

## State News for NSPE Members

### Governor Appoints New Director of WYDOT

Governor Mark Gordon has appointed Darin Westby to serve as director of the Wyoming Department of Transportation(WYDOT). Westby has served as interim director of the agency since March. He was one of three finalist candidates for the position that the Wyoming Transportation Commission submitted to the governor.

Prior to joining WYDOT as interim director, Westby spent 22 years with the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, serving as director of the agency from 2016-2023. He has more than 28 years of experience in the environmental, architectural, engineering, construction and management fields. Westby earned his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Wyoming and holds a civil professional engineering license and a certificate in public management. [Read more.](#)

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### Casper Takes First Steps for Ford Wyoming Center Development

The city of Casper wants to build off the Ford Wyoming Center, Trails Center and up-and-coming Wyo Sports Ranch by developing its 112 acres of vacant land next door. It's a project that would take years, if not decades, to realize. And the city's just getting started: the council ironed out some of its very first steps, which includes putting in for \$10 million in financial support from the state, [The Casper Star Tribune reports.](#)

Casper's main objective, should the project move forward, would be dragging out utilities and expanding transportation in the area. The Ayers Associates report estimated this would cost roughly \$14.8 million, most of which would go toward laying water and sewer lines and reconfiguring roadways.

The city thinks it's found a way to cover the bulk of the project: securing a \$5 million grant and \$5 million loan from the Wyoming Business Council's Business

Ready Community program. The initiative helps governments pay for infrastructure developments that would support community economic development. [Read more.](#)

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## TransWest Line to Recast Wyoming from Coal Villain to Energy Hero

A 728-mile (1,172-km) transmission line connecting wind farms in rural Wyoming to power consumers in California and Nevada looks set to reshape Wyoming's reputation from coal stalwart to energy transition lynchpin, [according to a report by Reuters](#). Wyoming is by far the largest coal producing state in the United States, accounting for more than 40% of total US coal output in 2021, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

The state also relies on coal to generate more than 60% of its electricity, three times the US national average, according to environment group Ember, which focuses on the global transition to clean electricity. But construction of the TransWest Express transmission line, which after 15 years in development finally broke ground this summer, has the potential to reshape Wyoming into a key enabler of the United States' energy transition ambitions.

A combination of abundant open spaces, above-average wind speeds and relatively low domestic power consumption make Wyoming an ideal candidate for wholesale wind farms that can export power to other states. [Read more.](#)

*Stay up to date on legislative issues through the [NSPE Advocacy Center](#).*

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## Workability Webinars Series to Focus on Emerging Tech

NSPE offers a live webinar series free to members—"WORKability Wednesdays"—to support members with their professional development goals. The first webinar of this season took place on September 13 - [How New PFAS Regulations Will Impact Water and Wastewater Utilities](#). A webinar on [What Utilities Want Fleets to Know About Moving to Electric Vehicles](#) will take place on September 27.



NSPE members get free access to the webinars, but must register to attend. Visit the [PE Institute](#) to review the full series line-up and to mark your calendar for these live, online events.

## Registration Open: 2023 NSPE Women's Leadership Virtual Fall Symposium

Join us for these live, one-time events to hear from experts in the field and join your colleagues in important discussions organized by NSPE's Women Leadership Program Task Force: [The Cost of Leadership](#); [Leading Yourself: Learning to Increase Your Emotional Intelligence](#); and [Networking Strategies: An Unconventional Approach to Connecting with Others](#) . The webinars will take place on October 12, October 19, and October 26 at 1:00 p.m. (ET). This exclusive package is free and includes all three live, one-time sessions. The sessions will not be recorded and PDH credits will not be issued for them.

[Register now.](#)

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## #NSPECon23 Revisited

NSPECon23 provided an opportunity to learn and build community in the heart of Louisville, Kentucky. Find photos from the All Things Louisville reception, the first-time attendee mixer, PE Day celebrations, recognition and installation ceremonies, and more on [NSPE's Flickr account](#) . Relive the fun and excitement with all your PE peers that gathered to celebrate the engineering profession.



**Save the Date: NSPECon24—Raleigh, North Carolina—August 7–9**



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## A False Solution for Our Workforce Challenges

*The Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing (ARPL) recently posted an opinion column that highlights the risks of weakening professional licensing requirements to address workforce challenges. NSPE is a member of ARPL.*

Workforce shortages, talent pipelines at a trickle and expensive labor are all-too-familiar challenges facing businesses and the public sector. In an attempt to tackle these problems, there is a growing trend of exploring the weakening or elimination of certain key job requirements. These proposals include getting rid of college degree requirements without equivalency alternatives, doing away with requisite testing, and downgrading credentials and licensure for professionals.

To be sure, there are some elements of the occupational licensure process that require continuous improvement and elimination of impediments disparately impacting underrepresented groups. However, in the rush to address workforce challenges, legislators and other policymakers must be cautious not to create new problems that leave employers and the public at risk.

Weakening professional licensing requirements is a false solution to various workforce ills. Minimum qualifications ensured by licensing exist to protect employers and the public they serve. This is particularly important for technical professions with high public impact, such as architecture, certified public accountancy, engineering, landscape architecture and land surveying. Care must be taken to ensure that critical licensing systems for such professions, designed to ensure public and economic protection, are not compromised and swept up in

broad-brush calls for occupational licensing reform. [Read more](#) .

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