

## State News for NSPE Members

### State Infrastructure Gets C Grade

Montana has 377 bridges and more than 1,485 miles of highway in poor condition, and 1 in 4 of the state's public transit vehicles is ready for the scrapyard, according to a new "infrastructure report card" from the Biden Administration.

A *Daily Inter Lake News* article examines the details of the [report card](#), released as part of the administration's push for a \$2.3 trillion infrastructure package. It gives Montana's overall infrastructure health a C grade and highlights how the package would address various needs.

The report finds Montanans' commute times have increased by 3.9% since 2011, and the effects of driving on roads in disrepair cost each motorist in the state an average of \$472 a year. The report goes beyond crumbling roads and bridges, noting costs associated with housing, home energy, broadband access, child care, veterans' health care, clean energy and manufacturing—all of which would be covered under the plan.

[Read more.](#)

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### Montana Tech University Opens New Engineering Labs

The newly completed SEL Power-Systems Labs will give Montana Technological University's electrical engineering students a place to hone their skills in power-system protection, energy conversion, and power plant systems. A \$1.5 million cash donation from the Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories provided funding for the labs.

The timing couldn't be better, said Dr. Dan Trudnowski, dean of the School of Mines and Engineering at Tech, according to a Government Technology website article.

Working with high voltage systems is at once expensive and dangerous if not done

right, so very few labs of the caliber Tech has exist in universities across the country, he said, adding that the industry is booming with job opportunity.

"This will enable us to have a state-of-the-art lab where they're safe. But yet, they can really get into the nuts and bolts details of high voltage power systems, which is a huge need in our society. With renewable energy coming in, one of the biggest challenges is how do you connect it to the grid safely and reliably. And so we'll be able to really get into that in a lot of detail. It really sets our program up to be one of the best in the nation," Trudnowski said.

[Read more.](#)

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## **Northwestern Energy, Colstrip Bill Ignites Controversy**

At a marathon hearing on April 14, the bill meant to encourage NorthWestern Energy to acquire a larger share of the Colstrip 4 power plant came under withering criticism, as a "corporate bailout" that could fleece the company's ratepayers, according to a KVTH.com report.

Critics, including two public service commissioners, blasted [Senate Bill 379](#) as a measure that would wipe out 100 years of rate-making policy for one asset—Colstrip—and dictate, in law, how NorthWestern gets to charge customers for its cost.

Essentially what this bill does is say, 'Hey, Legislature—we don't want to go to the (Public Service Commission) and have this great deal approved by the commission,'" said Public Service Commissioner James Brown, R-Dillon. "No, it's such a great deal that the Legislature needs to set the terms of the purchase."

But nearly two-dozen witnesses—many from Colstrip, or with unions representing Colstrip workers—lined up to defend the bill and the continuing operation of the Colstrip plant in southeast Montana. They said consumers need the reliable and affordable power that the plant produces.

[Read more.](#)

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NSPE's **Job Board** is your one-stop resource for professional engineering employment. Whether you are on the hunt for your next career move or looking for today's top engineering leaders and talent, you will find it here.

NSPE provides the tools PEs need to keep current in the profession and advance their careers.

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*Stay up to date on legislative issues through the [NSPE Advocacy Center](#).*

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## **We Need Your Input on Proposed Changes to Engineers' Creed**

The [Engineers' Creed Survey](#) will be open until 9:00 pm EDT on April 23. As outlined in previous communications, NSPE is collecting feedback on proposed modifications to update outdated language without altering the philosophical underpinnings of the organization. The hope is that the use of broad, inclusive language will help all engineers within our organization incorporate their personal beliefs and experiences to better the profession.

Thank you to members who have already completed the survey. Please note: If you previously completed the survey, you will not be able to take it again.

If you have not had a chance to provide feedback, we encourage you to do so. Your input is important.

Thank you for your assistance, and thank you for being a member of NSPE.

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## **Watch NSPE's New YouTube Vlog on Legislative and Regulatory Issues**

Episode 3 of NSPE's new [Committee Corner](#) vlog covers the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and the March 24 markup of S.914 - the Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021.

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## **Ask Your Senators to Back Drinking and Wastewater Infrastructure**

Professional Engineers play an integral role in the development and maintenance of the nation's infrastructure, including infrastructure that provides clean drinking water and safe wastewater treatment.

Every community in the United States needs clean drinking water, and wastewater treatment facilities that keep the community clean and safe. The Senate is expected to vote this week on a bill to fund these vital systems.

[Ask Your Senators to Vote "Yes" on S.914](#)

S. 914, The Drinking and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021, ensures that communities have both, by providing much-needed funding for our drinking and wastewater systems. The bill authorizes funding for the Safe Drinking Water Act programs, and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. It also establishes programs that direct services and funding to low-income and under-served communities, and allocates money to respond to cyber threats. Share your engineering expertise with your lawmakers, and ask them to support this crucial funding.

S. 914 was voted out of the Senate Environment and Public Works committee with unanimous, bipartisan support. And in a press release dated April 15th, Majority Leader Schumer said the bill could be voted on by the full Senate as early as this week.

[Ask Your Senators to Vote "Yes" on S.914](#)

Please take a moment to contact your Senators, express your support, and ask them to vote "yes" on S. 914.

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## **Society Backs House Bills on Engineering Education and 529 Savings Plans**

NSPE supports the WORKER Act ( [H.R. 594](#) ), which establishes a \$20 million grant program to make specialized engineering programs available in K–12 schools. The bill was introduced by Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH) and Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA) to improve worker training, retention, and advancement.

The grants will assist with teaching students the overall analytical and experimental approaches used in engineering and engineering technology; and increase participation of under-represented student groups in the engineering and engineering technology pipeline.

NSPE continues to advocate for passage of the Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act ( [H.R. 2171](#) ). This legislation was successfully reintroduced by Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) with support from the Professional Certification Coalition. The bill allows the beneficiaries of tax-advantaged 529 education savings plans to pay the costs associated with obtaining or maintaining postsecondary credentials—including professional licensing and private certification—with funds from their plan. As introduced, the legislation supports both new and existing PE licenses and NICET certifications. A companion bill, [S. 905](#) , was introduced by Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN).

NSPE will work with the Professional Certification Coalition leadership to help move these bills through the legislative process.

Members can view and participate in advocacy campaigns at the [NSPE Advocacy Center](#) .

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## **Scammers Target Licensed Professionals**

Scammers typically pose as someone from your bank, the IRS, or tech-support services to steal sensitive information and money, but these bad actors have added a twist to their schemes. Now, authorities are warning professional licensees that they are becoming prime targets for fraud.

In March, Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge issued a fraud alert to licensees and state licensing boards. Scammers are calling license holders with claims that their licenses are under investigation and at risk of being suspended if they don't make an immediate payment. The license holder's caller ID may even display the legitimate licensing office's phone number that has been spoofed by the scam callers.

These latest scams have increased for nurses and other licensed medical professionals, but they aren't limited to a particular state, region, or profession. In February, the Maryland Department of Labor issued an alert about phishing emails

targeting licensees. The Hawaii Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs warned licensees in July 2020 about individuals posing as state officials or law enforcement agents to intimidate potential victims into divulging personal information. And as early as 2019, the California Department of Consumer Affairs issued a fraud scheme alert to licensees of the agency's boards and bureaus, including the board that licenses design professionals.

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## Take Advantage of NSPE's Spring Webinars



Throughout April and May, NSPE will host a webinar every Wednesday starting at 2 p.m. EST. The webinars are available to members for \$99 (\$129 for nonmembers) and will include an online discussion and a 10-question quiz for the sessions to qualify for continuing education credit.

**April 28:** [Turn Your Ideas Into Gold - A Guide to Intellectual Property](#)

**May 5:** [Engineering Ethics: Canon IV - Fidelity to Employers/Clients](#)

**May 12:** [Engineering Leadership Success By Design - Emotional Intelligence and Neuroscience as Career Differentiators](#)

**May 19:** [Energy Storage: The Other Half of Renewable Energies](#)

**May 26:** [Catapult Your Win Rate by 50%](#)

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