

State News for NSPE Members

Governor Creates Commissions to Distribute ARPA Funds

Governor Greg Gianforte has created four commissions to provide recommendations for allocating federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act. The commissions are focused on infrastructure, communications, economic stabilization/workforce, and health care and are comprised of three members of the Montana Senate, three to four members of the Montana House of Representatives, and three appointees from the executive branch.

In particular, the Infrastructure Advisory Commission will review applications for funding for state capital projects and state and local government water and sewer infrastructure projects and provide recommendations on which projects should be funded.

Commission members include: Sen. Doug Kary (R-Billings), Sen. Mike Cuffe (R-Eureka), Sen. Ellie Boldman (D-Missoula), Rep. Dan Bartel (R-Lewistown), Rep. Sue Vinton (R-Billings), Rep. Jim Keane (D-Butte), Amanda Kaster (Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation), Chris Dorrington (Director of the Department of Environmental Quality), and Rachel Meredith (Counsel to Governor Gianforte).

Montana Department of Transportation News

Get access to information on Montana Department of Transportation activities, programs, and resources in [the latest issue](#) of the agency publication *Newsline*.

Federal Funds Made to Create Stronger Broadband Infrastructure

State officials are laying the foundation to spend \$275 million in federal funds to increase internet connectivity across Montana. It's the state's first widespread

government-sponsored broadband program, according to a Montana Public Radio report.

A special legislative advisory commission recently met to consider a timeline for its work, which will include recommending broadband projects funded by the latest round of federal coronavirus relief.

Though only covering about a quarter of what's needed to fully build out connectivity across Montana, State Commerce Director Scott Osterman said the \$275 million windfall and other funding streams present a massive opportunity for the state.

[Read more.](#)

Analysts See Montana Wind Farm Benefits for School Trust Lands

A southeast Montana wind farm would generate more than \$700,000 for Montana schools over the next three decades, according to the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

Clearwater Wind, a sprawling 150,000-acre development set to begin construction this summer, would include 11 wind turbines on school trust land, for which the state would receive \$770,400 in lease payments over 35 years, with more money to come from energy royalties.

"The projected income could be well over \$700,000," said Cory Shaw, DNRC property management section supervisor.

The state share of the project area is about 4,500 acres. Power generated from state land would produce additional payments, the amount of which is still uncalculated.

At 750 megawatts capacity, Clearwater will be three times bigger than the state's current largest wind farm, the 250-megawatt Pryor Mountain Wind Project constructed by PacifiCorp near Bridger in 2020.

[Read more.](#)

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

Register for the 2021 Virtual PECon

Registration is now open for NSPE's [Virtual Professional Engineers Conference](#)

2021 (August 3–5). The [early bird registration](#) rate deadline is **July 15**.

Attendees will have access to up to 14 unique and insightful PDH sessions (live and on-demand sessions) and will have the opportunity to collaborate with peers and experts from across the country through morning “coffee chats” and Mastermind sessions. In the Mastermind sessions, attendees will address their most pressing professional issues and tap into the knowledge, experience, and advice of their peers and PE experts to help workshop solutions. There will also be virtual engineering facility tours and a celebration of [PE Day](#) (August 4).



PECon at a Glance

- [Bridging the Gap to Leadership: Connecting the Skills You Have with the Skills You Need](#) (Shelley Row, P.E., CSP, Leadership and Decision-Making Expert)
- [Florida International University Bridge Failure, A Study in Ethics](#) (Susan Sprague, P.E., F.NSPE, Senior Associate, and Eric Tappert, P.E., Consultant)
- [AI and the Evolving Role of the “Traditional” Engineer: An Engineer’s Perspective from NASA to Infrastructure and Beyond](#) (Kimberly Johnson, P.E., Founding Principal)
- [Reaching New Heights in Engineering](#) (Alan Mallory, P.E., PMP, Speaker, Author, and Performance Coach)

Registration Options

A **Day Pass** for NSPE members is \$99 until July 15 and \$149 after July 15. The pass provides access to four PDH sessions, networking morning “coffee chat” roundtables of your choice each day, and evening post-session discussions.

The **All Access Pass** for NSPE members is \$249 until July 15 and \$299 after July 15. This pass provides access to 14 PDH sessions, access to daily networking morning “coffee chat” roundtables, and evening post session discussions.

Student members can register for a Day Pass or the All Access Pass for free

until July 15. The rate for both passes is \$50 after July 15. Nonmembers can join NSPE for \$299 and receive member pricing.

Women in Engineering Event to Explore Gender and Racial Equity

DiscoverE and the Congressional Women in STEM Caucus will co-host an event on **June 23**, in celebration of [International Women in Engineering Day](#). The event will include a lively panel discussion exploring the factors that attract girls to engineering, why women persist in the field, and the role you can play in achieving gender and racial equity in engineering and technology.

NSPE Government Relations staff coordinated the participation of the Women in STEM Caucus for the event. The Women in STEM Caucus seeks to bring public and congressional awareness to policies, programs, and initiatives that support women in STEM fields, and develops the next generation of women leaders. Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA), Rep. Debbie Lesko (R-AZ), Rep. Haley Stevens (D-MI), and Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-IN) serve as caucus co-chairs.

NSPE [recognizes](#) the benefits of a diverse population of licensed engineers in shaping the future of engineering. Diverse backgrounds foster unique contributions and capabilities and create an inclusive community ultimately leading to a more creative, effective and technically respected community.

[Register here.](#)

2021–22 Call for Volunteers

NSPE needs your knowledge, expertise, and time to help the Society carry out its [vision and mission and meet the goals of the strategic plan](#). Volunteer positions begin in mid-August and end at the 2022 Professional Engineers Conference.

There are three types of volunteer opportunities:

- **Level 1 (Highest Engagement)–Standing Boards and Committees**
Often includes attending at least one in-person meeting. Most meetings held via video conference. Terms may be up to three years.
- **Level 2 (Intermediate Engagement)–Ad Hoc Committees and Task Forces**
Activities primarily include online correspondence and video conference meetings.

- **Level 3 (Lowest Engagement)–Ad Hoc Volunteer**
Volunteer on a project-by-project basis.

Submit forms by July 9 to be considered for a 2021-22 term.

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