

State News for NSPE Members

CO2 Researchers Set Up Testing in Gillette

UCLA researchers who are developing a process to turn carbon dioxide into construction materials are testing their idea on an industrial scale at Dry Fork Station, the coal-based power plant outside of Gillette. The team is one of five finalists competing for a \$7.5 million prize for the most viable technology for turning carbon dioxide emissions into valuable products.

The team also won a \$2 million grant from the US Department of Energy to support development of a process that can convert carbon dioxide emissions into construction materials. The DOE is also calling for the establishment of “[coal products innovation centers](#)” in places like the Powder River Basin.

The UCLA team is led by Gaurav Sant, a professor of civil and environmental engineering and of materials science and engineering, who has invented CO2Concrete, a form of concrete that is made in part from carbon dioxide emissions. [Read more.](#)

Rare Earth Metals Project Slated for Northeast WY

A three-year pilot project in Campbell County to extract rare earth metals from coal ash has received \$1.62 million in federal funding, according to the [Wyoming News](#). “This shows there’s finally a focus on a lot of these things and finally, after all these years, the Department of Energy is putting a footprint down here in Campbell County, where a lot of the country’s Btu’s (energy) come from already,” said Campbell County Commissioner Rusty Bell.

Deficient Bridge Raises Business Costs, Stirs Contention

New weight limits on the Snake River Bridge at the intersection of WYO 390 and

WYO 22 are causing headaches and increased costs for truckers and other businesses, reports the [Jackson Hole News & Guide](#). Corrosion of steel stringers under the bridge forced WYDOT to post the new limits. The article states that the bridge is one of the state's two most travelled structurally deficient bridges. A repair contract was expected to be let this month.

We Want to Hear from You!

Do you know of engineering news in Wyoming that would be great for this newsletter? Maybe it's a project you or your firm is working on, or perhaps you read some interesting engineering news in your local newspaper. Or maybe you know of a fellow PE or student who deserves a little recognition. If so, we want to hear from you. Email your ideas to pemagazine@nspe.org.

NSPE Urges Veto of Structural Engineering Bill

In a letter to Georgia Governor Brian Kemp, NSPE encouraged the veto of a bill to establish a separate licensing system for structural engineers.

President-Elect Tricia Hatley, P.E., F.NSPE, wrote that creating a new licensing system for structural engineering does not improve the public health, safety, or welfare. "Instead, it muddies the water, creating confusion and requiring regulatory authorities to make arbitrary distinctions to define structural engineering," she added. "Rather than reducing regulatory burdens, the change would add a new layer, requiring one engineer to obtain multiple licenses in order to do work that, previously, required only one."

Instead of creating a separate licensing system, NSPE recommends a certification process that occurs after the professional engineering license has already been obtained. "This system would allow for the SE designation, if required or requested by potential employers or RFPs, without drawing the same, hard line between structural and other types of engineering," Hatley wrote.

[Read the full letter.](#)

Take Action on Federal Infrastructure Bills

You have an important opportunity to add your voice to the debate around pending infrastructure legislation.

The first two bills are the House and Senate's surface transportation infrastructure reauthorization bills—The INVEST in America Act ([H.R. 2](#)) and the America's

Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019 ([S. 2302](#)). This is an opportunity to communicate to members of Congress the importance and value of having PEs involved in engineering decisions to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

[Take action on surface transportation reauthorization!](#)

The third bill, the SMART Infrastructure Act ([H.R. 4687](#)), would take decision-making authority away from professional engineers and instead give it to state and local authorities, allowing them to select “appropriate” construction materials. The bill would establish that these entities would have the flexibility to select appropriate construction materials that meet the performance requirements of the contract and enhance the service life, sustainability, and resiliency of the project.

NSPE opposes this bill because its enactment would prevent PEs from making the final decision on the appropriate construction materials for a project. Additionally, it establishes a federal interagency task force charged with deciding whether state and local procurement practices have artificial barriers to competition for new and innovative materials and recommending actions that can be taken to remove barriers. Their decisions could put the public at risk should these new and innovative materials present unforeseen harms to the public.

[Voice your opposition to H.R. 4687!](#)

Celebrate PE Day!

NSPE is celebrating licensed professional engineers with the [fifth annual Professional Engineers Day](#) on Wednesday, **August 5**. Join the Society in raising awareness about what it means to be a PE and showing appreciation for the work they do every day.

In lieu of in-district meetings with legislators, like those conducted last year, NSPE members will be able to participate in a series of panel discussions. The discussions will include members of Congress and/or their staff, who will share information on pending legislation that impacts the engineering profession. NSPE members will have opportunities to ask questions and to take action on the bills that are discussed by the panel.

PE Day falls within the week of the Virtual **PECon** (August 3–7). As a highlight of PE Day, NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt III, will discuss [“The Role and Responsibility of Professional Engineers in Ensuring Safety of Our Nation’s Infrastructure.”](#) His presentation will touch on the NTSB’s recommendation for eliminating the PE



license exemption for public utility work, and the requirement for a professional engineer's seal on public utility engineering drawings, stemming from the tragic pipeline explosions and fires in the Merrimack Valley of Massachusetts.

IBM's Global Chief Technology Officer Ben Amaba, is also featured as a keynote speaker and will cover the [professional engineer's role](#) in artificial intelligence and technology.

[Register for the Virtual PECon.](#)



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