

State News for NSPE Members

Army Corps Developing Water Management Plan for Lake Okeechobee

The U.S Army Corps of Engineers is working on a water management plan for Lake Okeechobee in South Florida. The work requires consideration of flood control and public health and safety, WPTV [reports](#). Algae blooms and unsafe drinking water are community concerns arising from the strategy of using periodic water discharges. Local leaders are asking for a plan that sends more water south, instead of sending toxic discharges toward West Palm Beach and Cape Coral.

Six options were considered at a recent public meeting. The South Florida Water Management's governing board workshop is focusing on the [Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual](#) (LOSOM), and the Army Corps is expected to release a report in August.

An editorial in the [Dayton Beach News-Journal](#) recently addressed the statewide issue. "Florida leaders get it. They're just not willing to take the toughest steps needed to clean things up. They are willing to throw some money at it...but it's not nearly enough to tackle the big problems that face Florida's algae-plagued water bodies — most of which track back to an excess of nitrogen and phosphorus leaching into water bodies."

Recommendations from Engineers for Structural Safety Include New PE License Option

A group of professional engineers, including members of the Florida Engineering Society, has formed to make recommendations to legislators about whether reinspections of tall buildings should be required after a certain period of time, the [Tampa Bay Times reports](#). Formed in response to the collapse of the Surfside Condo, the group is also pushing for the creation of a special license for structural engineers in the state, arguing that it could help prevent future collapses.

Governor Ron DeSantis has not committed to any mandatory review of older buildings.

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

Have You Registered for Virtual PECon 2021?

With sessions on leadership, innovation, diversity, ethics, time management, and more, there is a session for everyone at the [2021 Virtual Professional Engineers Conference](#) (Aug 3-5). The [early bird registration](#) rates end after today (July 14).



You won't want to miss out on the keynote speakers, networking with your friends and peers in Coffee Chats, solving everyday problems in MasterMind sessions, and [PE Day](#) (August 4). Here's a peek....

- [Managing Up, Out and Within](#) (Stephanie Buckingham and Paula E. Miles, P.E.)
 - [Cyber-attacks and Resilience](#) (James Livermore and Dave Ubert)
 - [NSPE Engineering Excellence Awards](#)
 - [Mars Is a Harsh Mistress \(So is the Moon\)](#) (George Hamilton, P.E., F.NSPE)
 - [Delegation: How to Manage the Monkeys on Your Back](#) (Shelley Rowe, P.E.)
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Iowa Approves PE Exam Before Experience

PE license candidates in Iowa will have the opportunity to take the PE exam prior to meeting the four years of experience requirement.

Legislation (H.F. 284) signed by Governor Kim Reynolds in April eliminates the requirement that applicants for a professional engineer license must show necessary practical experience in engineering work prior to taking the PE exam. The bill does not alter other experience requirements for applicants.

Individuals applying for licensure in Iowa should access the Iowa Engineering and Land Surveying Examining Board [website](#) for updates on implementation of the rule change.

In states that have “decoupled” the experience and examination requirements, applicants are still required to complete all education, examination, and experience requirements before being granted a PE license.

NSPE believes that licensing boards should provide the option of taking the PE exam as soon as applicants for licensure believe they are prepared to take the exam and have passed the FE exam. Applicants, upon passing the exam, should not be eligible for licensure before meeting all other jurisdictional requirements.

Can the Engineering Profession Achieve Racial Equity?

Engineering occupations are some of the highest-paying and most prestigious in the US labor market, but they are also some of the least diverse. A [new report](#) from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce finds that between 1990 and 2019, the total number of Black/African American and Latinx students who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in engineering increased nearly fourfold, but there is still far from equitable representation.



Over the same time period, the Latinx share of bachelor’s degrees in engineering increased from 3% to 13%, while the Black/African American share held steady at 4%. At this pace, achieving racial equity in engineering on par with population share would take 76 years for Latinx and Black/African American workers as a group and up to 256 years for Black/African American workers alone.

“Having a career in engineering means you’ve made it,” said Anthony Carnevale, CEW director and report lead author in a statement. “While it’s a marker of climbing the wage and status occupational pyramid, it’s also a social indicator of progress on racial and gender justice.”

The report addresses how Black and Latinx are underpaid in a profession that pays very well. A person with an engineering bachelor’s degree (and no graduate degree) earns 25% more on average than the typical bachelor’s degree holder in the first job after graduation.

However, as with almost all fields, Black/African American and Latinx workers earn less than the average. While White and Asian workers with a bachelor’s degree in engineering earn 61% and 71% more, respectively, than the average for all bachelor’s degree holders, Black/African American and Latinx engineering majors

earn just 15% and 18% more, respectively. To attain earnings comparable to those of White engineering majors, Black/African American or Latinx engineers must earn an additional degree beyond the bachelor's degree.

The report authors emphasize that it shouldn't take decades or centuries to ensure diversity in the engineering workforce mirrors diversity in society. It will take a comprehensive, committed, and innovative approach from employers and universities to close the gap.

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