

Governor Approves Nearly \$400 Million in Infrastructure Spending

Governor Steve Bullock signed bills in May that will devote almost \$400 million to buildings, bridges, and water systems state-wide. The spending aims to create jobs, enhance the state's economy, and clear a backlog of work.

Included was money to repair or replace 14 bridges and 51 water, wastewater, and sewer projects. The 2019 legislature passed \$2.7 billion in infrastructure projects overall; after it adjourned, both Democrats and Republicans promoted the economic benefits of the measures.

"These long-term investments in every corner of Montana will have a lasting impact that allow urban and rural communities to sustain strong economic growth," said Bullock.

Read more from [the AP](#) and [KXLH.com](#).

There's Good News and Bad News on Montana's Bridges

The Federal Highway Administration released a report in March ranking US states by the percentage of structurally deficient bridges. The good news: Montana wasn't at the top of the list. The bad news: the state wasn't at the bottom either.

Out of 52 states and territories, Montana ranked 24th. Of 5,265 total bridges, 390 were deemed deficient--or 7.4% of total inventory. The 2018 number was down slightly from 8.1% in 2017.

[See the rankings.](#)

Montana State Students Among Top FE Exam Takers

As the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying explains, "getting on the licensure path early puts engineers in a position to succeed professionally." Many higher education institutions, valuing licensure, encourage their students to take the Fundamentals of Engineering exam.

NCEES data show that Montana State University students are among the top FE exam takers. The school

ranks fifth of all the institutions responding nationwide. According to NCEES, 418 students took the exam for the first time over the period examined, October 2017 through September 2018.

[View all the NCEES statistics.](#)

Complete the Engineering Team With NICET Certification

In the late 1950s, as the US came to rely more heavily on machines and automation, technically skilled workers who could support the work of engineers were in high demand. In 1961, NSPE rose to the challenge by forming an organization to certify technicians and technologists.



But even though technicians have been an integral part of the engineering team and NSPE since then, that organization—the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies—is not always understood by PEs. A well-attended, NSPE-sponsored webinar on May 29 provided the full picture.

During the webinar, “ [Quality and Safety Through a Qualified Engineering Team](#) ,” NICET Communications Director Chip Hollis detailed the institute’s operations and the technician’s role on the team. NICET was founded to recognize the qualifications of technicians. Its focus, Hollis explained, helps ensure a qualified engineering workforce, certifying both engineering technicians and technologists in areas such as construction materials testing, transportation construction inspection, electrical power, fire protection, and security systems.

Don't Miss This Upcoming Webinar



Stay current with essential professional development opportunities through NSPE webinars. Members receive a special rate on the upcoming live webinar:

On **June 26** at 2 p.m., the webinar [The Saint Joseph Water Crisis – Lessons Learned in the Age of Deteriorating Water Infrastructure](#) will focus on a water crisis in Saint Joseph, Louisiana, which lends many lessons related to the difficulties faced by small and large water systems in rural environments.

In this session, David A. Martin, P.E., will present an overview of the state of the town's water system prior to and after construction, as well as an overview of the new treatment process and applicability to other aquifer systems. Additionally, participants will be presented with the lessons learned during the crisis, including regulatory involvement, use of multiple funding sources, early owner procurement of long lead time equipment, and alternate project delivery.

Don't Miss...

- [Exemptions to Engineering Licensure Laws](#). NSPE has updated this report, with information current as of May 2019. It is free for members.
- [Take Action on Licensure Exemption Bills](#). It's imperative that lawmakers hear from their professional engineering constituents who [support bills](#) in the US House and Senate targeting licensure exemptions in public utility pipeline work.
- [PECON at a Glance](#). Take a look at the lineup of activities and educational sessions taking place at the 2019 Professional Engineers Conference in Kansas City.

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