

## State News for NSPE Members



### Rural Internet Infrastructure Woes

Rural parts of New Hampshire are struggling with poor internet service that “is failing to meet remote work and schooling needs during the pandemic,” [reports the NH Business Review](#). The findings are based on an ongoing survey of state residents. Between 45% and 55% of respondents from Landaff, North Haverhill, Bristol, Keene, Orford, and Lebanon said their internet “is not adequate for work, meaning they have difficulty videoconferencing, uploading or transferring large files and connecting to the virtual private network of their company.” Gov. Chris Sununu recently announced \$6.5 million will be allocated to broadband projects in the towns of Bristol, Danbury, Deering, Errol, Hillsboro, Mason, Springfield, Stoddard, and Washington.

### Grant Boosts UNH STEM Education Program

The University of New Hampshire has received \$2 million in federal funding for STEM education. The grant, awarded by the National Science Foundation, will support a university project that aims to strengthen teaching curriculums for STEM subjects. These new curriculums would better educate students on core skills, such as analyzing visual learning materials like graphs and knowledge of fundamental mathematical concepts like ratios and proportions, allowing students to acquire a more integrated view of science that will boost their understanding and educational success. The grant was announced on August 17 by New Hampshire legislators: US Senator Jeanne Shaheen, US Senator Maggie Hassan, and Representatives

## NH Prepares for Flying Cars

Will New Hampshire's new law on roadable aircraft, commonly called flying cars, put the Granite State in the transportation spotlight? To some extent it already has. The bill signed by Gov. Sununu was the first of its kind in the country, and government and private companies are collaborating in preparation for takeoff. Read more in the [Lowell Sun](#).

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## At Virtual PECon, NTSB Chair Discusses Florida Bridge Collapse

In a session on August 5, National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Robert Sumwalt III explained the role of the NTSB and the agency's investigation and [report](#) on the deadly pedestrian bridge collapse at Florida International University in Miami.



In March 2018, a pedestrian bridge under construction at FIU collapsed—claiming six lives. Despite evidence of severe cracking, the engineer of record insisted that the cracking did not pose a safety problem, according to the NTSB report. The university wanted to enhance pedestrian safety by constructing the bridge over a multilane highway that had been the scene of a pedestrian fatality. It would also serve as a unique gathering place for students, faculty, and university visitors.

“We all know that cracking in concrete is going to happen. That’s acceptable. But in this case, we saw structural cracks that were 40 times larger than is typically acceptable,” Sumwalt stated. The bridge was designed using an “accelerated bridge construction” design method.

The NTSB identified three critical errors: 1) The bridge was under-designed. 2) The peer review was insufficient; and 3) There was a failure to close the bridge to traffic and workers.

During the session, Sumwalt outlined how failures at all levels to stop work on the project or to close the highway to vehicle traffic and pedestrians played a significant role in the tragedy. He emphasized the responsibility to speak out for public safety no matter what.

“I saw those crushed cars. Six people lost their lives because of what I will call hubris and professional arrogance,” he stated. “I don’t care where you fit on the

totem pole, if something doesn't look right, you have an ethical and moral obligation to wave the flag.”

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## Access Virtual PECon Webinars

NSPE members who registered for an all-access pass and individual sessions can access webinar recordings at their convenience. Members who were unable to attend **PECon** can [purchase and access](#) some individual sessions at a discounted member price.

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## Coming Soon: 'Fireside Chat' Series

NSPE is hosting a set of fireside chat style webinars on legislative issues affecting the future of the engineering profession, as well as the here and now.

Monday, August 31 (TBD)

**Diversity is the Future of Engineering: Opportunities in STEM Education**

Monday, September 14 (3 p.m. ET)

**Building for the Future**, with US Rep. Bruce Westerman, P.E. (R-AR)

Be on the lookout for more information!

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