

State News for NSPE Members

Introducing the 2024 Excellence Awards Winners

The Delaware Engineering Society (NSPE-DE) is excited to announce the 2024 Excellence Awards winners. This year's winners are **D. Preston Lee, Jr., P.E. (Ret)** - Engineer of the Year, **Shanté Hastings, P.E.** - Government Engineer of the Year, and **Breanna Kovach, P.E.** - Young Engineer of the Year.

Engineer of the Year



D. Preston Lee, P.E. (Ret) is a native Delawarean and has practiced in the state his entire career. He presently lives in the historic town of Lewes with Linda, his wife of 55 years. He earned a civil engineering degree in 1969 from the University of Delaware.

After graduating, Lee worked for the Delaware Water and Air Resources Commission and later at the consulting engineering firm VanDemark & Lynch, Inc., where he reviewed permit applications and worked on utility design. He then joined Edward H. Richardson Associates, focusing on designing water and wastewater facilities in multiple states. In 1975, he cofounded Tatman & Lee Associates, which became a successful civil engineering firm known for innovative wastewater treatment systems. The firm was later acquired by Woodward-Clyde Consultants and later by URS Corporation, where Lee served as vice president. He semi-retired

in 2001 to focus on project management and engineering through his own business, notably managing the Southern Sewer Service Area Project for New Castle County. [Read more.](#)

Government Engineer of the Year



Shanté Hastings, P.E., is the Deputy Secretary and Chief Engineer for the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). She has worked at the Delaware DOT since graduating from the University of Delaware in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. Hastings is responsible for implementation of the department's over \$600 million annual Capital Transportation Program. She is also involved with personnel management, legislation, and national transportation policy in her role as deputy secretary. Hastings currently serves as the chair of AASHTO Innovation Management, chair of AASHTO Committee on Design and vice chair of the AASHTO Committee on Transportation System Operations. [Read more.](#)

Young Engineer of the Year



Breanna Kovach, P.E., is a group engineer with the Project Development North section at the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). She graduated with honors from Temple University with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 2011 and began her career at DelDOT working as a project engineer, designing road projects. In 2016, Kovach became a PE in Delaware and promoted to a project manager. She later obtained her MBA from Wilmington University with a

concentration in organizational leadership and was promoted to a group engineer in 2018. Kovach is currently responsible for a program management of capital projects in New Castle County. [Read more.](#)

DELAWARE MATHCOUNTS®

On **Friday, March 15**, middle school students from across our state will come together for the [Delaware MATHCOUNTS Competition](#) at the University of Delaware's Pencader Conference Center. These students are some of the most capable and hardworking young mathematicians in our state, and the top scoring students earn the prestigious honor of representing Delaware at the national level.

NSPE-DE seeks your support in helping students to reach their full potential in becoming future engineers, scientists, doctors, and teachers through the MATHCOUNTS program. So...how can you help? There are two (2) ways:

Volunteer Your Time

This competition takes a number of volunteers to help make this event successful. To date, we had some volunteers who have signed up to make a difference, but we can always use more. There is a place for everyone to be a part. Roles include registration check-in, moderator, scorers, etc.

Support Through a Sponsorship

There are various sponsorship levels that include recognition on the NSPE-DE webpage (logo and link), a logo on event signage, and thank you ad and recognition in the NSPE-DE monthly newsletter. All donations will be used for this year's or future MATHCOUNTS competitions. [Access the sponsorship brochure.](#)

Please contact NSPE-DE President K. James Taylor, P.E., directly at jtaylor@verdantas.com or at 302-489-2261 to volunteer and/or become a sponsor.

State Licensing News

Registration Open: Engineering Ethics Training

The Delaware Association of Professional Engineers will hold a training session on **Thursday, April 18**, at the University of Delaware – Clayton Hall from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (doors open at 9:15 a.m.). **Registration is limited! Access the registration link [here.](#)**

The session will take a deep-dive into DAPE's Continuing Professional

Competency Requirements, including tips and tools for recordkeeping, how to be prepared for a DAPE random audit, and what happens at a disciplinary hearing related to CPC deficiencies. A recording will be available to members after the event to view online for 2 PDH credits (engineering ethics).

Plan Now for 2024 PE Renewals

DAPE expects to open the renewal window for all licensed professional engineers in early May 2024, with a deadline of June 30, 2024. This is a perfect time to review your Professional Development Hours (PDH) log to see how many PDHs you have from July 1, 2022 to the present. Access CPC guidelines on the [DAPE website](#).

While the ethics training will be all about DAPE's continuing education requirements, you can always direct questions about this (or any other licensing-related topic) to office@dape.org.

Delaware Lawmakers Seek Rules for Artificial Intelligence

Companies are using artificial intelligence tools to produce various documents, from term papers to home mortgages, but the technology has raised concerns about plagiarism, misinformation, racism, and other societal harm, [The Center Square reports](#).

Delaware lawmakers are pushing new regulations to prevent the emerging machine-learning technology from being abused. One proposal would create the Delaware Artificial Intelligence Commission, a formal body tasked with making recommendations to the General Assembly and Department of Technology and Information on AI utilization and safety.

One of the bill's primary sponsors, state Rep. Krista Griffith (D-Wilmington) said the proposal is "aimed at harnessing the potential of AI while ensuring its safe and responsible utilization" in the state. "While this new technology has transformative potential for both the public and private sectors, it's critical that we recognize the risks and provide the necessary oversight," she said in a statement.

A key responsibility of the commission would be to conduct a comprehensive inventory of AI use by Delaware's executive, legislative, and judicial agencies and identify high-risk areas in each. Backers of the bill say that by identifying high-risk areas, the commission would ensure AI technologies are deployed in a manner that keeps Delawareans safe and does not violate any individual's rights. [Read more](#).

Wilmington Airport Gets \$5.6 Million to Expand Terminal

Wilmington Airport received \$5.6 million in federal infrastructure funding to update and expand its terminal, according to an announcement from the Federal Aviation Administration, the [Delaware News Journal reports](#).

The money comes as part of a nearly \$1 billion investment in airports across the country, spanning 114 airports in 44 states and three territories. As part of the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Biden administration had pledged to hand out \$5 billion over five years as part of its Airport Terminals Program, designed to "address the aging infrastructure of the nation's airports."

The money was hailed by US Senator Tom Carper as a "win-win for Delawareans and our economy." [Read more.](#)

The Road to Heat Resilience

As climate change fuels more days of extreme heat every year, American cities are becoming increasingly familiar with the urban heat island effect. Heat islands are areas that experience increased air temperatures in urban zones due to reduced shade and a lack of heat-reflective surfaces. High concentrations of buildings, pavement and other infrastructure made of heat-absorbent material like asphalt, brick and steel can make urban spaces up to 20 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than greener spaces and suburbs.

Now, a team of researchers from the University of Delaware's Gerard J. Mangone Climate Change Science and Policy Hub, UD's Center for Environmental Monitoring and Analysis (CEMA) and Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) is mapping heat in Wilmington, Delaware.

Extreme heat is the number one cause of weather-related death in the United States, making urban heat islands a significant public health concern. This threat is especially salient for individuals most prone to heat-related illnesses, such as young children, the elderly and those with chronic health conditions. Heat islands also have a cumulative effect on workers with outdoor-based jobs and residents without easy access to air conditioning or cooling.

Areas with high heat-absorbance such as urban environments consume more energy, thereby creating more emissions. Enhanced daytime heat and reduced nightly cooldowns mean greater electricity dependency for air-conditioning, and peak demands put a heavy strain on energy systems that can lead to mitigation efforts such as controlled blackouts, or even result in citywide power outages.

The exacerbation of urban heat island impacts due to climate change has prompted a wave of urban sustainability planning and cooling strategies. [Read the full article in the UDaily.](#)

NCEES Seeks PE Expertise to Update Exams

NCEES is currently seeking licensed professional engineers to participate in a professional activities and knowledge study, or PAKS, to update specifications for the PE Architectural Engineering Exam and the PE Environmental Exam.

Architectural Engineering

NCEES requires a cross section of PEs practicing architectural engineering (including those working in industry, consulting, the public sector, and academia) to complete an online survey about the tasks and knowledge required of a licensed architectural engineer with four to six years of experience to practice in a manner that safeguards the public. Access the survey [here](#) and participate by April 24.

Environmental Engineering

NCEES requires a cross section of PEs practicing environmental engineering (including those working in industry, consulting, the public sector, and academia) to complete an online survey about the tasks and knowledge required of a licensed environmental engineer with four to six years of experience to practice in a manner that safeguards the public. Access the survey [here](#) and participate by May 5.

The 2024 Scholarship Season Opens

The NSPE Education Foundation is [now accepting applications](#) for the 2024 scholarship season through an online submission platform. The application deadline is April 1.

High School

The [Maureen L. and Howard N. Blitman, P.E., Scholarship to Promote Diversity in Engineering](#) is awarded annually to a high school senior from an ethnic minority who has been accepted into an ABET-accredited engineering program at a four-year college or university. The award is for \$5,000.

Undergraduate

The [Steinman Scholarship](#) is awarded annually to undergraduates entering or continuing their junior year in a four-year ABET-accredited engineering program. The award is for \$5,000.

The [William R. Kimel, P.E., Engineering Scholarship](#) is awarded to an undergraduate student who is a resident of either Kansas or Missouri, enrolled as a junior in an ABET-accredited engineering program in a college or university in either Kansas or Missouri. The award is for \$2,500.

Graduate

The [George B. Hightower, P.E. Fellowship](#) is awarded annually to a current engineering undergraduate or graduate student who is enrolled in, or graduated from, an ABET-accredited engineering program. The award is for \$3,000.

PE Institute – 15 Free Webinar Package

NSPE has moved 15 on-demand webinars out from behind the paywall for viewing by members from the comfort of home or the office. Members can [add the webinar package to their account now](#). Once added, the webinars can be viewed through January 15, 2025.

Since 2022, NSPE has offered all PE Institute webinars free of charge to members. Past webinars are also available for viewing in the [On-Demand Webinars](#) section of the PE Institute website.

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