

State News for NSPE Members

Litigation Over Coastline Damage

Federal judges ruled in early August that Louisiana parishes can use the state court system to pursue claims against oil and gas companies for coastline damage, according to [Bloomberg Law](#). Parishes are pursuing 42 lawsuits against more than 200 companies. The cases center a receding coastline that threatens homes, businesses, and infrastructure, such as flood protection systems.

The Benefits of Plugging Orphan Wells

Louisiana has almost 4,300 abandoned oil and gas wells. Plugging them will not only cut pollution but also provide jobs to those hurt in the economic downturn, [reports Houma Today](#). The news comes from a report by Columbia University and the environmental policy think tank Resources for the Future. The article says, “Plugging all of Louisiana’s orphan wells could employ just over 1,000 oil workers full-time for one year. It would also cut methane emissions by 558 metric tons per year, according to the report’s metrics.”

In a separate [article](#) in the *West Side Journal*, the Louisiana Oil and Gas Association reports that the state has plugged more than 3,300 abandoned wells since 1993 at a cost of \$128 million.

Federal Funding for Wastewater Projects

The United States Department of Agriculture is investing \$462 million to modernize water and wastewater infrastructure in rural parts of America, including four projects in Louisiana, [according to brproud.com](#). The main projects are replacement of Louisiana’s Zone Two Water System’s water mains and meters; the drilling of two water production wells in Colfax; a new water treatment plant in Tullos; and, in St Landry Parish, the addition of water softeners, installation of a ground storage tank, and replacement of service pumps.

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.”

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.

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!

You received this e-mail because you are subscribed to *PE Matters* e-newsletter.

To update your e-mail address, visit www.nspe.org and login to manage your account.

If you do not wish to receive any more issues of *PE Matters*, [click here](#) to unsubscribe .

Share with your network



**National Society of Professional Engineers | 1420 King Street | Alexandria, VA
22314**

