Governor Highlights $3.3B Transportation Act with “Build with Us Tour” Stops

Tennessee Governor Bill Lee recently announced a statewide “Build with Us Tour” to celebrate the landmark Transportation Modernization Act and highlight key infrastructure priorities across rural and urban Tennessee. Governor Lee’s travel will include stops in all three Grand Divisions throughout June and July, Fox13 Memphis reports.

“As Tennessee continues to experience record growth, the Transportation Modernization Act will ensure our roads keep up with the pace,” Lee stated in a release.

“This summer, I look forward to seeing how our new transportation strategy will prepare rural and urban Tennessee for continued economic growth and opportunity, without new taxes or debt, and I thank the legislature for its partnership to ensure our state’s success.”

Lee introduced the Transportation Modernization Act this year and signed it into law on April 17, following successful bipartisan passage in the Tennessee General Assembly.

The plan creates a new transportation strategy and will invest an additional $3.3 billion to accommodate Tennessee’s record growth, address traffic congestion and meet transportation needs across rural and urban communities.

The strategy will give the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) the resources needed to solve the state’s current and future mobility challenges. Read more.

TDEC Announces Nearly $300 Million in Additional Water Infrastructure Investments
The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) recently announced 131 grants totaling $299.2 million from the state’s American Rescue Plan (ARP) fund, part of which TDEC is administering in the form of drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure grants. Since August, TDEC has awarded and announced $933.6 million in grant funds through ARP programming.

Of the 131 grants announced, 29 are collaborative grants and 102 are non-collaborative grants. Collaborative grants involve multiple entities (cities, counties, or water utilities) partnering on projects to work toward a shared purpose. All grants awarded represent 469 individual drinking water, wastewater, and/or stormwater infrastructure projects.

Tennessee received $3.725 billion from the ARP, and the state's Financial Stimulus Accountability Group dedicated $1.35 billion of those funds to TDEC to support water projects in communities throughout the state. Of the $1.35 billion, approximately $1 billion was designated for non-competitive formula-based grants offered to counties and eligible cities to address systems' critical needs. Those include developing Asset Management Plans, addressing significant non-compliance, updating aging infrastructure, mitigating water loss for drinking water systems, and reducing inflow and infiltration for wastewater systems.

The grants recently announced are part of the $1 billion non-competitive grant program. The remaining funds ($269 million) will go to state-initiated projects and competitive grants. Read more.

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**TVA Proposes Methane Gas Plant Outside of Nashville**

In the past year, the Tennessee Valley Authority has proposed nearly 4 gigawatts of new fossil fuel generation — or about 10% of the utility’s current electricity capacity, 90.3 wpln news reports.

TVA approved plans for a large gas turbine at Cumberland in January and proposed gas peaker plants for its notorious Kingston site in May. It just revealed plans to burn more gas on land right outside of Nashville.

On the same day that TVA announced that it was starting a new study of its power system, the authority outlined a plan for a methane gas plant, a 12-mile pipeline and a battery system in Cheatham County, on a site near Ashland City that would generate 900 megawatts of power.

The “scoping” process is the first public step in TVA’s regulatory timeline to build new a power plant. The federal utility is supposed to consider all its options and gather public feedback before preparing a formal environmental review. Read more.
Stay up to date on legislative issues through the NSPE Advocacy Center.

Connect with Your Colleagues at #NSPECon23

Register now for NSPECon23 and connect with your colleagues in Louisville, Kentucky, August 2-4. The conference features multiple education tracks in leadership, trends in the industry, and career development with the opportunity to earn up to 10 PDHs. Also stay tuned for information on engineering-related tours. Register by June 29 to take advantage of discounted rates.

Register Now!

Keynote Speakers

Bill Samuels, Jr., Chairman Emeritus of Maker’s Mark Distillery, will open the NSPECon 23 meeting. Samuels, who helped design both the Gemini and Polaris missiles and became friends with the founding administrator of NASA, will talk about the, “Trials and Tribulations of a Failed Aerospace Engineer.”

Megan Bendtzen, the CEO and founder of TheDoctorofFun.com, will give a keynote presentation on - Beyond the Blueprint: Mastering the Most Important Project of Your Life. In this clever and entertaining presentation, Bendtzen will completely shift your perspective, debunking the myth of work-life balance and revealing the single biggest lie surrounding the pursuit of happiness.

Conference Session Highlights

- Ethical Obligations and Engineering Through a DEI Lens
• The Engineer’s Blueprint: Success Principles for Winning at Work and at Home

• Lithium: The Race for North American EV Dominance But at What Cost to the Industry?

• Finding the Funds for Your Infrastructure Project

• Leaders Leading Leaders

• We Need YOU to Protect the License!

• Meeting the Challenges and Needs of The Engineering Workforce

• Speculative Technology and Exploratory Engineering for Designing the Future

Access the full conference program.

Sponsor and Exhibitor Opportunities

NSPECon23 offers sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities to put your company or organization in front of senior executives and other decision-makers from across the industry. Access the Sponsor and Exhibitor Prospectus for more information.

New Webinar: Racing Towards Excellence

A new webinar will get you ready for NSPECon23 — Racing Towards Excellence: Enhancing Customer Experience and Improving Safety at Churchill Downs.

Neil Crawford, P.E., an accomplished engineer and project manager at Qk4 Inc., offers insight into the history of Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby and its economic impacts on Kentucky. Learn about recent improvement projects to enhance the customer experience and also projects to improve equine/horseman safety and expand the racing operations.

The webinar is FREE for members and offers 1 PDH. Register and watch now.
ARPL Offers New Advocacy Resources

ARPL has released two new advocacy resources. A video, Universal Licensing: A Closer Look, (featuring Rebecca Bowman, Senior Director of Ethics and Professional Practice) and an advocacy document, The Critical Role of Licensing in Business Success, based on recent research. As a sponsoring member of ARPL, NSPE has access to these resources and others on the ARPL website.