

State News for NSPE Members

Senator Tester Backs Train Safety Legislation

US Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) joined recently with other federal lawmakers to introduce two bills in a bipartisan effort that he said are aimed at improving train safety in eastern Montana and other rural communities, according to the *Great Falls Tribune*.

On November 18, he introduced the “[Right Track Act](#)” along with Republic Senator Deb Fischer of Nebraska. Tester, Fischer and Senator Jerry Moran, R-Kansas, also introduced a bill that would exam more than 200,000 crossings nationwide.



Tester said Congress needs better information on these blocked crossings to make highways safer and more efficient.

Tester and Fischer said their earlier bill, “Right Track Act,” requires the Federal Rail and the Federal Highway administrations make recommendations on improving rail safety in rural areas, increase public outreach on grade crossing safety, and target resources for grade crossing safety in rural areas.

[Read more.](#)

MSU Marks Milestones for Female Engineering Enrollment, Faculty

For nearly a decade, Christine Foreman has advocated for female students in a field where men far outnumber them. So it felt like a personal victory, she said, when the number of women majoring in engineering and computer science at Montana State University recently hit an all-time high, according to a *MSU News* report.

Fall semester saw female student enrollment in MSU's [Norm Asbjornson College of Engineering](#) reach 20% of the total of 3,650 students. Adding to the milestone, Foreman, who directs MSU's [Women in Engineering](#) program, became the fourth woman ever in the college to earn the top academic rank of professor.

"I'm thrilled with the progress we've made," said Foreman, who also serves as the college's associate dean for student success. "I love being able to provide opportunities for young women and watch them exceed their own expectations."

Foreman took over as director of the Women in Engineering program in 2012, when women accounted for only 16% of students in the college. That year was also when Brett Gunnink became the college's dean and made recruiting female students a top priority. The percentage of female students in the college has steadily climbed since. "Christine's leadership, along with that of our other female faculty, has been key to promoting a culture in which women can achieve what they want to achieve," he said.

[Read more.](#)

Where Does Montana Rank on Highway Performance?

Montana ranks 10th in the nation in highway performance and cost-effectiveness, according to the Annual Highway Report by the Reason Foundation. This is a two-spot decline from the previous report, where Montana ranked 8th overall.

In safety and performance categories, Montana ranks 42nd in overall fatality rate, 28th in structurally deficient bridges, 14th in traffic congestion, 11th in urban interstate pavement condition, and 24th in rural interstate pavement condition. On spending, Montana ranks 13th in total spending per mile and 18th in capital and bridge costs per mile.

"To improve in the rankings, Montana needs to reduce its fatality rate. The state is in the bottom 15 for overall and rural fatality rates. Compared to neighboring states, the report finds Montana's overall highway performance is better than South Dakota (11th) and Washington (45th), but worse than North Dakota (ranks 1st),"

said Baruch Feigenbaum, lead author of the Annual Highway Report and senior managing director of transportation policy at Reason Foundation. “Montana is doing better than some comparable states like Wyoming (ranks 36th), but worse than others like Idaho (ranks 5th).”

The foundation’s Annual Highway Report measures the condition and cost-effectiveness of state-controlled highways in 13 categories, including pavement condition, traffic congestion, structurally deficient bridges, traffic fatalities, and spending (capital, maintenance, administrative, overall) per mile.

[Access the full report.](#)

Schools Work to Comply with State Drinking Water Lead Reduction Rules

Children spend a lot of time at school, and a statewide rule is aimed at minimizing their lead exposure while they are there.

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services rolled out the lead reduction in school drinking water rule at the beginning of 2020—its goal is simple, but complying with it poses challenges, according to KTVH news report.

The [lead reduction in school drinking water rule](#) — designed with help from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and Office of Public Instruction—states all schools under the OPI must test water throughout their facilities for lead levels.

“The schools are required to sample all their drinking water fountains, all kitchen fixtures that are used for either food preparation or drinking, as well as all their fixtures that have the potential to be used for drinking water,” DEQ lead reduction in school drinking water rule manager Greg Montgomery said.

[Read more.](#)



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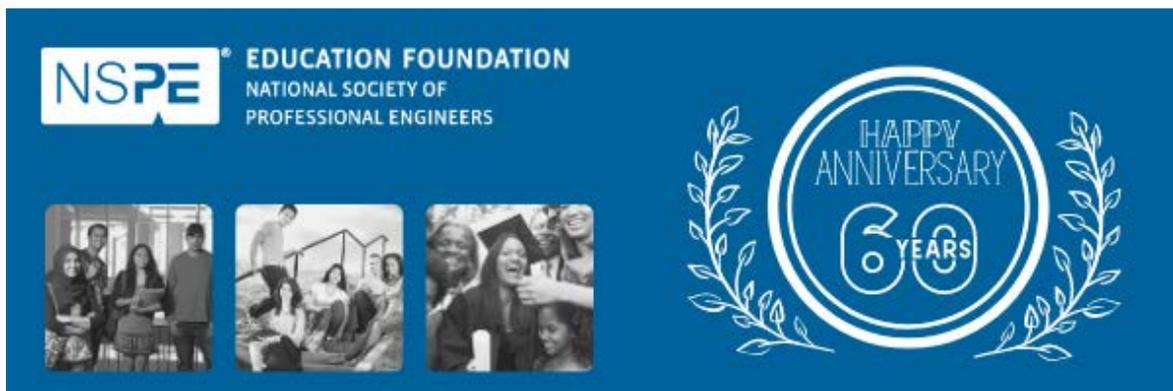
NSPE Government Relations Staff Releases 2020 Advocacy Report

NSPE's Government Relations staff has released its year-end report—**By the Numbers**—a semi-deep dive into how advocacy campaigns performed, which issues staff tracked and how often, and which members of Congress were most and least supportive of NSPE issues.

The report provides summaries of lessons learned and establishes best practices. It also draws some fact-based conclusions on who are NSPE allies on the Hill, and which offices need a little more prompting before they get on board. It's an excellent capstone to an unexpected and difficult, but ultimately successful year!

[Access the report.](#)

Education Foundation Celebrates 60 Years of Giving Back



For 60 years, the NSPE Education Foundation has been a major source of support

for the educational and ethical practice needs of engineering students, engineering teachers, and practicing professionals.

This past year, the foundation gave out five scholarships to [deserving engineering students](#) and supported young professionals in NSPE's [Emerging Leaders Program](#). In the coming year, the foundation will explore additional programs to broaden its reach and impact, and NSPE member support will mean more than ever before.

In this season of giving, and in honor of the NSPE Education Foundation's 60th anniversary, a donation of \$60 will help further its mission to support students, educators, young professionals, and the profession at large.

[Donate today.](#)

EJCDC Releases New Owner and Engineer Task Order Docs

The Engineers Joint Contract Documents Committee has released a new document: [EJCDC E-505 2020, Agreement Between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services—Task Order Edition](#). This document is available to NSPE members at a 50% discount.

EJCDC E-505 defines individual task orders for specific professional assignments. In a task order, the owner and engineer agree to task-specific terms, such as scope of services, schedule, and compensation, for each specific assignment. When a task order is issued, no drafting or negotiating is needed for provisions such as indemnification, insurance, claims, dispute resolution, suspension, or termination because these provisions will have been negotiated previously and set in place in the E-505 Main Agreement and its exhibits.

The E-505 is designed for multiple or recurring assignments (“tasks”) related to one or several projects; it is similar to the E-500 Agreement Between Owner-Engineer for Professional Services in structure, terminology, and conditions. Updates to the EJCDC E-505 include enhanced and reorganized exhibits to the E-505 main agreement and task order form to reflect evolving contract practice and improve ease of use. This edition is published in four parts, which are included in a downloadable zip file.

[Learn more.](#)

It's Not Too Late: Get Your 15 Free PDHs for 2020

Act now to take advantage of the annual NSPE membership benefit of 15 free PDHs. Access to the [2020 lineup of courses](#) will end after **December 31**.

Members may earn credits by viewing the webinars from the comfort of their home or office and will receive an attendance certificate after passing a quiz with a score of 70% or higher. PDHs from these courses are recognized by most US states, including Florida.



Don't have time to view the 15 free courses before December 31? Simply "purchase" the webinars by December 31 and add them to your NSPE member account. That way you can view them when you are ready. Webinars in your account can be accessed for up to one year.

Here's a sample of available webinar topics:

- [Engineering Ethics: The obligation to conduct themselves honorably, responsibly, ethically and lawfully](#)
- [Drones: The Sky's the Limit](#)
- [How Not to Fail as a Leader](#)
- [Professional Engineer's Role on Application of Artificial Intelligence and Technology](#)
- [Texts and Emails That Fuel Engineering Success](#)

Act now to access the [2020 free courses](#) .

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