

State News for NSPE Members

Registration Open: 2023 NHJES Annual Conference

Please join us for the **NHJES Annual Conference** on **Wednesday, October 18**. The conference will be held at the Bedford Event Center (379 South River Road, Bedford, NH 03110) from 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. The registration fee is \$125. Sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities are also available.

We are revamping the format this year and will have a morning of short lectures followed by lunch and an afternoon of interactive sessions. Dress is business casual, and bring a laptop to delve into some AI activities.

Speakers/Topics

James T. McKim, Jr., PMP, ITL – Taming Unconscious & Other Types of Bias in Engineering

Aaron Cheever, P.E. – Stormwater Best Management Practices

Jim Isaac – Generative AI

Kayla Hampe, P.E. and Aaron Lachance, P.E. – Peterborough Bridge Case Study

Nicole Fox, P.E. – Complete Streets

[Register Now!](#)

Coastal Communities Seek to Protect Drinking Water from Climate Change

Local scientists, engineers, and planners are seeking a clearer picture on a vulnerability that's becoming more prominent: sea-level induced groundwater rise and its effects on coastal water sources, [WBUR reports](#).

Groundwater rise has the potential to bring more disruptions to infrastructure than surface flooding in coastal areas, said Jayne Knott, environmental engineer who has worked on modeling projects for some Seacoast communities.

The closer to the coast a drinking water well or aquifer is, the more likely it is for saltwater to enter from below. Wells that are drilled deep into bedrock are also increasingly vulnerable to saltwater intrusion.

Septic systems can also fail if they become submerged in water, said Jennifer Jacobs, engineering professor at the University of New Hampshire. "In order to work, septic systems need to have some distance between the system and the groundwater below it, where it provides treatment to the waste," said Jacobs.

Knott and Jacobs are working with the state's environmental agency to do an updated coastal risk assessment for coastal communities in the state, which they said should conclude in September of next year. That assessment will include more inland communities, such as Dover, Madbury, Rollinsford, Exeter and Newcastle. [Read more.](#)

Grafton County Awarded \$12 Million Federal Grant for Broadband Build-Out

Grafton County has been awarded a \$12 million grant from the federal bipartisan infrastructure law to help expand high-speed broadband by building out the backbone, or middle mile, which residents, businesses, emergency services, hospitals, schools, and municipalities can tap into, the [Caledonian Record reports](#).

The \$12 million NTIA award will help Grafton County develop a 222-mile fiber optic cable to provide communities with faster and dependable internet and it will also support the infrastructure needed for the county's future broadband growth needs with minimal additional investment.

"Providing the resources to connect unserved and under-served communities to reliable, high-speed internet is one of the best investments we can make to secure future growth in our state," said US Senator Jean Shaheen, a negotiator of the bipartisan infrastructure law. "I'm proud to welcome this \$12 million federal grant to build out over 200 miles of fiber optic cable that will help deliver faster internet service to Granite Staters in Grafton County."

US Representative Ann Kuster remarked, "This investment from the bipartisan infrastructure law is a game-changer for New Hampshire. These federal funds will help towns and communities throughout Grafton County connect homes, hospitals, schools and more directly to high-speed internet." [Read more.](#)

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

Workability Webinars Series to Focus on Emerging Tech

NSPE offers a live webinar series free to members—"WORKability Wednesdays"—to support members with their professional development goals. The first webinar of this season took place on September 13 - [How New PFAS Regulations Will Impact Water and Wastewater Utilities](#) . A webinar on [What Utilities Want Fleets to Know About Moving to Electric Vehicles](#) will take place on September 27.



NSPE members get free access to the webinars, but must register to attend. Visit the [PE Institute](#) to review the full series line-up and to mark your calendar for these live, online events.

Registration Open: 2023 NSPE Women's Leadership Virtual Fall Symposium

Join us for these live, one-time events to hear from experts in the field and join your colleagues in important discussions organized by NSPE's Women Leadership Program Task Force: [The Cost of Leadership](#); [Leading Yourself: Learning to Increase Your Emotional Intelligence](#); and [Networking Strategies: An Unconventional Approach to Connecting with Others](#) . The webinars will take place on October 12, October 19, and October 26 at 1:00 p.m. (ET). This exclusive package is free and includes all three live, one-time sessions. The sessions will not be recorded and PDH credits will not be issued for them.

[Register now.](#)

#NSPECon23 Revisited

NSPECon23 provided an opportunity to learn and build community in the heart of Louisville, Kentucky. Find photos from the All Things Louisville reception, the first-time attendee mixer, PE Day celebrations, recognition and installation ceremonies, and more on [NSPE's Flickr account](#) . Relive the fun and excitement with all your PE peers that gathered to celebrate the engineering profession.



Save the Date: NSPECon24—Raleigh, North Carolina—August 7–9



A False Solution for Our Workforce Challenges

The Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing (ARPL) recently posted an opinion column that highlights the risks of weakening professional licensing

requirements to address workforce challenges. NSPE is a member of ARPL.

Workforce shortages, talent pipelines at a trickle and expensive labor are all-too-familiar challenges facing businesses and the public sector. In an attempt to tackle these problems, there is a growing trend of exploring the weakening or elimination of certain key job requirements. These proposals include getting rid of college degree requirements without equivalency alternatives, doing away with requisite testing, and downgrading credentials and licensure for professionals.

To be sure, there are some elements of the occupational licensure process that require continuous improvement and elimination of impediments disparately impacting underrepresented groups. However, in the rush to address workforce challenges, legislators and other policymakers must be cautious not to create new problems that leave employers and the public at risk.

Weakening professional licensing requirements is a false solution to various workforce ills. Minimum qualifications ensured by licensing exist to protect employers and the public they serve. This is particularly important for technical professions with high public impact, such as architecture, certified public accountancy, engineering, landscape architecture and land surveying. Care must be taken to ensure that critical licensing systems for such professions, designed to ensure public and economic protection, are not compromised and swept up in broad-brush calls for occupational licensing reform. [Read more](#) .

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