

State News for NSPE Members

Montana Tech Adds New Construction Management Degree

[NBC Montana reports](#) that Montana Technological University has announced the addition of a new Construction Management degree. The four-year bachelor's degree is meant to fill the need for construction leaders in the state.

"We are incredibly excited about the new Construction Management curriculum at Montana Tech," School of Mines and Engineering Dean Kenneth Lee said. "Our program will provide graduates with well-paying, high-demand careers in the construction industry in Montana and beyond."

The new degree is a perfect fit for students who want to participate in Montana's robust and growing construction economy and prefer to focus their studies on the multidisciplinary aspects of the field that include logistics, CAD design, communications, surveying, health and safety, budget and cost analysis, human resources, and personnel management, in conjunction with foundational principles of construction. The new program also allows two-year pathways from programs offered at Highlands College.

Executive Director of Admissions and Enrollment Leslie Dickerson reports that Montana Tech is accepting applications to the university for Fall 2023 and Fall 2024. Fall 2023 courses begin August 21. "It's not too late to get signed up for classes," Dickerson said. [Read more.](#)

Growing Interest in Solar Energy Driven by Efficiency Gains, Financial Incentives

A growing number of people in Montana are reconsidering solar as a viable option due to technological advancements and financial incentives, [according to a report in Energyportal.eu.](#)

Modern solar panels are twice as efficient and significantly cheaper than they were

15 years ago. This means that even in regions like Montana, where sunlight can be scarce during the winter months, solar energy systems are becoming more attractive for both residential and commercial buildings. A moderately sized commercial building can now be fitted with a solar system capable of producing 50kW of electricity, enough to power two modern homes.

One major factor driving the increased adoption of solar energy is the availability of federal grants and tax credits. These incentives can lower the cost of installing a photovoltaic solar system by up to 65%. This financial benefit appeals to a wide range of customers, regardless of their political views. Both environmentalists and conservatives are motivated by the potential savings and the positive impact on the environment. [Read more.](#)

Montana Tribes to Get \$3.5 Million for Road Improvements

[The Missoulian reports](#) that Montana Indian tribes are set to receive about \$3.5 million in federal resources to strengthen roadway safety across tribal lands in the state.

The Federal Highway Administration recently announced a \$20.9 million allocation for 88 projects geared toward improving safety on roads and highways on tribal lands across the country. Of the 19 states included in the grant funding, Montana is getting the second-highest investment.

The grants are aimed at minimizing deaths of Indigenous people across the country, a news release from the US Department of Transportation stated. Injuries and fatalities from vehicle-related incidents disproportionately impact Native American people, according to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data.

“The crisis of traffic deaths on our nation’s roads stretches across the country, and that devastation is experienced at even higher rates in communities of Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and other indigenous peoples,” said US Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg in the news release. “The grants we are announcing today through our Tribal Transportation Program will improve, repair, and modernize infrastructure in communities of all sizes on Tribal land, making roads safer and saving lives,” he continued. [Read more.](#)

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

Vermont PE Rises to Top Leadership

William (Bill) Atkinson, P.E., F.NSPE, was installed as NSPE’s 2023–24 president during a ceremony at



NSPECon23 in Louisville, Kentucky, on August 3. He has spent most of his career volunteering for NSPE and various engineering organizations that hold true to his passion for protecting the public through licensure and ethical engineering decision making.

Atkinson serves as the engineering manager and lead engineer at Vermont Mechanical Inc., a mechanical and plumbing design build contractor that focuses on healthcare and commercial construction (where he has been employed since 2001). He currently directs the service and engineering departments.

Throughout his engineering career, Atkinson has taken on various volunteer and leadership positions within NSPE, the Vermont Society of Professional Engineers, ASHRAE, and NCEES. He served on the Vermont Board of Professional Engineers and the University of Vermont College of Engineering Advisory Board. He has also served as an ABET observer and as the president of the Clarkson University Vermont Alumni Chapter. He is a licensed professional engineer in New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

Atkinson lives in Essex, Vermont, with his wife, Kim Atkinson, P.E., and two young active sons. When he and his wife are not working they are often found coaching or enjoying the outdoors in all seasons.

Honoring Excellence in the Profession

NSPE members were recently honored for their outstanding contributions to the profession during NSPECon23 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Engineering Education Excellence Award

This award recognizes licensed engineering faculty who have demonstrated the ability to link engineering education with professional practice. It is sponsored by the Professional Engineers in Higher Education (PEHE) interest group.



Waterloo Tsutsui, Ph.D., P.E., is a senior research associate in the School of Aeronautics and Astronautics at Purdue University where his primary aim is to provide a rigorous education that nurtures an engineering mindset among students and empowering them to analyze, communicate, and solve complex problems. He ensures students derive maximum advantage from meticulously designed educational experiences integrated into their curriculum, fostering lasting knowledge and capabilities that extend far beyond the confines of the classroom

for the ultimate benefit of students. As an example, Tsutsui implemented virtual labs and visualization in lab courses as an innovative way to link engineering practice to education.

New Professional of the Year Award

This award recognizes a young NSPE member who has made outstanding contributions to the engineering profession and the community during the early years of one's career.



Sri Kumar, P.E., is the president and CEO of Connico, a national consultancy serving the aviation, civil, and transportation markets. In his current role, he is responsible for outlining the company's strategy for the future, ensuring the company continues to execute its goals, and delivering excellence to clients from Tampa to Seattle. He is also committed to building Connico's employee-focused culture and is passionate about developing a strong, diverse, and uniquely talented team who work each day on solving some of the nation's most complex infrastructure challenges.

Emerging Leaders Program Seeks Candidates



The [NSPE Emerging Leaders Program](#) is seeking the next group of engineering change-makers. Candidates with 5–8 years of professional experience in the engineering field who are prepared to think strategically about their career and begin taking on leadership roles are [invited to apply](#).

The 2024 ELP syllabus and related time-commitments are available and the application for the program is due by **Thursday, August 31**.

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