

State News for NSPE Members

TDOT Unveils 10-Year Transportation Project Plan

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) revealed its first-ever proposed 10-year fiscally-constrained project plan in December, with the goal of better communicating with citizens and communities of the long-term investment strategy for infrastructure in Tennessee.

The \$15 billion fiscally constrained plan includes both the annual TDOT work program budget of approximately \$1.2 billion for 10 years plus the \$3 billion State General Fund appropriation provided in the Transportation Modernization Act (TMA), proposed by Governor Lee, and passed by the General Assembly earlier this year. There are 93 site-specific capacity-type projects in the plan, 46 of which are funded fully or in part by the \$3 billion. For the first time, TDOT has identified the funding necessary to complete all projects in the plan, ensuring “what gets started, gets finished.”

This first-ever 10-year fiscally constrained project plan is supported by a new data-driven prioritization process that allows for a more objective review of infrastructure projects across Tennessee. The plan is a road map that will be reevaluated annually to consider the changing needs of our people, economy and infrastructure. It permits a long-term investment strategy that will inform TDOT’s annual budget proposal to the General Assembly for consideration.

Fifty-five percent of the \$15 billion is identified for construction projects reflected on the 10-year project plan list, with the remaining 45 percent budgeted for programs that TDOT allocates annually based on need. These programs include, but are not limited to, resurfacing and bridge repair. Further, it is important to note that TDOT will allocate an additional approximately \$6 billion in state and federal funds over the next 10 years (nearly \$600 million annually) in partnership with airports, transit agencies, counties, cities, and other entities to address multimodal access, mobility, and safety. [Read more.](#)

Volkswagen's Knoxville Research is Developing the Future Of EVs

Volkswagen has long had a prominent presence in Tennessee. Starting with the Passat in 2011, the Chattanooga plant has churned out a handful of models over the years. The location employs thousands in Tennessee, but Volkswagen isn't limiting its involvement in The Volunteer State. Just a couple of hours up I-75 in Knoxville, the automaker is working with students from the University of Tennessee (UT) and the Oak Ridge National Lab (ORNL) to research materials, EV technology, and sustainability measures, [according to HotCars](#).

The Volkswagen Innovation Hub is located at the University of Tennessee Research Park, which houses other materials research labs, including some used by ORNL. Opened in 2020, the facility accommodates projects that the automaker said are a “unique blend of world-class academic research and Volkswagen's leading industry capabilities.”

The team has executed more than 25 joint research projects since 2020, and officials at UT said they plan to pull off another 10 through 2025. As part of the expansion, the university will introduce more PhD fellowships and internship positions at VW and establish more dedicated guest lectures with senior experts from the company. Additionally, the UT System is exploring ways to continue expanding educational and internship opportunities with the automaker. [Read more](#).

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

Help Guide the Future of NICET's SSI Program

The National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies (NICET), a division of the NSPE, is developing a certification program for the Systems Software Integrator (SSI) certification program. NICET invites you to [participate in the SSI Job Task Analysis survey](#) to provide vital feedback needed to develop the program.

The SSI certification program seeks to reduce risk, improve quality, and ensure public safety from new emerging technologies as software and information technology increasingly converges with the operation of physical processes and machinery affecting our lives.

We highly value the insight you can provide and would greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey by February 5. After completing the survey, participants can enter into a drawing for a \$100 Amazon gift card.



Nominations Open: 2024 Excellence Awards

Please consider nominating a colleague for an NSPE Excellence Award.

NSPE Award : The NSPE Award is the highest award given to an individual by the Society. It is presented to an engineer who has made outstanding contributions to the engineering profession, the public welfare, and humankind. The nomination deadline is March 1.

New Professional Award : This award recognizes a young NSPE member who has made outstanding contributions to the engineering profession and the community during the early years of one's career. The nomination deadline is March 1.

Engineering Education Excellence Award : This award recognizes engineering faculty who have demonstrated the ability to link engineering education with professional practice. The recipients must be licensed and have a faculty appointment in an ABET-accredited engineering program. The nomination deadline is March 31.

Call for NSPE Fellow Membership Nominees

Nominations for the **NSPE Fellow Membership Grade** are **due by March 1**. This prestigious national program aims to recognize dedicated professional engineers who have demonstrated outstanding and sustained service at the chapter, state, and national levels of NSPE. [Access more information about the nomination process](#) .

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