

MSU Officially Opens Nation's First Agricultural Autonomy Institute

The farm of the future is being created at Mississippi State University. MSU officials recently opened the Agricultural Autonomy Institute, the nation's first and only interdisciplinary research center focused on autonomous technologies to enhance on-farm precision and efficiency.

The Agricultural Autonomy Institute builds on and expands MSU's longstanding precision agriculture efforts and history of innovation in the field. The institute serves as a hub for researchers across campus interested in technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence and remote sensing that have potential to increase agricultural precision, production and profitability.

Alex Thomasson, Agricultural Autonomy Institute director and head of MSU's Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, said autonomous technologies can reduce the impact of labor shortages by making farm workers more efficient with the aid of novel systems.

"Autonomous systems multiply the productivity of a single farm worker such that they can oversee multiple machines and operations simultaneously," Thomasson said. "Overall, the goal of the institute is economic development. We want to attract agricultural equipment companies, and we want to conduct research that leads to technology-based startup companies. We want to develop a new workforce that will have the ability to work in this new world of robotics, mechatronics, and computer coding. I really hope to see Mississippi become the Silicon Valley of agricultural autonomy."

The research infrastructure for the institute includes a 4,800-square-foot laboratory space in the Pace Seed Technology Laboratory and a five-acre "Autonomous Acres" proving ground at MSU's R.R. Foil Plant Science Research Center. The institute is jointly managed by the university's Office of Research and Economic Development and the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine, with support from the Bagley College of Engineering, the College of Agriculture and

Life Sciences, the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station and other MSU institutes, research centers and departments. [Read more.](#)

State Licensing Board Initiates Biennial Renewal Process

Effective immediately, the [Mississippi Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors](#) has initiated a biennial (every two years) renewal process in connection to changes made to Rules 5.2 and 15.3 of the Rules and Regulations for the Mississippi Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors.

With this change, the board approved a two-phase approach for the renewals. Individuals licensed in odd years will be the first renewed under the new system. Individuals licensed in even years will initially be renewed for one year (and will renew biennial next cycle). **Fees for license renewal will double for those who are being licensed for the biennial process.** The licensure system will automatically display the applicable renewal fee.

Online licensure renewal for 2024 began on October 1, 2023, and continues through December 31, 2023. Licenses which are not renewed within this time frame will be considered expired, after December 31. Expired license renewals will be accepted through June 30 of the following year (with the appropriate late fee applied).

Email notices about the updated license renewal process were distributed earlier this month. See the notice at this [link](#) for additional information.

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

Check Out the Latest Issue of *PE*

Future Forward

Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and nanotechnology are revolutionizing the world. But these technologies are developing at a pace much faster than can be effectively absorbed into critical engineered infrastructure. The NSPE Emerging Technologies Committee is laser focused on ensuring that new technologies can benefit society and the profession with minimal risk to safety and security.

Claiming a Seat at the Table

Does it ever seem like your ideas go unnoticed? Do you sometimes feel like you



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

Engineers Week 2024 — Welcome to the Future!

Founded by NSPE in 1951, [Engineers Week](#) (February 18–24, 2024) is dedicated to ensuring a diverse and well-educated future engineering workforce. The latest theme for Engineers Week — **Welcome to the Future!** — seeks to inspire the next generation to play a vital role in innovating solutions to global challenges that impact future generations. By working together to develop new technologies, products, and opportunities, engineers create new possibilities that make the world a better place.



Engineers Week is a time for you to:

- Celebrate how engineers make a difference in our world.
- Add your voice to the conversation about the need for engineers, technicians, and technologists.
- Engage students in engineering.

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