

State News for NSPE Members

UDOT Plans \$945M Light Rail System

The Utah Department of Transportation has released plans for its phased approach to roll out the Point of the Mountain Transit Project, [ksl.com reports](#).

The plans include an anticipated \$945 million investment into the buildout of a light rail transit system (the system currently used for Utah Transit Authority's TRAX system). The schedule for its completion will be established as funding plans are developed for the project, according to the transit study.

"We have some major opportunities for economic development in the area," said Marcus Bennett, project manager at Utah Transit Authority. "We know that employment and population will grow in this area. Let's plan transit to be prepared to meet the demands. We know that transit can act as a drive of economic development there and throughout the area."

The project will reside with the Utah Department of Transportation through construction, with UTA continuing as a partner in the project. Once construction is complete, UTA will be responsible for all transit operations. [Read more](#).

Salt Lake City Joins Federal Lawsuit Challenging UDOT

Salt Lake City and Sandy recently filed a joint lawsuit against the Utah Department of Transportation and other government agencies in federal court for allegedly failing to adequately review the full environmental impacts associated with transportation projects proposed for Little Cottonwood Canyon, [Axios Salt Lake City reports](#).

The municipalities are challenging an environmental impact study released by UDOT in July, which includes the agency's approval of a \$729-million gondola aimed at mitigating ski traffic in the canyon during the ski season. The plaintiffs are asking the court to halt transportation developments in the canyon until a new

environmental assessment can be completed.

The Metropolitan Water District of Salt Lake and Sandy is also named as a plaintiff. The US Forest Service and the Federal Highway Administration are listed as defendants.

Details: The complaint alleges the agencies did not sufficiently study how the transportation projects would impact the drinking water supply.

"The entirety of Little Cottonwood Canyon is a critical drinking water source protection area for the Salt Lake metropolitan area," per the lawsuit. [Read more.](#)

Los Alamos National Lab Shipping Radioactive Waste in Utah

Los Alamos National Lab's radiological and hazardous waste from years past has been disposed of at off-site facilities at rates that have exceeded expectations, [The Center Square reports](#). The move helps the Lab mitigate hazards to workers, the community, and the environment, "while sustaining the national security mission," according to the lab.

"What's more, the lab's off-site shipments of waste outpaced the rate of waste generation even as its mission to develop plutonium pits expanded," the lab said.

The lab generated 817 containers of transuranic (TRU) radioactive waste in Fiscal Year 2023. It included protective clothing, tools, and equipment contaminated from nuclear weapons production and research. The lab got rid of more containers than those generated, including TRU waste from past years. It shipped a total of 885 containers off-site.

In 68 shipments, the containers left the lab to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, New Mexico, which the release describes as "the nation's underground repository for defense-generated nuclear waste."

The lab ships its low-level waste and mixed low-level waste to facilities like Waste Control Specialists in western Andrews County, Texas, and Energy Solutions in Clive, Utah, about 75 miles from Salt Lake City. Also, it ships its transuranic waste (TRU) to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in the Chihuahuan Desert of New Mexico, a spokesman for the lab told [The Center Square](#). [Read more.](#)

Miss USU Uses Platform to Encourage Women in STEM

Utah State University engineering student Regan Tracy fell in love with space exploration and STEM at 10 years old and decided right then and there she wanted to grow up to be an engineer. That was the passion behind her platform while

running as Miss USU: creating a new inclusive environment for underrepresented groups in STEM.

"Stepping out of your comfort zone is difficult, but it's even more difficult when you're in a setting with people who don't look like you," Tracy said. "But all the best things happen when you challenge yourself, and I wanted to challenge others in engineering to do the same thing."

Tracy was crowned Miss USU in April 2023 as a part of a pageant that happens annually. Although she did not expect to win, Tracy wanted to use the opportunity to share her love of engineering and step out of her comfort zone. Friends and family alike flocked to support her that night.

"It felt like time slowed down when they said I had won," she said. "I was so overwhelmed with love and gratitude for those who came out to support me. It pushed me to really do my best in this position."

As Miss USU, Tracy represents the university at sports events, student events and every engineering event she can find time to attend. She has spoken with young women about internship experiences, run booths at Science Unwrapped conferences and is even the Utah Society of Women Engineers SWENext counselor, encouraging girls to get involved in STEM. In October, Tracy was awarded the Student Pathway Award from the Women in Tech Council for her dedication to her STEM studies. [Read the full Utah State Today article.](#)

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

Share Your Expertise: NSPECon24 Presentations



NSPE seeks speakers willing to elevate the profession by providing interesting, relevant, and timely education to colleagues attending the [2024 Professional Engineers Conference \(NSPECon24\) August 7-9 in Raleigh, North Carolina](#).

Proposals may address a number of topics in three key conference tracks that include leadership, issues and trends, and career assistance. Please consider sharing your expertise and insights by **submitting a presentation proposal by midnight, January 10**.

To learn more about potential topic areas, how to prepare a submission, and the benefits of being selected to present, click on the button below.

[Submit Your Presentation](#)

NSPE Member Benefit: On-Demand Webinars

The WORKability Wednesdays fall series wrapped up in November. Recordings of the presentations are available in the [PE Institute](#). Past webinars are also available for viewing in the [On-Demand Webinars](#) section of the website.

NSPE is always seeking great content and speakers. Those interested in presenting can submit ideas using the online [Call for Webinars form](#).

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Is your organization looking to bring together a team of engineers, each committed to professional growth and staying up to date with the ever-evolving field of engineering? [Consider launching your NSPE Enterprise Membership!](#)

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the profession in 2024 include critical thinking, problem-solving, active learning, resilience, stress tolerance, and flexibility.

“NSPE Enterprise Membership has proven to be a valuable program for our engineering team at Huitt-Zollars. It streamlines our membership process; the ability to make a single payment for multiple employees simplifies our administrative tasks and reduces time. Our engineers appreciate the continuous learning/professional development and networking opportunities provided by NSPE throughout the year.” — John Ho, P.E., F.NSPE, Vice President, Huitt-Zollars

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