriched cereal.

Other canned goods once were stored in the shelter, but would get old and needed rotation, he said. Now, canned goods are stored in a kitchen cabinet beside the basement stairs and can be carried to the shelter in the event of an attack.

Although Vestecka said he is secure that his family would survive a nuclear attack in the shelter, he added "in a way, you're kind of despondent that there is a possibility you might have to use it."

The Cornhusker Ammunition Plant was established during World War II along with two other army ordnance plants at Mead and Sidney and a giant naval depot east of Hastings, according to Riley.

The plants shut down after the war, but reopened during the Korean War. The Grand Island plant was the only one of the four producing weapons during the Vietnam War, Jones said.

According to the *World-Herald*, after the Vietnam War, the Cornhusker Ammunition Plant shut down for the third time in a generation, a "casualty of peace."

However, the *World-Herald* reported the plant did not lie dormant when it shut down. Industries bid for peaceful use of the plant's buildings, and some of the plant's 19-square miles were used for agriculture and grazing. The ammunition plant remained productive in peace, as it had been in war.

Industry...

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Nebraska got its share of defense spending in World War II, a war that saw the state make its first large industrial contributions to America's war efforts, according to Riley.

Outside of grain and meat production, Nebraska's only major war-time industry during World War II was the potash refineries near Antioch in Sheridan County, Riley wrote.

A GENERATION LATER America fought in the world's second global war, and "though most Nebraskans were opposed to America's entry into World War II, community leaders in Omaha and Lincoln began seeking defense industries as early as May, 1940," Riley wrote.

In 1940, Bellevue was chosen as the site of the Glenn L. Martin Company bomber

plant, and began producing B-26 Marauder bombers in January 1942, Riley wrote. Late in 1943, the plant switched to making B-29s.

Like Omaha, Lincoln was actively producing war materials during World War II. The Lincoln Steel Works produced mooring buoys and cargo barges, Riley wrote.

One defense industry was established on what is now part of the UNL campus. A branch plant of the Elastic Stop-Nut Co., of Union, N.J., was set up in a warehouse that is now part of Nebraska Hall at 16th and W streets. The plant produced tiny self-locking nuts, 10,000 of which were used in a single bomber to reduce vibration.

IN BEATRICE, THE Dempster Co. manufactured one and one-half million 90mm shells during World War II.