

State News for NSPE Members

Louisiana DOTD Gets \$10.5M for Columbia Port Commission

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development recently announced the Columbia Port Commission would receive \$10.5 million in grant funding from the US Department of Transportation, [according to Transportation Today News](#).

The grants, part of the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program, will allow the commission to fund the Grant Ouachita River & La Highway. 165 Multimodal Connectivity and Safety Project which will build a state-of-the-art truck parking facility at the Port of Columbia. Officials said the facility would have surface parking for an estimated 50 commercial trucks, 100 cars and 12 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.

“Our ports are a critical part of our economic system in the state, and also provides support for some of the most critical freight movements in the country,” said Renee Lapeyrolerie, DOTD commissioner of multimodal commerce. “Approximately 33% of freight that comes through Louisiana travels by water, and this grant will enhance our port program.”

Officials said the project will begin in late 2023 and be completed in early 2027, weather permitting. [Read more](#).

Louisiana Commission Approves Renewable Projects

Southwestern Electric Power Co. has received approval by the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) to move forward with its fuel-free power plan to acquire up to 999 megawatts of renewable generation resources, [according to a news release](#).

The LPSC approved the terms of a settlement agreement reached on March 10, 2023, by all parties in the proceeding, subject to certain procedural conditions moving forward. This effort will help meet projected power needs while protecting

customers from volatility in energy costs.

The additional generating capacity is necessary to meet the energy needs of SWEPCO customers. That need has increased due to new rules from the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) that require utilities to have available additional generation capacity to support reliability. SPP is the 14-state grid-balancing authority that includes Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas.

“SWEPCO’s analysis of our generation needs showed that the lowest cost, best value option for capacity was adding wind and solar resources,” said Brett Mattison, SWEPCO president and Chief Operating Officer. “We appreciate our regulatory commissioners allowing us to bring more low-cost, renewable energy to Louisiana customers.”

One solar and two wind projects are to be constructed by Invenergy and acquired by SWEPCO. The three projects were identified through a competitive bidding process. They are:

- Mooringsport, a 200 MW solar facility located in Caddo Parish, Louisiana.
- Diversion, a 200.6 MW wind facility in Baylor County, Texas
- Wagon Wheel, a 598.4 MW wind facility located in Garfield, Kingfisher, Logan, Payne, and Noble counties in Oklahoma. [Read more.](#)

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

Meet the 2023 NSPE Emerging Leaders



NSPE is pleased to recognize 15 talented professionals who recently completed the Society’s [Emerging Leaders Program](#). This diverse group of young professionals was selected from around the country to take part in an intensive, unique enterprise designed to equip them as leaders in the engineering field.

- **Nicholas J. Bailey, P.E.** (Cincinnati, Ohio)
- **Frank Block III, Ph.D., P.E.** (Silver Spring, Maryland)
- **Timothy Choma, P.E.** (Iselin, New Jersey)

- **Courtney Cunningham, P.E.** (Houston, Texas)
- **Steven T. Fox, P.E.** (Nashville, Tennessee)
- **Blane Gee, P.E.** (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)
- **Holly Hartley Guillaume, P.E.** (Katy, Texas)
- **Lingbee Chyna Lim, P.E.** (Charleston, South Carolina)
- **Brianne R. Jole, P.E.** (Lubbock, Texas)
- **Corey Kingsland, P.E.** (Kansas City, Missouri)
- **Carter Lytal, P.E.** (Lubbock, Texas)
- **Rebecca Martinez, P.E.** (Cherry Hill, New Jersey)
- **Alissa Neuhausen, P.E.** (Rockville, Maryland)
- **Victor Odili, P.E.** (Conroe, Texas)
- **Skylar Wierzbicki, P.E.** (Grapevine, Texas)

The program is [accepting applications](#) for the next class of rising leaders until August 31.



The upcoming [Professional Engineers Day](#) (Wednesday, August 2) is an incredible opportunity to showcase the value of NSPE and your PE license. We encourage you to post on your social media accounts a highlight from your community, your work, your impact, your story and include the #IAMNSPE, #WeareNSPE, #ProudPE.

NSPE's [apparel shop](#) features the PE Day logo on a variety of items including many styles of t-shirts and other apparel for men, women, and kids, as well as accessories like mugs, notebooks, tote bags, wall prints, and even phone cases. [Shop now.](#)

Check Out the Latest Issue of *PE*

The Chatter About AI

OpenAI's ChatGPT came on the scene in November 2022. This type of generative AI has made a noticeable impact in a brief period of time and other versions of chatbots have been released. This emerging technology is sparking discussions about what impact AI could have on the engineering workforce and in engineering practice.

Reaching Tomorrow's Innovators

DiscoverE has released its latest research on the views of high school students and parents on engineering and engineering careers. The Messages Matter results were encouraging as they reveal that targeted messages and profiles of engineers can spur interest in engineering among the very groups that will ensure a more diverse future for the field.

Members who subscribe to the [digital edition of *PE*](#) can access the current and back issues.



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