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STATE NEWS

>>> AUGUST 2020

State News for NSPE Members

2020 House of Delegates General Assembly Recap

The 2020 House of Delegate General Assembly of NSPE was held via video conference on August 1 and attended by Montana representative Mike Keene, P.E. The Assembly was led by the incoming NSPE President Tricia Hatley, P.E., F.NSPE, of Oklahoma. Her 2020–2021 term will focus on four areas:

1. Promoting diversity within our engineering community.
2. Educating for the future.
3. Supporting initiatives that align with our strategic goal of driving NSPE growth.
4. Developing and delivering quality virtual events like the eight virtual sessions that will begin in September 2020 related to member acquisition and engagement, advocacy, association leadership and management, financial management and strategic planning support for state societies.

Hatley emphasized how the NSPE members and society have successfully navigated the challenges of 2020, acknowledging that we are better when we work together.

Past President David Martini, P.E., F.NSPE, of Minnesota, noted the importance of continuing to actively promote licensure and ethics in the practice of engineering. We need to stay true to our vision and mission, particularly during this period of political, economic, and operational changes. Specific to our NSPE operations, we are losing two critical people: our Deputy Chief Executive Officer & General Counsel Arthur Schwartz, who is retiring after 38 years. Also, we are losing our current Executive Director, Mark Golden, who is leaving after sharing eight years of NSPE leadership. David Martini introduced Wendel Stewart who will serve as the Interim CEO.

The Assembly completed the voting for the new Board of Directors. Jim Baker, P.E., of Idaho, will be our Western Pacific Region representative on the BOD. He replaces Craig Cisco, P.E., of Nevada. Craig Cisco did a great job representing the

WPR and particularly our Montana needs. The Assembly also approved the amendment to NSPE Bylaw 24 by unanimous consent. The Bylaw 24 relates to Electronic Voting Provisions and Procedures.

The Assembly heard annual reports from the NSPE Treasurer and the Chief Executive Officer.

President Hatley announced that the 2021 Professional Engineers Conference will be held July 7-11 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Mike Keene, P.E., has one year left on his term as a House of Delegates representative for Montana. Interested volunteers to assume the HOD Montana seat can share their interest with the Montana Society of Engineers Board via Michele Munson at michele@assoc-mgt.com. Or you are welcome to contact Mike Keene directly at mikekeenepe@gmail.com.

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.](#)

Report: Job Opportunities in Mine Clean Ups

Some western states that are economically struggling due to the declining coal industry, may find some help in reclamation projects, according to the Western Organization of Resource Councils. A WORC [report](#) estimates that the workforce needed to complete surface mine reclamation is between 4,893 and 9,786 job-years in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, and Wyoming. Much of this work could

be completed within a relatively quick timeframe, both during mining and after closure. Thus, each year of reclamation will require thousands of workers.

"There is no one simple answer to these myriad impacts but reclamation provides one of the few, immediately available job opportunities for local workers," the report says, "and should be seen as one part of a proactive response to changing conditions in coal country."

Reclamation, whether of surface or underground mines, comes with risks, of course. Five years ago, a mine cleanup project in Colorado [went wrong](#), resulting in a spill of more than three million gallons of untreated wastewater and toxins into the Animas River. The incident sparked NSPE to push for more safeguards and greater attention to the [importance of licensure](#). Immediately following news of the spill, NSPE urged the EPA and all federal agencies to review their existing requirements and practices pertaining to the practice of engineering.

Montana Licensing Board Meetings

The Montana Board for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors held its quarterly meeting on August 20 via teleconference. The next meeting is scheduled for November 4.

Board meetings are held 4 times per year—usually early in February, May, August and November. Meetings are open to the public, although Screening Panel meetings and any necessary executive sessions are closed to the public. All meeting dates are subject to change due to board member schedules and/or weather conditions.

[Access the August meeting agenda.](#)

Job Opening

[Engineer I or II](#)

City of Bozeman

Find more job openings or reach the right employees on the [NSPE Job Board](#).

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."

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.

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)

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