

State News for NSPE Members

Superfund Site Needs Great Salt Lake Water to Seal in Toxic Waste

Add another potential disaster to the growing list associated with the shrinking Great Salt Lake: the implosion of the cleanup plan for the US Magnesium Superfund site, [The Salt Lake Tribune reports](#).

The plan, finalized just two years ago, requires sufficient water to create a salt "cap" sealing in the toxic waste left should the company eventually close.

"That's what the whole plan is predicated on — having saline water," said Ken Wangerud, a regional Superfund remedial project manager for the Environmental Protection Agency.

But the availability of and access to that water is far from certain given the dramatic contraction of the lake in recent years. Moreover, feasibility studies for possible contingency plans were never completed, Wangerud said.

The US Magnesium, which mines magnesium and other minerals from salts extracted from the Great Salt Lake at a facility 40 miles west of Salt Lake City, has for years illegally disposed of highly acidic hazardous waste in a network of open-air, earthen ditches and a 400-acre waste pond that lacked adequate environmental controls, according to EPA documents.

It is unusual for the EPA to designate an industrial site that is still operational as a Superfund project. Superfund is the colloquial name for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980. The act was originally intended to fund the cleanup of long abandoned, environmentally hazardous sites like mines, where there was no owner or responsible party present to clean up the contaminants left behind. [Read more.](#)

Renewable Energy Program Projected to Come to Fruition

in 2024

The Salt Lake City Council unanimously passed a resolution during its July 18 meeting committing the city to the Utah Community Renewable Energy Program, [kuer90.1 reports](#).

The program, coordinated by Rocky Mountain Power, aims to help communities meet a goal of net-100% renewable energy by 2030. In all, 18 Utah communities are poised to take the next step in realizing a yearslong process to establish it.

Salt Lake City, Park City, Castle Valley, Moab, Millcreek and Grand and Summit counties make up the seven "anchors" of the program. They are tasked with ensuring payment of the estimated \$700,000 project implementation cost. The goal of reaching 100% renewable energy in Salt Lake City has been around since at least 2016.

"This is the single largest undertaking for the city as we work to meet our net 100% clean electricity goals and our 80% carbon reduction goals for the community," said Sophia Nicholas, the city's energy & environment division director. "We're about to, fingers crossed, work to achieve a very significant milestone with the Utah 100 Communities Agency."

That program has been in the works since 2019. A state law called the Community Renewable Energy Act allows municipalities to contract with utilities to offer cleaner energy options like wind and solar.

According to project estimates, Rocky Mountain Power could submit an application to the state this fall with a start date of early 2024, but there are still hurdles to cross before that happens. [Read more](#).

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

Vermont PE Rises to Top Leadership



William (Bill) Atkinson, P.E., F.NSPE, was installed as NSPE's 2023–24 president during a ceremony at NSPECon23 in Louisville, Kentucky, on August 3. He has spent most of his career volunteering for NSPE and various engineering organizations that hold true to his passion for protecting the public through licensure and ethical engineering decision making.

Atkinson serves as the engineering manager and lead engineer at Vermont Mechanical Inc., a mechanical and plumbing design build contractor that focuses on healthcare and commercial construction (where he has been employed since

2001). He currently directs the service and engineering departments.

Throughout his engineering career, Atkinson has taken on various volunteer and leadership positions within NSPE, the Vermont Society of Professional Engineers, ASHRAE, and NCEES. He served on the Vermont Board of Professional Engineers and the University of Vermont College of Engineering Advisory Board. He has also served as an ABET observer and as the president of the Clarkson University Vermont Alumni Chapter. He is a licensed professional engineer in New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

Atkinson lives in Essex, Vermont, with his wife, Kim Atkinson, P.E., and two young active sons. When he and his wife are not working they are often found coaching or enjoying the outdoors in all seasons.

Honoring Excellence in the Profession

NSPE members were recently honored for their outstanding contributions to the profession during NSPECon23 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Engineering Education Excellence Award

This award recognizes licensed engineering faculty who have demonstrated the ability to link engineering education with professional practice. It is sponsored by the Professional Engineers in Higher Education (PEHE) interest group.



Waterloo Tsutsui, Ph.D., P.E., is a senior research associate in the School of Aeronautics and Astronautics at Purdue University where his primary aim is to provide a rigorous education that nurtures an engineering mindset among students and empowering them to analyze, communicate, and solve complex problems. He ensures students derive maximum advantage from meticulously designed educational experiences integrated into their curriculum, fostering lasting knowledge and capabilities that extend far beyond the confines of the classroom for the ultimate benefit of students. As an example, Tsutsui implemented virtual labs and visualization in lab courses as an innovative way to link engineering practice to education.

New Professional of the Year Award

This award recognizes a young NSPE member who has made outstanding contributions to the engineering profession and the community during the early years of one's career.

Sri Kumar, P.E., is the president and CEO of Connico, a national consultancy serving the aviation, civil, and transportation markets. In his current role, he is responsible for outlining the company's



strategy for the future, ensuring the company continues to execute its goals, and delivering excellence to clients from Tampa to Seattle. He is also committed to building Connico's employee-focused culture and is passionate about developing a strong, diverse, and uniquely talented team who work each day on solving some of the nation's most complex infrastructure challenges.

Emerging Leaders Program Seeks Candidates



The [NSPE Emerging Leaders Program](#) is seeking the next group of engineering change-makers. Candidates with 5–8 years of professional experience in the engineering field who are prepared to think strategically about their career and begin taking on leadership roles are [invited to apply](#).

The 2024 ELP syllabus and related time-commitments are available and the application for the program is due by **Thursday, August 31**.

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