

## State News for NSPE Members

### Rural TN Counties to Receive \$45M for Economic Development, Infrastructure

Rural areas in Tennessee are set for a renewed economic development boost thanks to \$45 million in approved state funding, [the Tennessean reports](#).

It was a recent topic of conversation for the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner Stuart McWhorter, who appeared on Sen. Marsha Blackburn's podcast, released May 8.

Governor Bill Lee's budget for fiscal year 2025-26, passed in April by lawmakers, included about \$45 million for the Tennessee Rural Development Fund, which aims to promote economic investment and support infrastructure projects in rural communities across the state. Rural development, in general, makes up about a third of the work done at the Department of Economic and Community Development.

"This \$45 million is a substantial investment for us," Commissioner McWhorter said during the "Unmuted" podcast episode. "I mean, it's probably one of the largest we've had, certainly under Governor Bill Lee's leadership, and it allows us to invest in infrastructure." [Read more](#).

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### Lee, General Assembly Deliver Landmark Investments for Key Infrastructure Improvements

The Tennessee Department of Transportation recently announced that for the first time in history, the state's annual budget includes additional dedicated, recurring General Fund dollars for transportation, [Citizen Tribune reports](#).

As part of this 10-year-plan, part of the recurring money going into the road fund will come from sales of tires.

"Tire sales (was selected) because transportation costs keep going up," State Sen.

Steve Southerland (R-Morristown) said. “There are thousands of projects that need to be done. We have enough money coming into general fund to offset the loss.”

Southerland said that Hamblen County has been very fortunate in regards to road projects in recent years. In the past couple of years, an additional turn lane from West Andrew Johnson Highway was constructed onto State Route 66 at Walmart. There has also been \$5.6 million provided at the Exit 8 interchange with Interstate 81.

Now, Phase 1 of the four-laning of US 11E from US 25E to East Morris Boulevard near Russellville Elementary School is taking place. The project was allocated \$63.5 million from the 10-year plan. [Read more.](#)

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## **UT-Knoxville Experts Helping Philippines Revive Nuclear Energy Program**

The University of Tennessee at Knoxville is lending its expertise to help the Philippines in a quest to relaunch its nuclear energy program, [Knoxnews reports](#).

The country built a nuclear power plant in the 1980s, but never operated it because of financial barriers and earthquake risks. It wants to restart a nuclear program to provide reliable clean energy and is exploring options to revive the plant and build new reactors.

How UT is helping: UT's Department of Nuclear Engineering, the oldest nuclear engineering department in the US and the largest by number of doctoral students, plans to assist the Philippines to develop nuclear education programs at its universities.

Personnel from the Philippines may come to UT as visiting scholars or as enrolled graduate students. The Philippine Department of Science and Technology would pay salaries for visiting scholars and a stipend of \$10,000 a semester to UT.

UT would cover tuition for the graduate students and pay them for research and teaching as it does for other students. Scholars and students could then return to the Philippines to teach nuclear courses and conduct research. [Read more.](#)

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

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## **Get Involved! NSPE Seeks Volunteers for 2025–26 Committees**

NSPE's passionate and dedicated committee volunteers are essential to our

mission. **Why serve?** In addition to giving back to the professional engineering community, NSPE volunteers form strong connections with committee colleagues, learn new skills, enjoy networking with leaders or hone their own leadership skills. [Learn more and apply to NSPE's committees by June 4.](#) (You must log-in with your NSPE credentials to submit an application.)

If you do not see an opportunity that interests you in the link above, check out [Get Involved](#) throughout the year to learn more about other areas of engagement, including short-term projects.

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## Build Momentum – NSPECon25 Keynote Speakers



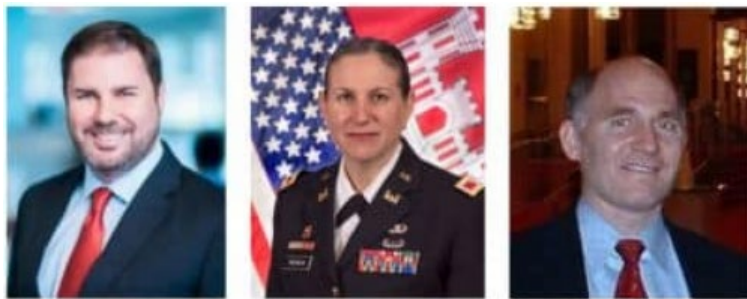
NSPECon25 (Kansas City, Missouri, August 6-8), the prime national event for professional engineers, will feature keynote speakers to provide inspiration and guidance to help elevate your career in addition to putting a spotlight on emerging issues within the industry. Meet your keynote speakers below and be sure to review the [full conference program](#).



**Dr. Cindy Frewen, FAIA, urban futurist and architect**, will present the session **“A World Gone Sideways: Engineering 2050 in a Post-Normal World.”** She will explore how engineers in 2050 can become not just problem-solvers, but storytellers, system-shapers, and stewards of a better world.



**Coach Donnie Campbell** will present the session **“What’s Your MVP? Leadership Lessons from the Coach Who Inspired Ted Lasso.”** In his leadership keynote, inspires audiences to discover their “MVP” – their mission, values, and principles to inspire individuals to reach their potential and teams to reach new heights.



A presentation on the **“Government and Private Industries’ Response to the Maryland Key Bridge Collapse”** will explore the coordinated efforts between government agencies and private industries in response to the tragic bridge collapse. **Stephen R. Skippen**, DBIA, CCM, ENV SP (senior project manager, Skanska USA Civil), **Colonel Estee Pinchasin** (director of logistics, National Security Agency), and **Paul Hankins** (director, salvage operations and ocean engineering, United States Navy), are the presentation panelists.

**Early-bird discount rates are available until June 27.** NSPECon25 will take place at the Intercontinental Kansas City at the Plaza. The [deadline for reserving a hotel room](#) at the discounted conference rate is July 4. We encourage you to make your reservation early since there are a limited number of conference-rate hotels rooms available.

### **Welcome 2025 Sponsors!**

NSPE offers a range of sponsorship packages tailored to meet various goals and budgets, with a special exhibitor discount available for Kansas City-based businesses. Discover more about these opportunities in the [Sponsor and Exhibitor section](#) of the conference website.

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**Don't Miss Out on the 2025 Spring Webinar Series**



NSPE offers a live webinar series free to members—“WORKability Wednesdays”—to support their professional development goals. Register now at [NSPE's PE Institute](#) to attend the webinar on **May 28**—[How Has Technology Shaped Workstyles Across Generations?](#)

Members can access a recording of the recent webinar held on May 14—[Using Your Engineering Expertise as a Forensic Expert](#) in addition to the webinars held in March and April. \*Members are advised to consult their state licensing board to determine requirements for PDH or CPD credits.

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