

## State News for NSPE Members

### Arizona Regulators OK Repair of Bridge Damaged by Train Derailment

The Arizona Corporation Commission approved Union Pacific's emergency application to reconstruct a bridge damaged when at least eight freight cars derailed July 29 on a bridge over Rio Salado Parkway and Tempe Town Lake, according to an *Associated Press* article. UP satisfied safety concerns of the commission and Arizona Public Service Company by eliminating a planned piling in the parkway's median to support the bridge. Instead, the company will install a prefabricated bridge span over the entire four-lane parkway, the commission said.

[Read more.](#)

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### Project Cancellations Sweeping the Nation as COVID-19 Intensifies Funding Shortfalls

Billions of dollars' worth of transportation projects are being delayed or canceled across the country as state and local governments make spending cuts due to the coronavirus pandemic. A *For Construction Pros* article highlights findings from a recent American Road and Transportation Builders Association report that points out that 14 states and 19 local authorities have delayed or canceled road, transit and airport projects worth \$8.58 billion.

[Read more.](#)

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### Client Selection Is More Important Than Ever

*By Rich Friedman*  
(Friedman & Partners)

When the economy starts to look rocky and project opportunities may be diminishing, it can be tempting to start saying yes to work that's not a great fit (but

it's work) or chasing RFPs.

I saw a lot of this happening during the Global Financial Crisis (2008-2009), and I'm seeing it again now. In times of uncertainty, of course, we may be more willing to take on a project that is not ideal. But too often, firms start to convince themselves that throwing best practices out the window is their best option.

In this article, I discuss why that's not a good idea and offer some helpful guidelines for creating and implementing a thoughtful client selection process, one that strengthens your firm for the future.

[Read more.](#)

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## How Is the COVID-19 'New Normal' Affecting your Organization?

For the upcoming issue of *PE* magazine, an article will address how months later the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the work lives of NSPE members from different practice areas: construction, education, government, industry, and private practice.

How have your projects or organizational priorities changed? What have been some challenges or changes for the better? Have there been any new opportunities? Share your experiences with *PE* at [pemagazine@nspe.org](mailto:pemagazine@nspe.org).

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## At Virtual PECon, NTSB Chair Discusses Florida Bridge Collapse

In a session on August 5, National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Robert Sumwalt III explained the role of the NTSB and the agency's investigation and [report](#) on the deadly pedestrian bridge collapse at Florida International University in Miami.



In March 2018, a pedestrian bridge under construction at FIU collapsed—claiming six lives. Despite evidence of severe cracking, the engineer of record insisted that the cracking did not pose a safety problem, according to the NTSB report. The university wanted to enhance pedestrian safety by constructing the bridge over a multilane highway that had been the scene of a pedestrian fatality. It would also serve as a unique gathering place for students, faculty, and university visitors.

“We all know that cracking in concrete is going to happen. That’s acceptable. But in

this case, we saw structural cracks that were 40 times larger than is typically acceptable,” Sumwalt stated. The bridge was designed using an “accelerated bridge construction” design method.

The NTSB identified three critical errors: 1) The bridge was under-designed. 2) The peer review was insufficient; and 3) There was a failure to close the bridge to traffic and workers.

During the session, Sumwalt outlined how failures at all levels to stop work on the project or to close the highway to vehicle traffic and pedestrians played a significant role in the tragedy. He emphasized the responsibility to speak out for public safety no matter what.

“I saw those crushed cars. Six people lost their lives because of what I will call hubris and professional arrogance,” he stated. “I don’t care where you fit on the totem pole, if something doesn’t look right, you have an ethical and moral obligation to wave the flag.”

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## Access Virtual PECon Webinars

NSPE members who registered for an all-access pass and individual sessions can access webinar recordings at their convenience. Members who were unable to attend **PECon** can [purchase and access](#) some individual sessions at a discounted member price.

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## Coming Soon: ‘Fireside Chat’ Series

NSPE is hosting a set of fireside chat style webinars on legislative issues affecting the future of the engineering profession, as well as the here and now.

Monday, August 31 (TBD)

**Diversity is the Future of Engineering: Opportunities in STEM Education**

Monday, September 14 (3 p.m. ET)

**Building for the Future**, with US Rep. Bruce Westerman, P.E. (R-AR)

Be on the lookout for more information!

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