Beckmann Commits $5M to Ole Miss Engineering School

The first female graduate of the University of Mississippi School of Engineering committed a $5 million estate gift to her alma mater for Giving Day 2024, and plans call for the Department of Chemical Engineering to bear her name in honor of the legacy gift.

Barbara Kerr Beckmann, a senior economic adviser for ExxonMobil focusing on planning and optimization, has always been a trailblazer. The company's first female engineer has enjoyed a 63-year career — longer than any other company employee.

"Engineering is about problem-solving, which is one of my major interests," said Beckmann, an Arkansas native who lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. "I considered going into medicine, but after an assessment, my high school guidance counselor said I did not have the personality for it. My fascination with math and science led to my decision to study engineering. Read more in the Mississippi Business Journal.

Mississippi State University to Launch Electric Shuttle Bus Pilot Program

New electric passenger shuttle buses on the Mississippi State campus will be the first of its kind in Mississippi and the Southeastern Conference. Mississippi State University will be on the cutting edge of technology, innovation, and research—introducing an electric-autonomous passenger shuttle system pilot program to campus and community this fall. The shuttles, deployed by Beep, Inc., are designed for safety, sustainability, accessibility and efficiency, Magnolia State Live reports.

Two shuttles, each seating up to 11 passengers, including an attendant, are slated to be available for riders in September as part of a pilot project to evaluate how the autonomous vehicles complement other modes of campus transportation. Two
routes are planned to shuttle students between the core of campus and key housing points, as well as popular entertainment destinations.

“We are excited to announce this special project which is going through several layers of approval, including the Mississippi Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration,” said Jeremiah Dumas, MSU executive director of transportation. “Safety is the highest priority, as it is with any method of transportation,” he added, explaining the vehicles will not be allowed to operate on roads signed at more than 25 mph and are equipped with AI-enabled remote human supervision and self-governance. Although they will be self-driving, Dumas said each will have a full-time attendant on board. Read more.

Stay up to date on legislative issues through the NSPE Advocacy Center.

Get Involved! NSPE Seeks Volunteers for 2024-25 Committees

NSPE’s passionate and dedicated committee volunteers are essential to our mission. Why serve? In addition to giving back to the professional engineering community, NSPE volunteers form strong connections with committee colleagues, learn new skills, enjoy networking with leaders or hone their own leadership skills.

Learn more and apply to NSPE’s 2024-25 Committees by June 3. (You must log-in with your NSPE credentials to submit an application.)

If you do not see an opportunity that interests you in the link above, check out Get Involved throughout the year to learn more about other areas of engagement, including short-term projects.

NSPECon24 Keynote Speakers
NSPECon24 (Raleigh, North Carolina, August 7-9), the prime national event for professional engineers, will feature keynote speakers to provide inspiration and guidance to help elevate your career in addition to putting a spotlight on emerging issues within the industry. Early-bird registration rates are available until June 27. Access registration information and rates [here](#).
Paul Doherty, chairman and CEO of The Digit Group, will present the session “Unlocking the Metaverse: AI, Engineering the Future of Our Industry” to provide insight on emerging technologies and explore real-world solutions and projects that are challenging our industry.

Dan Heath, author and senior fellow, The Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship (CASE), Duke University, will present the session “RESET: How to Change What’s Not Working” to explore a framework for getting unstuck and making the changes that matter.

Access the preliminary NSPECon24 program for more details on the keynote speakers and session topics.

NSPECon24 also offers a variety of sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities to put your company or organization in front of senior executives and other decision-makers from across the industry. A special exhibitor discount is being offered to Research Triangle-based businesses.

Welcome to Our 2024 Sponsors!
Inaugural Leadership Institute for Women PEs
NSPE’s Women Leadership Program is sponsoring the Leadership Institute for Women Professional Engineers, a three-day program designed to support mid-career women PEs in confidently navigating their career path and leveraging their leadership skills.

The institute agenda is interwoven into the NSPECon24 program with participants attending pre-conference opening sessions on Wednesday, August 7, and sessions the mornings of Thursday, August 8 and Friday, August 9, in Raleigh, North Carolina. Attendees must register for NSPECon24 to attend the institute.

Access more information and register.