

## State News for NSPE Members

### EV Charging Network Developer to be Chosen in February

The Federal Highway Administration has allocated \$51.4 million in grant funding to the Puerto Rico Highways & Transportation Authority (PRHTA) to establish a network of 10 publicly accessible electric vehicle (EV) charging stations along the island's Route 2, and highways 22 and 52, [News Is My Business reports](#).

The funds are part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act's \$2.5 billion Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program, a competitive funding initiative that will fund 47 EV charging and alternative-fueling infrastructure projects in 22 states and Puerto Rico, including the construction of approximately 7,500 EV charging ports.

The secretary of Puerto Rico's Department of Transportation and Public Works, Eileen Vega-Vélez, told News is my Business that the island will work with a private-sector provider that will be selected in February, following a request for proposal process that began in August. "The PRHTA committee received the proposals in December and will be meeting this month to analyze them," she stated. [Read more](#).

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### Tesla Launches Puerto Rico Virtual Power Plant

Tesla has officially launched its Virtual Power Plant (VPP) in Puerto Rico, potentially becoming the world's most enormous owing to its extensive Powerwall user base, [Interesting Engineering reports](#). This initiative, introduced to support the island's power grid, aims to leverage distributed energy assets, predominantly rooftop solar and home energy storage, providing grid services like peak shaving.

The VPP concept involves aggregating energy resources from individual customer assets, assisting the grid when needed, and compensating participating customers. Tesla's VPP in Puerto Rico, a collaborative effort with Sunova Energy and Sunrun, presents an opportunity for approximately 75,000 Powerwall owners in the region to enroll directly via the Tesla app.

The VPP establishes a network of residential battery units ready to support the grid when required. It allows Powerwall owners to participate in the Battery Emergency Demand Response Program, offering compensation of \$1 for every kWh their Powerwall supplies during grid-supporting events.

Participants must have a residential service account registered in LUMA's Net Energy Metering program and should not be simultaneously enrolled with another aggregator. The program review process determines eligibility and automatically enrolls eligible participants. [Read more.](#)

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## **Puerto Rico Case Study Sheds Light on Academic-NGO Collaborations**

Puerto Rico has faced several human-made and natural crises in recent years, including the devastating effects of Hurricane Maria in 2017. Building disaster resilience and recovery is crucial for community well-being and requires a comprehensive approach with cooperation from multiple organizations. A new study from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign examines the partnership between a Puerto Rican non-governmental organization (NGO) and a group of academics, [according to a news release](#).

“Disaster resilience is a grand-scale challenge that is complex and multifaceted. When individuals from different disciplines and cultural perspectives come together, there is genuine value in approaching the problem from as many of those perspectives as possible. In this study, we sought to identify the complexities, risks, and pitfalls of NGO-academic cooperation in order to lay out a process that is more efficient and successful for future practitioners,” said Luis F. Rodríguez, associate professor in the University of Illinois’ Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering.

Rodríguez is a co-author of the study, which documents the collaboration between a National Science Foundation INFEWS-ER (Innovations at the Nexus of Food, Energy, and Water Systems Educational Resources) project and Caras con Causa, a Puerto Rican NGO that works with disadvantaged communities to create educational, environmental, and economic opportunities for local youth. [Read more.](#)

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

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## **Help Guide the Future of NICET’s SSI Program**

The National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies (NICET), a

division of the NSPE, is developing a certification program for the Systems Software Integrator (SSI) certification program. NICET invites you to [participate in the SSI Job Task Analysis survey](#) to provide vital feedback needed to develop the program.

The SSI certification program seeks to reduce risk, improve quality, and ensure public safety from new emerging technologies as software and information technology increasingly converges with the operation of physical processes and machinery affecting our lives.

We highly value the insight you can provide and would greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey by February 5. After completing the survey, participants can enter into a drawing for a \$100 Amazon gift card.

[Take the Survey](#)

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## Nominations Open: 2024 Excellence Awards

Please consider nominating a colleague for an NSPE Excellence Award.

**NSPE Award** : The NSPE Award is the highest award given to an individual by the Society. It is presented to an engineer who has made outstanding contributions to the engineering profession, the public welfare, and humankind. The nomination deadline is March 1.

**New Professional Award** : This award recognizes a young NSPE member who has made outstanding contributions to the engineering profession and the community during the early years of one's career. The nomination deadline is March 1.

**Engineering Education Excellence Award** : This award recognizes engineering faculty who have demonstrated the ability to link engineering education with professional practice. The recipients must be licensed and have a faculty appointment in an ABET-accredited engineering program. The nomination deadline is March 31.

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## Call for NSPE Fellow Membership Nominees

Nominations for the **NSPE Fellow Membership Grade** are **due by March 1**. This prestigious national program aims to recognize dedicated professional engineers who have demonstrated outstanding and sustained service at the chapter, state, and national levels of NSPE. [Access more information about the nomination process](#).

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