Hackers Target City’s Water Supply

A possibility that cybersecurity experts had feared for years has happened in the town of Oldsmar where hackers broke into a water treatment plant’s system and put residents in danger, the *New York Times* reports. The perpetrators changed the levels of lye in the water, which could have sickened many. However, the crime was detected in time to prevent disaster. The level of sodium hydroxide was changed from 100 parts per million to 11,100 parts per million, a level dangerous for human consumption.

Senator Marco Rubio said in a tweet that the action should be treated as a matter of national security. Cyberattacks on critical infrastructure have become more common in recent years, including nations like Russia, Iran, and Israel, as well as the U.S., attacking each other’s systems.

Governor’s Budget Continues Unprecedented Environmental Funding

Governor DeSantis’s Florida Leads budget includes continued funding of $625 million for Everglades restoration and water quality protections and increased investment of $180 million for addressing resiliency of coastal communities.

The Florida Leads budget addresses the challenges of sea-level rise, intensified storm events, and localized flooding by establishing the Resilient Florida program. The program will provide $1 billion over four years for state and local government entities to address these issues.

Senator Urges Fossil-Fuel Workers to Embrace Plans for Clean Energy
Bills introduced by State Senators Lori Berman and Anna Eskamani this month instruct the Florida Office of Energy to develop a statewide plan for converting fully to clean energy by 2040 and achieving net zero carbon pollution emissions by 2050, according to the Florida Phoenix. Advocates say state residents could save significant amounts of money by being more energy efficient and creating their own solar power.

Eskamani urged workers in Florida's fossil-fuel industries to embrace the effort. The plan will create jobs in those industries and help the state economy while protecting the climate, she said.

Highlighted Florida Job Opportunities

**Project Engineer Project Management Division**
Manatee County Public Works

**Structural PE Engineer Manager: Restoration**
Delta Engineering & Inspection, Inc.

**Senior Civil Engineer**
Wood

**Senior Coastal Engineer**
Noble Consultants, Inc (GEC, Inc)

See many other Florida engineering job opportunities on the NSPE Job Board.

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.
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 framework 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.