

State News for NSPE Members

Tennessee Secures Historic Investment to Modernize Memphis Infrastructure

On July 12, the US Department of Transportation informed Congress of a landmark federal investment of nearly \$400 million that will be allocated toward half the cost of replacing the I-55 Bridge over the Mississippi River, also known as America's River Crossing. This investment marks a significant step toward enhancing regional and national connectivity and safety.

In addition to the nearly \$400 million investment from the US Department of Transportation, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), utilizing a State General Fund allocation provided through the Transportation Modernization Act, and the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) have each committed up to \$250 million. These investments demonstrate a collaborative effort to fund this bridge replacement and meet infrastructure needs of the region.

The I-55 Bridge, a vital link for national commerce, is set to undergo a comprehensive overhaul aimed at adding capacity, improving safety standards, ensuring route resiliency, and maintaining optimal operational conditions. The existing bridge has served travelers for 75 years since its construction and will be replaced with a larger structure designed to meet modern seismic codes, as it sits on the New Madrid fault line.

By 2050, the state-of-the-art I-55 Bridge is projected to accommodate approximately 64,000 vehicles daily, significantly higher than the current 48,000 vehicles, benefiting residents, workers, and businesses across Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi in one of the nation's most traversed freight corridors. The project aims to reduce traffic congestion, lower accident rates, and optimize traffic flow, thereby bolstering local and regional transportation networks. [Read more.](#)

New Law Allows Developers to Hire Their Own Building

Safety Inspectors

A new law initiated by Governor Bill Lee will allow developers to hire their own inspectors to check for environmental, safety and building violations on construction sites — bypassing city codes departments and the State Fire Marshal's Office, the [Tennessee Outlook reports](#).

Lee, who made the measure a key policy priority this year, said it is intended to streamline the building process, particularly in rapidly growing Tennessee communities. "Time is money," he said introducing the plan in his State of the State address earlier this year.

"Just take it from someone who spent 35 years in the construction industry," said Lee. "A bureaucratic permitting process is bad for everybody but the government."

Opponents of the law, including the statewide association of codes officials, say privatizing building inspections introduces risks. For-hire inspectors paid by a builder seeking a favorable inspection have the potential to overlook key safety and building standards that apply to both single family homes and high-rise office buildings. In other words, private inspectors could have incentive to tell their boss what he or she wants to hear.

"The potential harm is they could approve construction that is not safe," said Monty Kapavik, president of the Tennessee Building Officials Association and the codes enforcement director for Nolensville. [Read more](#).

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

Celebrate Licensure and the Profession on PE Day



The annual [Professional Engineers Day](#) will be celebrated on August 7, 2024. Save the date and get ready to share your on-site photos and selfies as part of the online

virtual event using the hashtag #LicensedPEday on X (Twitter), Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn. Share your reasons for being a PE and give special recognition to your colleagues and teams. [Download the official PE Day logos](#) to use in your social media posts or celebrations.

Shop at the [PE Day Logo Store](#) for gear to show off your PE pride. [PE Day polo shirts](#) are also available for purchase.

Emerging Leaders Program Seeks Candidates

The [NSPE Emerging Leaders Program](#) is seeking the next group of engineering change-makers. Candidates with 5–8 years of professional experience in the engineering field who are prepared to think strategically about their career and begin taking on leadership roles are [invited to apply](#). Selected participants come from a variety of firms with a range of engineering expertise.

The 2025 ELP syllabus and related time-commitments are available and the application for the program is due by August 31. Candidates accepted into the program will receive notification in October.

[Apply Now](#)

EJCDC® Releases Geotechnical Engineering Services Document

The Engineers Joint Contract Documents Committee has released a new document - [EJCDC® E-530 Agreement Between Owner & Geotechnical Engineer for Professional Services](#) (2024 edition). NSPE members will receive a 50% discount on the EJCDC documents.

The E-530 is a standard agreement for a project owner's direct engagement of the services of a geotechnical engineering firm or individual geotechnical engineer. It is common practice for project owners to directly engage the services of a geotechnical engineering firm (or individual) whose basic task will be to investigate the subsurface condition of the site and prepare a geotechnical report for the design engineer's use in designing the project. The geotechnical report is usually also made available to prospective construction contractors and subcontractors for use in preparing bids and proposals, and to the selected construction contractor for reference during construction. [Learn more](#).

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