NSPE-HI Seeks College Alma Mater Volunteers

We are asking for volunteers to be potential resources for your college/university alma mater. If your school or a potential student applicant is looking for help, we will connect them with you so you can share your experience and insight. Please fill out this form with your college information.

HAPI Scholarship Program Accepting Applications

The Hawaii Asphalt Paving Industry (HAPI) is offering two $1,000 scholarships to students attending a four-year college/university and one $500 scholarship to a student attending a community college, and a $250 scholarship for a student attending a trade school. For additional information and to apply, please visit the HAPI Scholarship Program webpage. Applications are due by October 31.

State Licensing Board Meeting

The Hawaii Engineers, Architects, Surveyors & Landscape Architects Board will hold its next meeting on Thursday, October 12. Access meeting information here.

$95 Million Approved for Hawaii’s Electric Grid

The US Department of Energy will provide $95 million to Hawaiian Electric through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to strengthen the power grids on Hawaii’s wildfire-ravaged islands, Reuters reports.

The island of Maui was devastated earlier this month after the deadliest US wildfire in more than a century swept through the resort town of Lahaina, leaving 115 people dead and 338 missing.
"This investment will help reduce the likelihood of outages, reduce restoration times following outages, reduce risk of wildfire events, and increase grid operational resilience," the White House said in a statement.

The federal funding would pay for half of the Hawaiian Electric's proposed $190 million climate adaptation plan and would help cut its cost to customers in half, the company in a press release. Read more.

US House to Hold Hearing on Maui Fires

A US House committee will hold a hearing on Hawaiian Electric's reaction to the Maui fires later this month, The Center Square reports. House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), and Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Chair Morgan Griffith, (R-VA) said there were questions about a downed power line sparking dry grass and contributing to the fires. The committee also wants more information on the utility company's work on its power grid in recent years.

"We must come to a complete understanding of how this disaster started to ensure Hawaii and other states are prepared to prevent and stop other deadly wildfires," Rodgers and Griffith said in a joint statement. "In our capacity as chairs of the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the US House of Representatives and its respective energy policy and oversight subcommittees, we are empowered to oversee energy supply, reliability of all power, and regulation of energy resources throughout the country. To that end, we seek a fuller understanding of the role, if any, of the electric infrastructure in this tragic event."

Shelee Kimura, president and CEO of Hawaiian Electric, will testify at the September 28 hearing. The utility's chairman, Leodoloff Asuncion Jr., and Mark Glick, the chief energy officer for the state, will also appear, according to the committee.

Maui County sued Hawaiian Electric last month. The suit alleged the utility company's failure to shut off the power lines during a red flag warning on August 7 led to downed power lines sparking the dry grass. The official cause of the fire is under investigation by the state attorney general's office. Read more.

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

Workability Webinars Series to Focus on Emerging Tech

NSPE offers a live webinar series free to members—"WORKability Wednesdays"—to
support members with their professional development goals. The first webinar of this season took place on September 13 - How New PFAS Regulations Will Impact Water and Wastewater Utilities. A webinar on What Utilities Want Fleets to Know About Moving to Electric Vehicles will take place on September 27.

NSPE members get free access to the webinars, but must register to attend. Visit the PE Institute to review the full series line-up and to mark your calendar for these live, online events.

**Registration Open: 2023 NSPE Women’s Leadership Virtual Fall Symposium**

Join us for these live, one-time events to hear from experts in the field and join your colleagues in important discussions organized by NSPE's Women Leadership Program Task Force: The Cost of Leadership; Leading Yourself: Learning to Increase Your Emotional Intelligence; and Networking Strategies: An Unconventional Approach to Connecting with Others. The webinars will take place on October 12, October 19, and October 26 at 1:00 p.m. (ET). This exclusive package is free and includes all three live, one-time sessions. The sessions will not be recorded and PDH credits will not be issued for them.

Register now.

**#NSPECon23 Revisited**

NSPECon23 provided an opportunity to learn and build community in the heart of Louisville, Kentucky. Find photos from the All Things Louisville reception, the first-time attendee mixer, PE Day celebrations, recognition and installation ceremonies, and more on NSPE’s Flickr account. Relive the fun and excitement with all your PE peers that gathered to celebrate the engineering profession.
A False Solution for Our Workforce Challenges

The Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing (ARPL) recently posted an opinion column that highlights the risks of weakening professional licensing
requirements to address workforce challenges. NSPE is a member of ARPL.

Workforce shortages, talent pipelines at a trickle and expensive labor are all-too-familiar challenges facing businesses and the public sector. In an attempt to tackle these problems, there is a growing trend of exploring the weakening or elimination of certain key job requirements. These proposals include getting rid of college degree requirements without equivalency alternatives, doing away with requisite testing, and downgrading credentials and licensure for professionals.

To be sure, there are some elements of the occupational licensure process that require continuous improvement and elimination of impediments disparately impacting underrepresented groups. However, in the rush to address workforce challenges, legislators and other policymakers must be cautious not to create new problems that leave employers and the public at risk.

Weakening professional licensing requirements is a false solution to various workforce ills. Minimum qualifications ensured by licensing exist to protect employers and the public they serve. This is particularly important for technical professions with high public impact, such as architecture, certified public accountancy, engineering, landscape architecture and land surveying. Care must be taken to ensure that critical licensing systems for such professions, designed to ensure public and economic protection, are not compromised and swept up in broad-brush calls for occupational licensing reform. Read more.