

State News for NSPE Members

Can Florida Become a National Leader in Resilience Policy?

State Representatives Vance Aloupis (R) and Nick Duran (D), whose Miami districts are familiar with flooding, want the state to become a leader in national resiliency policy. In an [op-ed](#) for *Miami's Community Newspapers*, they pointed out that the [new law](#) requiring publicly funded coastal projects to complete a Sea Level Impact Projection study prior to construction is a good start but not enough.

Next, they'd like to see four additional steps: (1) a standing committee on flooding and sea-level rise, (2) a statewide data center for flood risk to inform flood and resiliency policy, (3) a loan fund for resiliency to support local infrastructure and water quality projects, and (4) a statewide assessment of infrastructure resiliency to determine the need for federal investment.

What do you think? Share your feedback on this issue or other Florida engineering news at pemagazine@nspe.org. We'll share comments in an upcoming issue.

The Future of Florida Toll Roads

Planning for three new Florida toll roads, like many infrastructure projects, has its supporters and detractors. WUSF, the NPR station in the Tampa Bay area, spoke with representatives of three stakeholder groups—Florida Conservation Voters, the Florida Transportation Builders' Association, and the Florida Chamber of Commerce—to get their perspectives. [Read an excerpt and listen to the complete show.](#)

Girl Scouts to Engineers

Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida and Girl Scouts of the USA have announced 24

new badges in areas including automotive engineering and STEM career exploration, reports [SRQ magazine](#). The automotive engineering badge, for grades K–5, covers vehicle design, engineering, and manufacturing as well as the future of mobility. The STEM badge, for grades 2-8, will cover issues across the broad range of STEM fields.

At Virtual PECon, NTSB Chair Discusses Florida Bridge Collapse

In a session on August 5, National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Robert Sumwalt III explained the role of the NTSB and the agency’s investigation and [report](#) on the deadly pedestrian bridge collapse at Florida International University in Miami.



In March 2018, a pedestrian bridge under construction at FIU collapsed—claiming six lives. Despite evidence of severe cracking, the engineer of record insisted that the cracking did not pose a safety problem, according to the NTSB report. The university wanted to enhance pedestrian safety by constructing the bridge over a multilane highway that had been the scene of a pedestrian fatality. It would also serve as a unique gathering place for students, faculty, and university visitors.

“We all know that cracking in concrete is going to happen. That’s acceptable. But in this case, we saw structural cracks that were 40 times larger than is typically acceptable,” Sumwalt stated. The bridge was designed using an “accelerated bridge construction” design method.

The NTSB identified three critical errors: 1) The bridge was under-designed. 2) The peer review was insufficient; and 3) There was a failure to close the bridge to traffic and workers.

During the session, Sumwalt outlined how failures at all levels to stop work on the project or to close the highway to vehicle traffic and pedestrians played a significant role in the tragedy. He emphasized the responsibility to speak out for public safety no matter what.

“I saw those crushed cars. Six people lost their lives because of what I will call hubris and professional arrogance,” he stated. “I don’t care where you fit on the totem pole, if something doesn’t look right, you have an ethical and moral obligation to wave the flag.”

Access Virtual PECon Webinars

NSPE members who registered for an all-access pass and individual sessions can access webinar recordings at their convenience. Members who were unable to attend PECon can [purchase and access](#) some individual sessions at a discounted member price.

Coming Soon: 'Fireside Chat' Series

NSPE is hosting a set of fireside chat style webinars on legislative issues affecting the future of the engineering profession, as well as the here and now.

Monday, August 31 (TBD)

Diversity is the Future of Engineering: Opportunities in STEM Education

Monday, September 14 (3 p.m. ET)

Building for the Future, with US Rep. Bruce Westerman, P.E. (R-AR)

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