

State News for NSPE Members

From the NSPE-DE President

By K. James Taylor, Jr., P.E.



Greetings!

Each year, the Delaware Engineering Society is proud to host the Engineers Week banquet where we award scholarship recipients, recognize newly inducted Professional Engineers (presented by DAPE), celebrate the Engineering Excellence Awards (presented by ACEC-DE), and honor the Young Engineer of the Year and Engineer of the Year recipients. This year, we will be moving to a virtual format for an Engineers Week Celebration. The event will be held on Thursday, February 25. Please see the attached flyer for details. This will be a free event this year, so feel free to invite your entire company.

Following tradition, the program will highlight award winning engineering design projects, recognize newly inducted Professional Engineers and scholarship recipients, as well as honor the 2020 Engineer of the Year and Young Engineer of the Year recipients. This year's Young Engineer of the Year is Jennalee Fede, P.E., and the Engineer of the Year is Scott Rathfon, P.E. Please see our [press release](#) for more information on both of the award winners.

The event will begin at 12:30 p.m. and we anticipate being completed by 2:00 p.m. Please visit our [registration page to sign up](#).

In addition, as this is a free event, we are asking for donations to offset the scholarships awarded to high school seniors each year. If you or your firm is interested in donating, please contact me. Information for donations will also be posted on the [Delaware Engineering Society website](#). A special thanks will be included to those donating.

If you could also forward this email to your respective organizations, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your continuous support of this event. We look forward to celebrating everything engineering on February 25!

Manufacturing, Chemical Jobs Coming to Delaware

Highway and bridge construction company Eastern Highway Specialists, New Jersey headquartered Advantage Building Supply, and AWSM Solutions Delaware are [expanding into the state](#). The companies will add more than 150 manufacturing and chemical jobs.

Becky Harrington, business development director of the Delaware Prosperity Partnership, says [this trend will probably continue](#). The three companies' combined investment is about \$13 million, and the state has approved grants for all three totaling more than \$709,000. Harrington says the funding is part of the state's effort to secure new business.

Boosting Ready-to-Go Lab Space to Attract Tech, Science Firms

Delaware has launched a pilot grant program designed to spur private sector-led projects that will help the state attract and retain science and tech companies by expanding its inventory of ready-to-go lab space. Companies will need to partner with developers on a specific project to apply.

The state's Council on Development Finance allocated up to \$3 million from the Delaware Strategic Fund in December, and Governor John Carney committed to including additional funding from the FY22 budget.

"We want to improve the available inventory in the state and continue to support companies we've already invested in or are interested in coming to Delaware with the types of high-paying jobs we see with these sorts of operations, said Delaware Prosperity Partnership Director of Innovation Ariel Gruswitz.

In the long run, Gruswitz said, the need for the program should decrease as infrastructure increases and industry needs are better understood by the local

commercial real estate market.

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

New Report: Valuing Professional Licensing

For years, professional associations and regulatory boards lacked hard data that demonstrated the value of licensing. In 2020, the Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing (ARPL) sought to fill that information gap by commissioning Oxford Economics to help better understand the nuanced impacts of licensing on professions and trade and vocational occupations. NSPE is a founding member of ARPL.

The report [Valuing Professional Licensing in the United States](#) , includes several key findings:

- Across all professions and occupations, **licensing is associated with a 6.5% average increase in hourly earnings**, even after accounting for the job holder's educational attainment, gender, and racial demographics.
- Among professionals in technical fields requiring significant education and training, **a license narrows the gender-driven wage gap by about one third and the race-driven wage gap by about half**.
- Those in trade and vocational occupations can expect a **7.1% hourly wage increase** after becoming licensed, while those in a profession requiring advanced education and training can expect a **3.6% wage increase** after becoming licensed.

ARPL will host a **live webinar on February 24, 2021 (3:00 p.m. eastern standard time)** to review findings and conclusions of the report and share new strategies for lawmaker outreach. [Register now](#) .

Licensing Reform Must Prioritize Public Safety, Says NSPE President

NSPE President Tricia Hatley has once again made the case for keeping public health, welfare, and safety at the forefront of efforts to reform occupational licensure and increase mobility.

In a recent column directed to state and local government leaders, Hatley warns of the risks of implementing one-size-fits-all universal licensure proposals that do not maintain necessary education and experience standards.

Most people agree professionals should be allowed to move across state lines and earn a living with the least cost and hassle possible. Likewise, most people want to protect the public's health, safety and welfare by ensuring they are being served by qualified professionals who have the knowledge, skills and experience for the job. This is especially true in highly technical, high-impact professions that the Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing represents like certified public accountants, architects, engineers, surveyors and landscape architects.

Here comes the rub: many of the universal licensing proposals being pitched to state lawmakers, including those put forth by the American Legislative Exchange Council and in Arizona, tend to focus exclusively on the first point—improving mobility—while disregarding the second—ensuring standards necessary to protect the public.

In other words, universal licensing mandates don't consider the critical importance of substantially equivalent requirements between states. Instead, they dictate that states must accept a license issued by any state without regard for, understanding of, or any input in, the underlying minimum competency requirements behind the license.

[Read the full op-ed column.](#)

PEs Can Strengthen Autonomous Vehicle Safety

NSPE is calling on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to rely on the expertise of professional engineers and follow recommendations in the Society's [Autonomous Vehicle Policy Guide](#) as part of the federal safety frame work for automated driving systems.



In [recent public comments](#) , NSPE President Tricia Hatley informed the agency that NSPE is committed to creating a world where the public can be confident that engineering decisions affecting their lives are made by qualified and ethically accountable professionals. NSPE [Position Statement No. 03-1772](#) states that the testing and deployment of AVs must include a professional engineer. The rationale for the position is rooted in a professional engineer's ethical obligation to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

The Society also recommends that the NHTSA implement a third-party verification process. A third-party verification process should establish that the ADS technology under review meets a minimal level of safety, as determined by an assessment of

risk. This can be done through the submittal of risk assessments audited by a professional engineer who is in responsible charge of the third-party verification process.

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