WVU Engineers Collaborate to Produce Swabs for COVID-19 Testing

The Innovation Hub at WVU's College of Engineering is collaborating with WVU Medicine and a 3D-printing technology developer to produce nasal swabs used in testing for COVID-19, reports Control Engineering. The project got underway after a request from state officials and the West Virginia National Guard to ramp up testing in the state. The team will produce up to 10,000 swabs per week.

Letter to Governors Challenges Region’s Petrochemical Development

Eight college-affiliated economists and public policy experts are challenging the belief that the Ohio River Valley economy can be saved by expansion of the region’s petrochemical and plastics manufacturing industries, according to the Intelligencer. In a letter sent to Governor Jim Justice as well as Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf and Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, the group wrote “no such expansion and jobs boom is likely. And, unless we adopt new and better development strategies, we risk squandering hundreds of millions of dollars in public funds in pursuit of a vision that will not materialize.”

The letter, which can be read in full in the Business Journal adds: “The recent cancellation of the ASCENT ethane cracker in Wood County, West Virginia, the indefinite postponement of a final investment decision on the proposed Belmont County, Ohio cracker, the failure of the proposed Appalachian Storage Hub (ASH) to attract private investors, and the failure by China to follow through on an announced investment of $84 billion in in the region are just the most visible signs that the vision of an economic renaissance driven by an expansion of petrochemicals and plastics manufacturing is an economic non-starter.”

Representatives of the petrochemical industry disagreed with the letter, arguing that expansion of the industry in the area will have a positive economic impact,
Are You “In the Know”?  

Members who want to get a quick overview of the Society’s news should check out the June “In the Know with NSPE” video on YouTube. The 15-minute presentation by President-Elect Tricia Hatley, P.E., F.NSPE, covers topics like the reopening of licensing and certification exams, PE magazine highlights, a breakdown of the Society’s strategic plan, advocacy efforts on behalf of PEs, the upcoming Virtual Professional Engineers Conference, the Society’s statement on social injustice, and the Emerging Leaders Program.

Register for the Virtual PECon 2020  

Registration is now open for the 2020 Virtual Professional Engineers Conference (PECon) on August 3–7 with events centered around the annual celebration of PE Day on August 5.

Virtual PECon sessions can be experienced in a live virtual environment or by accessing recordings at a more convenient time. The virtual conference will also provide networking and social connection with colleagues by region and areas of practice in addition to professional development opportunities.

PECon at a Glance

- Keynote sessions featuring IBM’s Global Chief Technology Officer and the Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board
- Session: Ensuring Successful Stakeholder and Community Involvement
- Session: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Planning: Compliance Guidelines for Your Facility
- Session: Professional Engineer’s Role in Artificial Intelligence and
Technology

- Session: Ethics of Sustainable Design
- Session: Shrinking the Distance for Virtual Teams to Succeed

There are three registration options:

1. **Single Session** provides individual one PDH sessions for $39 ($99 for nonmembers);

2. **Day Track** provides access to three PDH sessions, networking morning “coffee talk” roundtables, and evening post session discussions for $99 ($279 for nonmembers); and

3. **All-Access Pass** provides 15 PDH sessions with networking morning “coffee talk” roundtables each day and event post session discussions for $249 ($1,149 for nonmembers).

Nonmembers can join NSPE for $299 and receive member pricing.

**Virtual PECon 2020 Free for Students**

NSPE is providing the opportunity for student members to participate in the upcoming **Virtual Professional Engineers Conference 2020** for free on August 3–7.

Student members who register for the conference can sign up for a track or an all-access pass and can also attend networking events, including morning coffee talks and evening round table discussions.

Register now.

Register now to customize your attendance package for live events August 3–7.

**Call for 2020–21 Volunteers**

NSPE needs your knowledge, expertise, and time to assist our organization carry out its vision, mission, and meet the goals of the strategic plan. Volunteer positions begin in August and end at the annual conference in 2021.

These opportunities are organized into three types with various levels of engagement.

**Engagement Level 1:** Standing committees and select committees require the highest engagement level. They often involve attending at least one in-person
meeting in conjunction with the annual meeting. Most meetings are held via conference call.

**Engagement Level 2:** These volunteer positions are responsible for organization activities and involve assignment to a committee, task force, or other group. Activities primarily include e-mail and conference calls.

**Engagement Level 3:** Ad hoc volunteers take part in activities on a project-by-project basis.

Submit forms by July 15 to be considered for a 2020–21 term.

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**Aiming for Leadership? This Program’s for You**

If you’re starting your engineering career and looking toward a future of leadership, NSPE is excited to offer an opportunity to participate in the Emerging Leaders Program.

The NSPE Emerging Leaders Program is an intensive seven month, professionally facilitated, focused, practical, virtual program for emerging leaders. Between August 5 (Professional Engineers Day) and February 27 (National Engineers Week) participants will receive specific, relevant training and application on how to be successful at higher levels of leadership responsibility.

The target audience for the Emerging Leaders Program is for promising early-career professionals with 5-8 years of experience who are just beginning to lead and think strategically in the profession and their careers. The reality-based curriculum focuses on the core skills necessary to think strategically, build effective teams, deliver great service for their most valued clients, and lead successfully.

Learn more and apply by **July 1, 2020**.

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**Advocacy Opportunity: Speak Out for Future PEs**

You have an opportunity today to advocate for the future of the engineering profession!

H.R. 5339 (Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow’s Workforce Act) amends the Internal Revenue Code to allow students with 529 Education Accounts to use those funds for expenses related to obtaining a post-education credential—including the PE license. Funds could be used for expenses associated with both exam prep and the exam itself.

The bill needs additional cosponsors in order to move forward. As NSPE’s
Government Relations team continues talking with House offices, your support of H.R. 5339 is crucial. The more support we have from NSPE members, the stronger position we’re in to ask House Representatives to sign on.

You have the opportunity to take multiple actions if you’d like, starting with writing a letter, then following up with either a Tweet or a phone call. Or all three, if you’re feeling especially ambitious!

Feel free to contact Stephanie Hamilton if you have any questions, or if you’d just like to talk about advocacy! Hamilton can be reached at 703-684-2844 or shamilton@nspe.org.

Take action on H.R. 5339.