

State News for NSPE Members

Puna Geothermal Venture Back Online After 2+ Year Hiatus

When the Kilauea volcano erupted in 2018, it took down the Puna Geothermal Venture. Now more than two years later, this significant energy source on Hawaii Island has returned.

Hawaiian Electric announced in the fall that Puna Geothermal Venture—one of the largest and most reliable renewable energy sources in the state—was officially back online with gradual production.

The PGV is a geothermal energy conversion plant bringing steam and hot liquid up through underground wells. The hot liquid (brine) is not used for electricity at this time. The steam is directed to a turbine generator that produces electricity. With the PGV up and running, the company stated that it can further reduce the use of fossil fuels to generate electricity.

The return of PGV to operational status marks a key milestone in Hawaii County's recovery from the Kilauea Volcano eruption of 2018 that devastated the Kapoho area of the island, according to HSPE member Curtis Beck, P.E., F.NSPE.

"The island's electric utility grid had been significantly weakened by the loss of firm geothermal steam powered generation that normally backs up intermittent sources such as solar and wind," says Beck, a retired Hawaii Electric Light Company (HELCO) senior manager. "It took over two years to restore roads, steam wells, substation equipment, and transmission facilities destroyed or damaged by the lava encroachment in and around the plant, but now the 30-year partnership between PGV and HELCO to develop this vital energy resource for the benefit of the community continues."



Credit: Hawaiian Electric

Prior to the volcanic eruption in May 2018, PGV helped Hawaii Island achieve the state's highest renewable energy percentage, close to 60%. Without PGV in service, the island's renewable percentage in 2019 was 35%, Hawaiian Electric pointed out in a statement.

The plant produced 38 megawatts, representing about 15% of the island's firm generation capacity, according to a Hawaiian Electric; the return of PGV increases the company's generation reserve margins, ensuring there is electricity available for periods of high demand when other generators are out of service for maintenance.

Licensing Board Meeting

The Hawaii Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors & Landscape Architects will host its next meeting via Zoom on Thursday, **February 11**, 2021 from 9a.m.-11:30 a.m. A Zoom link and agenda will be provided prior to the meeting.

Access the [licensing board website](#) for more information.

Maui to Receive \$300K Federal Grant for STEM Apprenticeship Program

A federal grant is aiming to help develop a work-based apprenticeship program for Maui residents, according to a KHON2 news report. US Sen. Brian Schatz, who introduced the legislation, announced that the Maui Economic Development Board would be receiving \$300,000 in federal funding to go toward a program looking to offer unique on-the-job training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills.

The funding comes from the STEM Talent Challenge, a new grant program administered by the Economic Development Administration at the US Department

of Commerce. “The program aims to create jobs, spur innovation and strengthen businesses in focus areas that are considered vital to the future of Hawaii’s economy,” says Schatz. Focus areas include renewable energy, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and agriculture.

[Read more.](#)

New Tool Projects High-tide Flooding in US Coastal Locations

A new tool to help decision makers and others assess how sea-level rise and other factors will affect the frequency of high-tide flooding in US coastal locations in the next 50–100 years has been developed by University of Hawaii Sea Level Center Director Phil Thompson with funding from NASA’s Earth Science Division, according to a *Municipal Sewer & Water* article.

The Flooding Days Projection Tool is an online dashboard that projects the number of high-tide flooding days per year for 97 US cities, based on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration impact thresholds. These thresholds provide a safety gap between regular high-tide water levels and conditions that result in flooding. Coastal communities are built at a certain elevation above sea-level with these natural fluctuations in mind.

[Read more.](#)

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

Society Announces New Executive

NSPE has announced Monika Schulz as the Society’s new executive director and CEO, beginning February 15.

“As we embark on the new year, we are starting a new chapter in NSPE’s history,” says NSPE President Tricia Hatley, P.E., F.NSPE. “It is thrilling to be in this place where NSPE’s volunteer leadership recognized the value that Monika’s expertise and authentic leadership style will bring to our organization. Her collaborative, yet-data-driven, approach to management will facilitate the successful execution of our strategic plan, and she’s demonstrated her ability to collaborate with state and local chapters to increase impact at her prior organizations.”



Schulz has a long history in associations and a passion for the contributions they make to society. Before joining NSPE, she served for over five years as the CEO of the American String Teachers Association in Fairfax, Virginia. In this role, she collaborated with the organization's board on strategic planning, implementing data-driven decision making, and carrying out a rebranding initiative. She also built stronger ties among the organization's 50 state and local chapters, bolstered member engagement, and expanded a national conference and tradeshow as well as a national orchestra festival.

"I'm very excited to be joining the NSPE team," says Schulz, "and I look forward to collaborating with leadership, state societies, and the NSPE management team to further NSPE's vision, mission, and initiatives. Engineers make the world a better place in which to live, and I feel incredibly fortunate and proud to champion the important work of professional engineers."

Prior to serving as ASTA's CEO, Schulz spent 18 years at the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy, in multiple leadership roles, including six years as chief operating officer.

The Virginia Tech graduate is active in the American Society of Association Executives and holds the CAE designation as a certified association executive.

EWeek 2021 Focuses on the Future

Engineers Week, with the theme "**Imagining Tomorrow**," will take place **February 21–27**, and this year's focus will be on virtual role models, distance learning, and diversity and belonging.

[Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day](#), or "Girl Day," will also carry this theme forward and will be held on February 25. The focus will also be on virtual role models and diversity and belonging, but it will also feature special editions of DiscoverE's "[Chats With Change Makers](#)" series in which a high school student interviews engineers and technicians who are working hard to make the world a better place.



This year's [Future City Competition](#) theme is "Living on the Moon." To adapt to the pandemic, teams will be allowed to work remotely and competitions will be virtual. Teams will make a video presentation of their cities, and their models will be presented in a slideshow format. There will be a live Q&A for the teams to answer questions about their models and presentations.

EWeek Event Dates

- Chats with Change Makers: new “season” began on September 25 and continues monthly.
- Future City Competition: September through April
- The Persist Series (formerly Global Marathon): begins January and continues monthly.
- Engineers Week: February 21–27, 2021
- Girl Day: February 25, 2021
- World Engineering Day: March 4, 2021

Access Your Member Benefit: 15 Free Webinars for 2021

To help members meet their continuing education requirements, NSPE has released a new slate of **15 free webinars** that will be available throughout 2021.

15 **FREE**

Members may earn credits by viewing the webinars from the comfort of their home or office and will receive an attendance certificate after passing a quiz with a score of 70% or higher. PDHs from these courses are recognized by most US states, including Florida.

Here's a sample of available webinar topics:

1. [Ethics Forum: Conflicts of Interest - Serving the Public](#) *
2. [How to Lead Without Authority](#)
3. [Leading Project Teams: Emerging Technologies and Smart Design](#) *
4. [Licensing for Profitability, Agility and Growth for Small and Mid-Sized Engineering Firms](#)
5. [Passing Down Institutional Knowledge Through Coaching, Mentoring and Storytelling](#)
6. [The Saint Joseph Water Crisis: Lessons Learned in the Age of Deteriorating Water Infrastructure](#) (New York approval pending)

*Webinar has been approved for continuing education credit in New York

[Check out the complete lineup of 2021 courses.](#)

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