

## State News for NSPE Members

### California's Shift to Virtual Meetings Gets Rave Reviews

NSPE-CA's recent shift back to virtual technical meetings is drawing a solid number of attendees and excellent reviews. In light of the positive response, virtual meetings will continue to be offered even once in-person meetings can be held again.

Vice President Joseph Quinn, who organizes the state's meeting programs, reported on the results at NSPE-CA's annual business and board meeting held June 27 via teleconference.

Virtual meetings that enable members from throughout the state to attend complement the recent in-person social events held in the Los Angeles area. When in-person meetings are once again feasible, NSPE-CA will be seeking volunteers to help organize events in areas outside Los Angeles.

NSPE President-Elect Tricia Hatley, P.E., F.NSPE, who attended the NSPE-CA annual meeting to give updates on NSPE activities. She provided information about how the Professional Engineers Conference—NSPE's national conference—has been transformed into a multi-day virtual event.

PECon is organized into five tracks—one per day:

- Monday, August 3—Communication Skills
- Tuesday, August 4—Public Works
- Wednesday, August 5—Innovation (Professional Engineers Day)
- Thursday, August 6—Sustainability
- Friday, August 7—Building & Leading Your Team

Regular [members can register](#) for one or more tracks, while students can attend the entire conference for free. There will be casual coffee talks and post session roundtable chats each day, for more social and less formal interaction.

In other administrative decisions, NSPE-CA President Mehdi Khalili presented the first draft of the society's newly collated Policy Manual, which was approved.

Further policies will be reviewed over the course of the next fiscal year.

Treasurer Ken Discenza reviewed the 2019–2020 budget and noted that COVID-19 did not immediately affect state revenue, but did reduce spending, leaving more funds to host events for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. In addition, the board has decided to change banks to access more modern banking capabilities, such as mobile deposit of checks.

Discenza, who also serves as the state coordinator for MATHCOUNTS through the state Education Foundation, reported on the events leading up to the cancellation of this year's state and national competitions.

Executive Director Jeanne Marie Tokunaga reported on a new outreach program to welcome new members to the society.

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## **Welcome New Members!**

Alan Brown, P.E.

Anthony J. Lacko, P.E.

Esther Margarita Ramirez Aguilar

Mohamad Salman, E.I./E.I.T.

### **Rejoining**

Alvaro Olague, P.E.

John A. Whitcraft, III, P.E.

### **Students**

Edward Allen, P.E.

Matthew Cristi

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## **Upcoming Board Meeting**

The next NSPE-CA board meeting will be held Saturday, September 26.

Several board terms are two years long, so there are no changes to officer positions this year.

### ***Current NSPE-CA Officers***

President

**Mehdi Khalili, P.E.**, of San Diego

Vice President

**Joseph Quinn, P.E.**, of El Segundo

Treasurer

**Kenneth J. Discenza, P.E.**, F.NSPE, of El Cajon

Immediate Past President

**Austin S. Lin, E.I.T.**, of Mountain View

Executive Director

**Jeanne Marie Tokunaga**, of Sacramento

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## **Virtual Meeting Recap—Root Cause Analysis**

The June 23 virtual technical meeting on root cause analysis with Robert (Bob) Latino earned excellent reviews from its 26 attendees.

Latino, chief executive officer of the Reliability Center Inc., discussed analysis of failure modes to discern the physical, human and systemic roots of failure. The program was overwhelmingly reviewed as relevant and clear, and the presenter rated as knowledgeable and engaging. The program was judged as having good interactivity among attendees as well as solid takeaways.

Virtual technical meetings will continue during and after COVID-19 restrictions. Invitations to all NSPE-CA events are emailed to all members and announced on social media.

### **What do you want to learn?**

Members with topic requests for future meetings are welcome to email Executive Director Jeanne Marie Tokunaga at [admin@nspe-ca.org](mailto:admin@nspe-ca.org).

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## **Stay Informed—Licensing Board News**

The Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists has released its Summer 2020 newsletter.

[It is available here.](#)

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## **What's the Status of Bridges in California?**

A recent American Road & Transportation Builders Association report provides a snapshot of the status of bridges in the US. The association compiled [state profiles and rankings](#) from the Federal Highway Administration's 2019 National Bridge Inventory Data (released in April 2020).

The recent report showed that more than one third (37%) of US bridges—nearly

231,000 spans—need repair work. More than 46,000 bridges are rated in poor condition and classified as “structurally deficient.” A total of 81,000 bridges should be replaced. While the number of structurally deficient bridges declined by 900 compared to 2018, it still would take more than 50 years to repair them all.

The [profile highlights](#) the following about bridges in the California

- Of the 25,771 bridges in the state, 1,797, or 7.0%, are classified as structurally deficient. This means one of the key elements is in poor or worse condition.
- This is down from 1,857 bridges classified as structurally deficient in 2015.
- The deck area of structurally deficient bridges accounts for 7.2% of total deck area on all structures.
- 168 of the structurally deficient bridges are on the Interstate Highway System.
- 548 bridges are posted for load, which may restrict the size and weight of vehicles crossing the structure.
- The state has identified needed repairs on 2,006 bridges at an estimated cost of \$8.8 billion.
- This compares to 5,071 bridges that needed work in 2015

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## **We Want to Hear from You!**

Do you know of engineering news in California 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](mailto:pemagazine@nspe.org).

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## **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.](#)

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## 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!](#)

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## 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.



SUMWALT

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.



AMABA

[Register for the Virtual PECon.](#)

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