State Licensing Board Meeting

The Montana Board of Professional Engineers and Professional Land Surveyors will hold its next meeting on Thursday, March 7. Access meeting information here.

Montana Sees Spikes in Bridge Closures

Montana is seeing an unusually high number of bridge closures recently. Twice as many bridges closed in Montana in 2023 than in any of the previous four years, NBC Montana reports.

The closure of Missoula’s Maclay Bridge and Bigfork’s Bridge Street Bridge in the past week is part of a troubling trend of closures statewide.

“The state of Montana has a severely aging infrastructure,” Montana Department of Transportation’s Bob Vosen said. “We’ve got a lot of bridges that are at or beyond their design life.”

There were eight to 10 bridges closed each year from 2019 to 2022, Vosen said. Officials saw closures jump to 20 in 2023. This January’s two closures have 2024 on pace to surpass last year’s numbers.

Vosen said the issue is due to limited resources like funding, as well as the number of facilities across the state. He credits the state legislature for providing additional infrastructure funding last session, as well as discretionary grants from the federal government.

“But that funding’s been in place for a short period of time, and bridge projects take time to develop,” Vosen told NBC Montana. “And we’re working on what the overall plan is for the entire state.” Read more.

New Scholarship for Montana Tech Mining Engineering
Students

Multinational mining corporation Rio Tinto has established a new scholarship for mining engineering students at Montana Tech. The $84,000 gift provides tuition assistance and opportunities to connect with professionals at Rio Tinto, pursue internships with the company, and visit the company’s mine sites.

The first recipients of the scholarship are Dozick Zablocki of Kittanning, Pennsylvania, and Grant Shedd, of Aptos, California. The pair met with Rio Tinto Kennecott Managing Director Nate Foster (Mining Engineering, '06) last November when Foster came to the Montana Tech campus to participate in awarding the scholarships.

“To meet the demands of the energy transition, Rio Tinto is proactively collaborating with strategic partners to address the mining industry’s labor shortage. Through investments in STEM education, we hope to bridge the mining talent gap with the next generation. As a Montana Tech alumnus, I’m proud to support this world-class mining program and find it personally fulfilling to meet with the recipients and support the beginning of their mining career,” said Foster. Read more of the NBC Montana report.

Stay up to date on legislative issues through the NSPE Advocacy Center.

NCEES Seeks PE Expertise to Update Exams

NCEES is currently seeking licensed professional engineers to participate in a professional activities and knowledge study, or PAKS, to update specifications for the PE Architectural Engineering Exam and the PE Environmental Exam.

Architectural Engineering
NCEES requires a cross section of PEs practicing architectural engineering (including those working in industry, consulting, the public sector, and academia) to complete an online survey about the tasks and knowledge required of a licensed architectural engineer with four to six years of experience to practice in a manner that safeguards the public. Access the survey here and participate by April 24.

Environmental Engineering
NCEES requires a cross section of PEs practicing environmental engineering (including those working in industry, consulting, the public sector, and academia) to complete an online survey about the tasks and knowledge required of a licensed environmental engineer with four to six years of experience to practice in a manner that safeguards the public. Access the survey here and participate by May 5.
The 2024 Scholarship Season Opens

The NSPE Education Foundation is now accepting applications for the 2024 scholarship season through an online submission platform. The application deadline is April 1.

High School
The Maureen L. and Howard N. Blitman, P.E., Scholarship to Promote Diversity in Engineering is awarded annually to a high school senior from an ethnic minority who has been accepted into an ABET-accredited engineering program at a four-year college or university. The award is for $5,000.

Undergraduate
The Steinman Scholarship is awarded annually to undergraduates entering or continuing their junior year in a four-year ABET-accredited engineering program. The award is for $5,000.

The William R. Kimel, P.E., Engineering Scholarship is awarded to an undergraduate student who is a resident of either Kansas or Missouri, enrolled as a junior in an ABET-accredited engineering program in a college or university in either Kansas or Missouri. The award is for $2,500.

Graduate
The George B. Hightower, P.E. Fellowship is awarded annually to a current engineering undergraduate or graduate student who is enrolled in, or graduated from, an ABET-accredited engineering program. The award is for $3,000.

PE Institute – 15 Free Webinar Package

NSPE has moved 15 on-demand webinars out from behind the paywall for viewing by members from the comfort of home or the office. Members can add the webinar package to their account now. Once added, the webinars can be viewed through January 15, 2025.

Since 2022, NSPE has offered all PE Institute webinars free of charge to members. Past webinars are also available for viewing in the On-Demand Webinars section of the PE Institute website.

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