Will State Infrastructure Get a Boost from Return of Federal Earmarks?

Earmarks, which were banned in 2011 by then-House Speaker John Boehner, are returning to the federal appropriations process, and U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont will be leading the way. As chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Leahy is in charge of crafting spending bills and will sign off on requests from individual members of Congress to fund home-state projects, reports Vermont Digger. “If anybody’s got a project that they are working on that they want to make sure is on the senator’s radar, we would love to hear about it and see if there’s a way to single out funding for that initiative,” a Leahy aide said.

Among the precautions: senators may not request funding for projects in which they or an immediate family member have a financial interest, spending items must be introduced in writing, and the appropriations committee must make each request publicly available online.

Leahy’s office was expected to set a deadline of late May for organizations to make pitches to the senator.

*Have you watched Committee Corner, NSPE’s new video series about legislative activity on Capitol Hall?*

Bridge Repurposing Comes with Scary Price Tag

Rockingham Selectboard members were hit with “sticker shock” after seeing the latest cost estimates to repair and repurpose the historic Depot Street Bridge, reports the Eagle Times. The estimate of $8 million - $9.2 million would involve repurposing the concrete arch bridge as a pedestrian walk and include the construction of an off-alignment vehicle bridge. The town would be responsible for 10% of the cost and VTrans would cover the remainder. The project managers said engineering challenges and related costs make the concrete arch design not economically viable. Instead, they recommend a steel truss design.
Stay up to date on legislative issues through the NSPE Advocacy Center.

New Jersey Student Wins MATHCOUNTS Title

Marvin Mao, an eighth-grade student from Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, was named the 2021 Raytheon MATHCOUNTS National Competition champion during the virtual event held May 8-10. Mao will receive a $10,000 scholarship.

This year’s national competition engaged 224 students representing 56 US states and territories in four rounds: Sprint, Target, Team, and Countdown.

The runner-up for the individual competition was Bohan Yao, an eighth-grader from Redmond, Washington, who will receive a $5,000 scholarship. Ten finalists will receive $3,000 scholarships.

Mao is also a member of the first-place New Jersey team consisting of fellow eighth-grade students Evan Fan, Ying Lu, and Alexander Wang. The team will receive a trip to the US Space Camp. The California team finished in second place and the New York team placed third.

California Team Captures Math Video Award

A video combining algebraic equations with an exciting heist won the 2021 Math Video Challenge for a team representing the Elite Academic Academy in southern California.

Team members Bradley Carpiuc (eighth grade), Madelynn Carpiuc (sixth grade), Zoe Kim (eighth grade) and Cole Seelman (sixth grade) each won a $1,000 college scholarship for their “The Sanitizer Stealers” video during the challenge finals on May 9. The video is about a group of thieves who steal overpriced hand sanitizer from a store. The crime is caught on camera, and the owner uses math to piece together just how much the thieves got away with.

The Math Video Challenge is a national program sponsored by MATHCOUNTS.
and the Department of Defense (DoDSTEM). More than 200 students who advanced to the national level of the MATHCOUNTS competition voted to determine the winning video.

Access the 2021 finalist videos.

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**Nominations Open for the QBS Awards**

Every year, ACEC and NSPE partner to administer the QBS Awards, recognizing public and private entities that make exemplary use of the qualifications-based selection process at the federal, state, and local levels. Award winners serve as examples of how well the QBS process works, and they help promote the practice in jurisdictions that do not use or underuse QBS to procure engineering services.

ACEC and NSPE are now seeking nominations for the 2021 QBS Awards by the deadline **Monday, June 7**. The awards are administered in three categories: federal government sector; state government sector; and nongovernment sector.

Nominations may originate from an ACEC member organization, an NSPE state society, a public or private entity, or an individual in the public or private sector. Self-nomination is not permitted.

Learn more and download a nomination form.

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**Boost Your Career with NSPE’s Spring Webinars**

![NSPE Institute Logo](image)

This season’s NSPE webinars will take place on Wednesdays starting at 2 p.m. EST. The webinars are available to members for $99 ($129 for nonmembers) and will include an online discussion and a 10-question quiz for the sessions to qualify for continuing education credit.

**May 26:** Catapult Your Win Rate by 50%

**June 2:** Engineering Challenges of the 21st Century: A Discussion with Leaders of Engineering Change Lab – USA
June 9: Tools to Ensure Effective Litigation Preparation and Testimony as an Engineering Professional

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