

## State News for NSPE Members

### Save the Date: 2024 Engineers Week Banquet

NSPE-DE will be hosting the **Engineers Week banquet** tentatively on **February 22, 2024**, at a location to be determined. The Engineers Week banquet is where we announce our scholarship recipients and recognize newly inducted professional engineers (presented by the Delaware Association of Professional Engineers). We also celebrate the Engineering Excellence Awards (presented by ACEC-DE) and honor the Engineer of the Year, Young Engineer of the Year, Government Engineer of the Year award recipients. Stay tuned for registration details and more information.

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### Call for Nominations: Engineer of the Year, Government Engineer of the Year, and Young Engineer of the Year

The Engineer of the Year and Young Engineer of the Year are the most prestigious awards presented by NSPE-DE. These honors recognize individuals who provide sustained and unusual welfare, the advancement of the engineering profession, and/or service to humankind. New this year, we will be introducing a Government Engineer of the Year award. Individuals that are eligible for nomination must be currently engaged in the practice of engineering as an employee of the state, local or quasi-government agency in either a managerial or technical position.

If you know or work with someone who you think is deserving of either the Engineer of the Year, Government Engineer of the Year, or Young Engineer of the Year awards, don't hesitate to nominate them. The nomination deadline is **December 1, 2023**. Access nomination information [here](#).

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### NSPE-DE Scholarship Program is Accepting Applications

NSPE-DE is pleased to announce the 2023–2024 scholarship program for Delaware high school seniors who plan to enroll in a college engineering program next fall. The **Joe J. Welker Memorial Scholarship** provides \$1,500-\$4,000 for

the freshman year.

Access scholarship criteria and applications forms [here](#). Applications are due on **December 31, 2023**.

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## **WANTED: Volunteers for the Delaware MATHCOUNTS Program**

Middle school students from across our state come together for the Delaware MATHCOUNTS Competition, the only in-person math competition of its kind. These students are some of the most capable and hardworking young mathematicians in our state. This program doesn't work without the engagement of professional engineers who can mentor and inspire them. NSPE-DE is seeking volunteers for the 2023-2024 MATHCOUNTS season. There are various opportunities to get involved and make a difference. For more information, contact James Taylor ([president@nspe-de.org](mailto:president@nspe-de.org)).

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## **FEMA Designates 'Disaster Resilience Zones' in Delaware**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is providing a shortcut for hundreds of vulnerable communities to get easier access to funds for climate resiliency projects, [why.org reports](#). FEMA announced the initial designation of 483 census tracts as Community Disaster Resilience Zones. The list includes several areas in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey.

"The priority is to assist communities that are at the highest risk to climate impacts and have the most need for assistance," Victoria Salinas, FEMA associate administrator for resilience, said during a call with reporters.

In southeastern Pennsylvania, parts of Philadelphia, the city of Chester in Delaware County, and Lower Oxford Township in Chester County made the cut. An area along the riverfront in Wilmington, Delaware and parts of Wildwood and Atlantic City, New Jersey were also included on the list.

The zone designations come from the Community Disaster Resilience Zones Act of 2022, which cleared the way for targeted assistance to places harshly impacted by the effects of climate change. [Read more](#).

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## **Delaware Small Businesses Get Solar Power Grants**

Delaware's Congressional Delegation announced \$1.3 million for nine Delaware projects that will lower energy costs for small businesses in Delaware as part of the

Rural Energy for America Program and the Inflation Reduction Act, [Delaware Business Now reports](#).

"USDA Rural Development is proud to support rural small businesses and ag producers in Delaware through our Rural Energy for America Program, said David Baker, USDA Rural Development State Director. "Through this critical investment, nine Delaware businesses are receiving funding that will help them to operate more sustainably, lower the cost of doing business, and contribute to resilient, clean, and thriving rural communities."

The announcement from the US Department of Agriculture includes millions in loans and grants to agriculture producers and rural small businesses to make investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements that will lower costs, generate new income, and strengthen the resilience of their operations. [Read more](#).

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

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## 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.



**Save the Date: NSPECon24—Raleigh, North Carolina—August 7–9**



## **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](#) .

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