

## State News for NSPE Members

### Refinery Tests Out 5G Technology

A Phillips 66 refinery in Belle Chasse is testing a private 5G cellphone network to control sensors and lay the foundation of implementing the industrial internet of things and other applications, according to the [1012 Industry Report](#). The company is working with Accenture and AT&T to install the 5G towers that will provide the wireless service. “Mobile applications are central to our day-to-day business activities—we use them for safety inspection forms for oil distillation units, capacity tracking and more — so connectivity is critical to keeping our operations running,” said Zhanna Golodryga, senior vice president, chief digital and administrative officer at Phillips 66.

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### How to Tame a Spillway

In the last five years, the Army Corps of Engineers has opened the Bonnet Carré Spillway an unprecedented four times. Each opening can cause water quality problems and other environmental challenges. To better manage the river as the possibility of more climate-driven river floods increases, a new [Tulane University study](#) has demonstrated the efficacy of upper river diversions. The diversions, according to the study, can improve river management and reduce the volume of water flowing through the spillway. The study was conducted by Ehab Meselhe, a professor in the university’s Department of River-Coastal and Science Engineering.

The Bonnet Carré Spillway, located in St. Charles Parish, allows flood waters from the Mississippi River to flow into Lake Pontchartrain and then into the Gulf of Mexico. It has been opened 16 times since its construction in 1937 — four times since March 2018. In 2019, an unprecedented volume of water was released through the structure, nearly 31 million acre-ft.

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**We Want to Hear from You!**

Do you know of engineering news in Louisiana that would be great for this newsletter? Maybe it's a project you or your firm is working on, or perhaps you read some interesting engineering news in your local newspaper. Or maybe you know of a fellow PE or student who deserves a little recognition. If so, we want to hear from you. Email your ideas to [pemagazine@nspe.org](mailto:pemagazine@nspe.org).

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## **NSPE Urges Veto of Structural Engineering Bill**

In a letter to Georgia Governor Brian Kemp, NSPE encouraged the veto of a bill to establish a separate licensing system for structural engineers.

President-Elect Tricia Hatley, P.E., F.NSPE, wrote that creating a new licensing system for structural engineering does not improve the public health, safety, or welfare. "Instead, it muddies the water, creating confusion and requiring regulatory authorities to make arbitrary distinctions to define structural engineering," she added. "Rather than reducing regulatory burdens, the change would add a new layer, requiring one engineer to obtain multiple licenses in order to do work that, previously, required only one."

Instead of creating a separate licensing system, NSPE recommends a certification process that occurs after the professional engineering license has already been obtained. "This system would allow for the SE designation, if required or requested by potential employers or RFPs, without drawing the same, hard line between structural and other types of engineering," Hatley wrote.

[Read the full letter.](#)

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## **Take Action on Federal Infrastructure Bills**

You have an important opportunity to add your voice to the debate around pending infrastructure legislation.

The first two bills are the House and Senate's surface transportation infrastructure reauthorization bills—the INVEST in America Act ([H.R. 2](#)) and the America's Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019 ([S. 2302](#)). This is an opportunity to communicate to members of Congress the importance and value of having PEs involved in engineering decisions to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

[Take action on surface transportation reauthorization!](#)

The third bill, the SMART Infrastructure Act ([H.R. 4687](#)), would take decision-making authority away from professional engineers and instead give it to state and local authorities, allowing them to select "appropriate" construction materials. The

bill would establish that these entities would have the flexibility to select appropriate construction materials that meet the performance requirements of the contract and enhance the service life, sustainability, and resiliency of the project.

NSPE opposes this bill because its enactment would prevent PEs from making the final decision on the appropriate construction materials for a project. Additionally, it establishes a federal interagency task force charged with deciding whether state and local procurement practices have artificial barriers to competition for new and innovative materials and recommending actions that can be taken to remove barriers. Their decisions could put the public at risk should these new and innovative materials present unforeseen harms to the public.

[Voice your opposition to H.R. 4687!](#)

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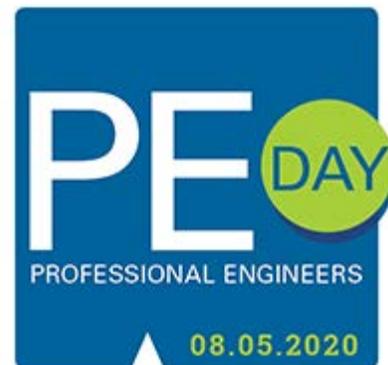
## Celebrate PE Day!

NSPE is celebrating licensed professional engineers with the [fifth annual Professional Engineers Day](#) on Wednesday, **August 5**. Join the Society in raising awareness about what it means to be a PE and showing appreciation for the work they do every day.

In lieu of in-district meetings with legislators, like those conducted last year, NSPE members will be able to participate in a series of panel discussions. The discussions will include members of Congress and/or their staff, who will share information on pending legislation that impacts the engineering profession. NSPE members will have opportunities to ask questions and to take action on the bills that are discussed by the panel.

PE Day falls within the week of the Virtual **PECon** (August 3–7). As a highlight of PE Day, NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt III, will discuss [“The Role and Responsibility of Professional Engineers in Ensuring Safety of Our Nation’s Infrastructure.”](#) His presentation will touch on the NTSB’s recommendation for eliminating the PE license exemption for public utility work, and the requirement for a professional engineer’s seal on public utility engineering drawings, stemming from the tragic pipeline explosions and fires in the Merrimack Valley of Massachusetts.

IBM’s Global Chief Technology Officer Ben Amaba, is also featured as a keynote speaker and will cover the [professional engineer’s role](#) in artificial intelligence and technology.



SUMWALT



AMABA

[Register for the Virtual PECon.](#)

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