Introducing the 2024 Engineer of the Year and Young Engineer of the Year

The NSPE-NH Engineer of the Year and Young Engineer of the Year are the highest awards given to individuals by the New Hampshire Engineering Societies. The awards will be presented at the 2024 Engineers Week Awards Banquet on February 22.

2024 Engineer of the Year

The New Hampshire Public Works Association nominated Kürt Blomquist, P.E., for this prestigious award based on his impressive contributions to the engineering and public works profession, his dedication to public welfare, and service to the community through numerous volunteer activities.

After graduating from the Norwich University with a civil engineering degree, Blomquist began his engineering career with the United States Air Force. Committed to the engineering profession, he became a professional engineer in 1989 and, wanting to further his understanding of engineering, obtained a master's degree in civil engineering with a focus in construction management from Georgia Institute of Technology three years later.

In 1993, Blomquist began his 30-year career in public works as the City of Keene's
deputy public works director for a year before being promoted to public works director. During his time with the City of Keene, he also served as emergency management director (since 2015) and assistant city manager (since 2021). Read more.

**2024 Young Engineer of the Year**

![Katelyn Welch, P.E.](image)

_Katelyn Welch, P.E.,_ was nominated by the Structural Engineers of New Hampshire (SENH) based on her record of professional accomplishments, service to the profession and promoting engineering and volunteer activities in the community.

Welch completed both her undergraduate and graduate studies at the University of New Hampshire, earning a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a master's degree in structural engineering.

Welch began her career with Hoyle Tanner & Associates, Inc. as an intern in 2015 and has rapidly advanced her career to her current role as structural engineer. She has been a driving force behind many successful projects, having tackled any task asked of her from bridge design calculations, roadway design calculations, load ratings, quantification and estimation, construction administration and inspection, shop drawing review, and CADD drafting for municipal and state agency bridge projects. Beyond her design and technical efforts, K also leads numerous projects in the stakeholder engagement process to ensure smooth transition from design through the construction phase of many projects. Read more.

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**2024 STEM Excellence in Teaching Awards Program**

NSPE-NH is accepting application packages for the _STEM Excellence in Teaching Awards_. Nominate an outstanding teacher and help us recognize those individuals that go above and beyond to educate our children in mathematics, science, technology, and pre-engineering! The _submission deadline is March 15_. 


What Increased Flooding Means for NH Energy Infrastructure

When historic high-tide flooding struck Hampton Beach on a Saturday in January, Unitil received reports of submerged natural gas service meters and regulators. Gas technicians decided to proactively conduct door-to-door inspections – approximately 3,000 meters were checked for damage, the *New Hampshire Bulletin* reports.

As unprecedented flooding wallopied the coast that day, Unitil warned customers about serious hazards, namely wet electrical wiring and gas service equipment. If someone suspected a gas leak, they were urged to call 911 and move to a safe environment.

While the gas system itself wasn’t directly impacted by the flooding, Unitil ultimately shut off about 100 meters that had sustained damage and required repairs or replacement.

The science of what actually happened on January 13 isn’t settled – whether the area was due for a historic extreme weather event, akin to the Blizzard of ’78, or if the storm was climate change-driven – said Jennifer Jacobs, professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of New Hampshire. But what is certain is that high-tide flooding is becoming increasingly common due to years of sea level rise, scientists say.

For the utilities that provide residents and businesses with electricity and gas services, it’s an escalating reality they’re considering in their strategic plans. From substations, to transformers, to individual gas meters at homes, flooding and storm surge pose threats to energy infrastructure. Read more.

NH Officials Share Draft Climate Priorities

New Hampshire's plan to take action on climate change is getting its first update since 2009. State officials are highlighting incentives and support for electric vehicles, public transportation, energy efficiency, heat pumps and workforce development as top priorities, nhpr.org reports.

The state's Department of Environmental Services this week released a draft of issues they'll include in the Priority Climate Action Plan, which is due to the federal government on March 1.

New Hampshire's priorities focus on reducing emissions in transportation and
residential buildings — the sources of the majority of the state’s climate-warming greenhouse gas emissions. State officials are using funding from the Inflation Reduction Act to create the plan. When it’s complete, it will allow the state to apply for more federal money to help with reducing emissions and air pollution. The federal government is expected to prioritize projects that benefit lower-income communities and those that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Almost half of the climate-warming emissions New Hampshire puts into the atmosphere come from transportation: cars, trucks, buses, airplanes, and the like. To address that, officials are hoping to incentivize residents to buy electric vehicles by reducing their upfront costs with rebates, making EV charging more accessible, and increasing access to public transportation. Read more.

Stay up to date on legislative issues through the NSPE Advocacy Center.

NCEES Seeks PE Expertise to Update Exams

NCEES is currently seeking licensed professional engineers to participate in a professional activities and knowledge study, or PAKS, to update specifications for the PE Architectural Engineering Exam and the PE Environmental Exam.

**Architectural Engineering**
NCEES requires a cross section of PEs practicing architectural engineering (including those working in industry, consulting, the public sector, and academia) to complete an online survey about the tasks and knowledge required of a licensed architectural engineer with four to six years of experience to practice in a manner that safeguards the public. Access the survey here and participate by April 24.

**Environmental Engineering**
NCEES requires a cross section of PEs practicing environmental engineering (including those working in industry, consulting, the public sector, and academia) to complete an online survey about the tasks and knowledge required of a licensed environmental engineer with four to six years of experience to practice in a manner that safeguards the public. Access the survey here and participate by May 5.

The 2024 Scholarship Season Opens

The NSPE Education Foundation is now accepting applications for the 2024 scholarship season through an online submission platform. The application deadline is April 1.

**High School**
The Maureen L. and Howard N. Blitman, P.E., Scholarship to Promote Diversity in
Engineering is awarded annually to a high school senior from an ethnic minority who has been accepted into an ABET-accredited engineering program at a four-year college or university. The award is for $5,000.

Undergraduate
The Steinman Scholarship is awarded annually to undergraduates entering or continuing their junior year in a four-year ABET-accredited engineering program. The award is for $5,000.

The William R. Kimel, P.E., Engineering Scholarship is awarded to an undergraduate student who is a resident of either Kansas or Missouri, enrolled as a junior in an ABET-accredited engineering program in a college or university in either Kansas or Missouri. The award is for $2,500.

Graduate
The George B. Hightower, P.E. Fellowship is awarded annually to a current engineering undergraduate or graduate student who is enrolled in, or graduated from, an ABET-accredited engineering program. The award is for $3,000.

PE Institute – 15 Free Webinar Package

NSPE has moved 15 on-demand webinars out from behind the paywall for viewing by members from the comfort of home or the office. Members can add the webinar package to their account now. Once added, the webinars can be viewed through January 15, 2025.

Since 2022, NSPE has offered all PE Institute webinars free of charge to members. Past webinars are also available for viewing in the On-Demand Webinars section of the PE Institute website.