

State News for NSPE Members

A Q&A with Eddie Templeton, P.E.

President, Burns Cooley Dennis Inc.



Last year, Burns Cooley Dennis Inc. celebrated 35 years in business. The firm started in a narrow slot in a Jackson warehouse building and has grown to become the largest geotechnical and materials consulting firm headquartered in Mississippi. Among its 69 employees are 11 PEs, 5 EIs, 7 employees with MS degrees in geotechnical engineering, and 3 with PhDs in either geotechnical or materials engineering.

President Eddie Templeton, P.E., joined NSPE and the Mississippi Society in 1994, and four other of BCD's engineering leaders are also members: VP/Principal Randy Ahlrich, Ph.D., P.E.; Principal Tommy Dunlap, P.G., P.E.; Principal Robert Varner, P.E.; and Engineer Kevin Williams, P.E.

Among the firm's current or recently completed projects:

- A technically challenging design of a stabilization system for the Loess bluffs along the Mississippi River and along the west side of the VA cemetery in Natchez;
- The design of a stabilization system for a complex grouping of large landslides along I-40 at Rockwood Mountain in Roane County, Tennessee; and
- Providing construction materials testing services for the Amazon facility under construction in Madison County.

Templeton recently provided some thoughts about the pandemic, project costs and quality, a recent acquisition, and the importance of technician certification.

The pandemic has shaken up many aspects of AEC industry. How has business

been over the last year?

Templeton: We have been blessed with a fairly steady flow of work during the pandemic. On the geotechnical engineering side, we attribute this to the diversity in the types of services we offer and to several ongoing open-end, indefinite delivery type contracts with state highway departments, the Corps of Engineers, railroads, and utility companies. There was a slight decrease in the volume of commercial development projects, which typically make up a nice portion of our workload, but this was offset by an increase in disaster relief/emergency response-type project work related to soil erosion and landslide activity that resulted from the historically high rainfall that occurred in late 2019 and early 2020.

BCD offers several specialty practice areas beyond routine geotechnical engineering and construction testing that were, thankfully, less impacted by the pandemic. These include flood protection projects, embankment/slope stabilization projects, earth fill dams design, and remediation, ground improvement, pavement materials research and design, geo-structure design and practical numerical geo-modeling. We also offer expertise in forensic geotechnical and materials engineering, value engineering, and geotechnical site selection studies which have help maintain a steady workflow throughout the pandemic.

Continue reading the [complete article](#).

Pipeline Draws Opposition

A planned pipeline to carry oil from a refinery in Memphis to Byhalia, Mississippi, has received all of its permits but is facing opposition from a Tennessee legislator, [reports the Mississippi Business Journal](#). U.S. Rep. Steve Cohen, a Democrat who represents Memphis, has asked President Joe Biden to rescind the permission the Plains All American project due to concerns about potential contamination of an aquifer that supplies the city with drinking water. The commander of the Corps of Engineers' Memphis District said in a letter that contamination of the aquifer is not reasonably likely to occur.

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

FAA safety engineer goes public to slam the agency's oversight of Boeing's 737 MAX

Haunted by the two deadly crashes of Boeing 737 MAX jets and his agency's role in approving the plane, veteran Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) safety engineer Joe Jacobsen is stepping forward publicly to give the victims' families "a firsthand account of what the truth is." In a detailed letter sent last month to a family

that lost their daughter in the second MAX crash in Ethiopia two years ago this week, and in [interviews with The Seattle Times](#), Jacobsen gave the first personal account by an insider of the federal safety agency's response to the MAX crashes. Jacobsen should have been among the FAA specialists who reviewed the MAX's critical new flight control software during its original certification, which was largely controlled by Boeing. He's confident that he and other FAA engineers would have flagged its serious design flaws.

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Wanted: 2021 NSPE Emerging Leaders



NSPE is fostering a new generation of engineers who can think strategically, build effective teams, and lead successfully through its [Emerging Leaders Program](#). This intensive seven-month, professionally facilitated, virtual program is now accepting applications until **May 31**.

Early-career professionals with 5-8 years of experience who are just beginning to lead and think strategically in the profession are encouraged to apply. The program graduated its [first class of diverse, super achieving professionals](#) in February.

Between August 2021 and February 2022 participants will learn how to be successful at higher levels of leadership responsibility. Participants will engage in 90-minute leadership training sessions each month with learning discussions and mentoring on topics such as ownership, team development, communication skills, giving/receiving feedback, and presentation skills. There will also be ample networking opportunities with peers and national NSPE national leaders.

[Learn more and apply.](#)

Ethics Webinars for PEs and Those on the Licensure Path

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Don't miss NSPE's upcoming ethics webinars on truthfulness and fidelity to employers and clients, with insight from Rebecca Bowman, P.E., Esq., NSPE's senior director for ethics and professional practice and NAFE executive director, and other NSPE ethics experts.

April 7

[Engineering Ethics—Canon III—Truthfulness](#)

Learn from a variety of situations in which circumstances can tempt (and even encourage) engineers to dance around the edges of Canon III.

Presenters: Hugh Veit, P.E., Susan Sprague, P.E., F.NSPE, and Rebecca Bowman, P.E., Esq.

May 5

[Engineering Ethics—Canon IV—Fidelity to Employers/Clients](#)

Examine the duties to employers and clients, and circumstances under which those duties can be pre-empted by higher duties, especially to the public health, safety, and welfare.

Presenters: David Kish, Ph.D., P.E., Jeff Greenfield, Ph.D., P.E., F.NSPE, and Rebecca Bowman, P.E., Esq.

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