

State News for NSPE Members

Vermont Gas Utility Delves into Geothermal Energy Project

Vermont's only natural gas company is exploring possible sites for its first fossil-fuel-free, networked geothermal project, a heating and cooling technology that could be a natural fit for a company already skilled at designing and constructing piping systems, according to an [Energy News Network report](#).

"It's a near-perfect overlay of our current business model," said Richard Donnelly, director of energy innovation at Vermont Gas Systems, which currently serves about 55,000 customers.

Legislation pending before the House Committee on Environment and Energy could help speed such geothermal innovation. The bill, still awaiting a number, directs the state Public Utility Commission to adopt rules for permitting thermal energy networks — underground loops of liquid-filled pipes that are heated or cooled by the earth and connected to multiple buildings.

It would authorize any entity, not just existing utilities, to operate geothermal networks as regulated utilities, enabling them to recover their costs through the rates paid by customers. [Read more](#).

Grants a Key Part of Closing Vermont's Broadband Divide

Within the next half-decade, most of Vermont should be connected to high-speed broadband.

Christine Hallquist, executive director of the Vermont Community Broadband Board, stated the target timeline as she outlined the agency's goals before a group of legislators on February 1. The presentation was the last in a series of briefings Governor Phil Scott initiated as 2023 gets underway, [The Center Square reports](#).

"We will get every Vermont address connected to broadband internet," Hallquist said. "The challenge, of course, is affordability."

The broadband board is the outgrowth of Scott's Act 71, which outlined a series of initiatives related to broadband expansion across Vermont. Scott in 2021 named Hallquist to the then-newly established entity. "For the most part, we're going to get it done in five years," Hallquist said of broadband accessibility. "There might be some stragglers."

Grant procurement will be a key component to achieving the goal of statewide broadband access, Hallquist said, particularly in some of Vermont's most rural enclaves. [Read more.](#)

Planned EV Fees Aim to Replace State Gas Tax Revenue

Be prepared to pay an extra fee if you drive an electric vehicle in Vermont. As more EVs have taken off, drivers of conventional cars have been left to pay an increasing share of the road, public transit, and other related costs. After years of debate, state officials are getting closer to rolling out a proposal on how to make up for lost gas tax revenue, according to a [WCAX3 report](#).

It's a fiscal dilemma VTrans has been planning for. "We have known all along that once folks start driving electric, they will no longer be purchasing gasoline and not paying the gas tax," said the agency's Michele Boomhower.

Now, VTrans has proposed lawmakers pass a mileage-based fee system for EV owners to cover those costs. "Everybody is used to paying a few extra cents every time they go to the gas pump and we wanted to replicate that so households wouldn't be hit with a big extra bill," Boomhower. said.

Mileage data is already collected when vehicles undergo an annual inspection and officials say data from odometers could be used to charge EV owners 1.3 cents per mile. "The idea is to structure a rate that is what the average Vermonter is paying right now in fuel taxes," said VTrans' Patrick Murphy. They estimate that comes out to about \$150 a year. [Read more.](#)

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

Meet the FEYA Top 10 Finalists

NSPE is pleased to announce the 10 finalists for the [2023 Federal Engineer of the Year Award](#) , honoring engineers employed by a federal agency with at least 50 engineers worldwide. All have made extensive contributions to their organizations and also to the public that PEs ultimately serve.

The winner of this year's award will be announced during a ceremony at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, on February 24, and will be selected from

the following finalists.

- **Stephen Craven, Ph.D., P.E.**, electrical engineer, networks/WAN specialist; Tennessee Valley Authority
- **Steven C. Dunn, Ph.D., P.E.**, electrical engineer; General Services Administration Public Buildings Service
- **Maj. Dustin L. Gooden, P.E., PMP, LSSBB**, chief, strategic basing corporate branch; US Department of the Air Force, Headquarters US Air Force
- **Chad C. Hogan, P.E.**, lead engineer; US Department of the Air Force, Air Force Material Command
- **Capt. Jeneé A. Jagoda, P.E., PMP**, engineering flight commander; US Department of the Air Force, Air Force Global Strike Command
- **Capt. Christopher C. Jankowski, P.E., PMP, ENV SP**, chief of operations engineering; US Department of the Air Force, Pacific Air Forces
- **Andrew R. Lawrence, P.E.**, salvage engineering response team principal architect; US Department of Homeland Security, US Coast Guard
- **Nicholas Brian Melly, P.E.**, fire protection engineer; US Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- **Dr. Brandon L. Toliver, P.E.**, branch chief, basing and beddown; US Department of the Air Force, Air Force Installation & Mission Support
- **Brian R. Wybrecht, P.E.**, civil engineer; US Department of the Army, US Army Europe and Africa



NATIONAL SOCIETY OF
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

FEDERAL ENGINEER OF THE YEAR



Stephen
Craven, Ph.D., P.E.



Steven C.
Dunn, Ph.D., P.E.



Major Dustin
Gooden, P.E., PMP,
LSSBB



Chad C.
Hogan, P.E.



Captain Jeneé A.
Jagoda, P.E., PMP



Captain Christopher C.
Jankowski, P.E., PMP,
ENV SP



Andrew R.
Lawrence, P.E.



Nicholas Brian
Melly, P.E.



Dr. Brandon
Toliver, P.E.



Brian R.
Wybrecht, P.E.

Congratulations to the 2023 Top 10 Finalists!

2023 Lineup of 15 Free PDHs Are Available

NSPE membership offers the benefit of access to 15 on-demand webinars. This year's webinars address various topics of interest to professional engineers including ethics, emerging technologies, construction projects, and licensure. Upon successful completion of each webinar quiz (with a passing score of 70% or higher), the quiz taker will receive an attendance certificate with the appropriate credits earned for that session. [Access the free webinars](#).

2022 NSPE Scholarship Winners

The NSPE Education Foundation awarded several scholarships to support talented students pursuing engineering degrees in ABET-accredited programs.

Auxiliary Legacy Scholarship

Leah Griesmer, from Broadview Heights, Ohio, is studying mechanical engineering at the University of Cincinnati.

Katelyn King, from Basking Ridge, New Jersey, is studying biomedical engineering at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Maureen L. and Howard N. Blitman, P.E., Scholarship to Promote Diversity in Engineering

Sebastian Rodriguez, of Cincinnati, Ohio, is attending Carnegie Mellon University to study mechanical engineering.

The George B. Hightower, P.E. Fellowship

Tyler Kleinsasser is a graduate student at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Swadesh and Om P. Popli, P.E., P.L.S. Scholarship

Eli Ordaz is studying civil engineering at Brigham Young University.

Steinman Scholarship

Kathleen Abrams is attending the University of South Carolina, majoring in biomedical engineering.

Michael Chavez is studying electrical engineering, with an emphasis on renewable energy, at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Jake Schneider, of Fort Thomas, Kentucky, is pursuing his degree in civil and environmental engineering at the University of Louisville.

Lindsay Steis, of Ridgway, Pennsylvania, is attending Gannon University, majoring in environmental engineering.

Jonathan Windham, of Sumrall, Mississippi, is pursuing an electrical engineering degree at Mississippi State University.

The 2023 Scholarship Season Opens

The NSPE Education Foundation is [now accepting applications](#) for the 2023 scholarship season through an online submission platform. The application deadline is **April 1**.



EDUCATION FOUNDATION
NATIONAL SOCIETY OF
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

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