$1.28 Billion Coming to Tennessee for Infrastructure Projects

The US Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration has announced that Tennessee is set to receive more than $1 billion in funding for infrastructure repairs and projects, according to WKRN. The funding supports investment in critical infrastructure, including roads, bridges and tunnels, carbon emission reduction, and safety improvements via 12 formula programs. The funding will also support workforce development for the projects and go directly to Tennessee, providing transportation leaders within the state with flexibility to continue the work of rebuilding roads and bridges and improving the transportation systems.

The largest investment in Tennessee comes from the National Highway Performance Program, with more than $641 million. The smallest amount is more than $5 million for the Railway-Highway Crossings Program. Read more.

TSU Gets $2 Million Grant to Boost Retention, Diversity in Engineering

A $2.25 million grant awarded to Tennessee State University aims to boost retention and diversity in the engineering field. TSU’s College of Engineering was awarded the grant money from the National Science Foundation.

Scholarships will be given to first-year students to help with the financial strains of the major. “It’s just something that you have to put constant time into,” said Cameron Anderson, a freshman engineering major. “I’ve always been drawn to engineering. Growing up as a kid, I loved robotics.”

Administrators found students like the program, but some couldn’t afford to stay due to the combination of course workload and needing to fund their education through extra jobs. The grant will help them stay on track with passing pre-math
and physics classes. “I feel like it’s very important. It gives somewhat of an incentive to stay in. I know some people give up on it for financial reasons,” said Anderson. Read more from WKRN.

Stay up to date on legislative issues through the NSPE Advocacy Center.

Looking Toward a Promising Future
By Bill Atkinson, P.E., F.NSPE, President 2023–24

As I continue on my professional journey as the NSPE president, I often reflect on what our organization has done since its founding in 1934 and what NSPE needs to do going forward. The next stage of NSPE’s future begins with our vision to ensure that the public lives in a world where engineering decisions are made by qualified and ethically accountable professionals. This will require that a unified engineering community step up to protect licensure laws across the nation and maintain high standards for professional practice. It will require that we embrace innovation and emerging technologies. This future will be bolstered by a new generation of engineers that we must encourage to understand that they can truly make a difference in the world. I look forward to playing my part and supporting others in these efforts.

Licensure and Emerging Technologies
Protection of the public health, safety, and welfare is at our core as professional engineers. Licensure is key to ensuring consistent standards of practice and professional competencies. We must make sure that these standards and competencies remain relevant to how we do things today, while looking toward the future.

We must continually question ourselves and the regulations that are in place. Are state licensing laws adequately regulating the profession of engineering without precluding otherwise qualified individuals from practicing? Is our current licensure model adequately serving its purpose? Are engineering licensure exemptions creating gaps where the public could be harmed? The answers to these questions
can help drive us to better ways of safeguarding the public.

I believe that most individuals that become engineers do so because they are good at making things better. They are not tied to the world they are in today and are always pursuing excellence and improvement. I believe that by pooling our experiences as engineers, we can bring the best and brightest together to tackle any challenge that we may face as we seek to evolve. This evolution will involve the development and use of emerging technologies to spur innovative solutions. NSPE is supporting members by providing professional development that showcases the use of these technologies in a manner that is ethical and will benefit the public. Read more.

NSPECon24 – Call for Presentation Proposals

Prepare to share your expertise during NSPECon24 in Raleigh, North Carolina, August 7-9, 2024. Review the topics NSPE seeks in the areas of career development, leadership, and issues and trends, and think about how you can contribute. The submission site will open on November 1 and the proposal deadline is January 10, 2024.

The NSPECon23 program is still available online and may give potential presenters some ideas about the caliber of sessions needed for next year.

Volunteers are the Heart of NSPE: Get Involved and Share Your Voice

Volunteers are essential to advancing NSPE’s vision to ensure a world where the public can be confident that engineering decisions affecting their lives are made by qualified and ethically accountable professionals. Volunteering is also a great opportunity for members to grow their professional network and connect with other leaders in the field.

There are several ways to get involved...here a few opportunities to consider
Serve as a mentor for an engineering student. If interested, send an email to education@nspe.org.

NSPE online community champion. Virtual opportunity to promote community and sharing of ideas through NSPE’s online channels. If interested, send an email to membership@nspe.org.

Write an article for PE magazine. Share your expertise and insights on professional practice, education, ethics, leadership, licensure, public policy, DEI, emerging technologies, and sustainability and resilience by serving as a guest writer for PE magazine. If interested, email pemagazine@nspe.org for submission guidelines.

Collaborate with staff to draft/supply input on federal legislation, regulations or public comments to federal Congressional staff and committees (Identify your area(s) of vocational expertise.) If interested, send an email to governmentrelations@nspe.org.

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