

State News for NSPE Members

DOE Commits Over \$450 Million to Expand Solar Access in Puerto Rico

In a significant stride toward fostering energy sustainability and cost reduction, the US Department of Energy (DOE) has unveiled a substantial commitment of up to \$453.5 million hailing from the Puerto Rico Energy Resilience Fund (PR-ERF), [Solarquarter reports](#).

This funding aims to stimulate the widespread adoption of residential rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage systems throughout the region, with a dedicated emphasis on extending support to Puerto Rico's most economically disadvantaged residents. The latest round of financial backing will encompass comprehensive consumer safeguards and educational initiatives, designed to facilitate the enduring utilization of solar infrastructure by local inhabitants. Additionally, a Solar Ambassador Prize will be instituted, incentivizing community groups to facilitate the identification and engagement of eligible households, thereby aligning with Puerto Rico's overarching ambition of establishing a resilient energy grid powered exclusively by renewable sources.

The announcement heralds an inaugural funding opportunity made available through PR-ERF, amounting to a staggering \$450 million. This allocation is meticulously structured to incentivize the installation of 30,000 to 40,000 solar PV and battery storage systems targeting economically disadvantaged single-family households. [Read more](#).

Puerto Rico Gets \$30.9 Million to Repair Public Transportation System

[NimB reports](#) that the US Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration has allocated \$30.9 million to fund repairs and improvements to public transport terminals in Puerto Rico, along with vehicle acquisitions in the towns of Las Marías, Hormigueros and Ponce, and attention to the Urban Train

light rail system in San Juan.

Of the total, \$30 million is designated for the Puerto Rico Highways & Transportation Authority. The funding will be used for a project to permanently repair damage to the Urban Train, which includes engineering and design services and rehabilitation of fixed facilities. This funding was awarded in response to the emergency declaration following a series of earthquakes in the island's southwest.

The Municipality of Hormigueros will receive \$396,000 to replace four vehicles damaged by natural disasters. The vehicles are used for community transportation services via the Julio Pérez Irizarry Multiple Activities and Services Center. The town of Las Marías will receive \$312,419 for repairs to the public transport terminal, for damages caused by Hurricane Isaías, which affected the island in July 2020.

Lastly, the Municipality of Ponce will receive \$154,937 for permanent repairs to the Carlos Garay Public Car Terminal and the Dora Colón Clavell Urban Park, which were damaged by hurricanes Maria and Fiona. [Read more.](#)

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

Vermont PE Rises to Top Leadership



William (Bill) Atkinson, P.E., F.NSPE, was installed as NSPE's 2023–24 president during a ceremony at NSPECon23 in Louisville, Kentucky, on August 3. He has spent most of his career volunteering for NSPE and various engineering organizations that hold true to his passion for protecting the public through licensure and ethical engineering decision making.

Atkinson serves as the engineering manager and lead engineer at Vermont Mechanical Inc., a mechanical and plumbing design build contractor that focuses on healthcare and commercial construction (where he has been employed since 2001). He currently directs the service and engineering departments.

Throughout his engineering career, Atkinson has taken on various volunteer and leadership positions within NSPE, the Vermont Society of Professional Engineers, ASHRAE, and NCEES. He served on the Vermont Board of Professional Engineers and the University of Vermont College of Engineering Advisory Board. He has also served as an ABET observer and as the president of the Clarkson University Vermont Alumni Chapter. He is a licensed professional engineer in New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

Atkinson lives in Essex, Vermont, with his wife, Kim Atkinson, P.E., and two young

active sons. When he and his wife are not working they are often found coaching or enjoying the outdoors in all seasons.

Honoring Excellence in the Profession

NSPE members were recently honored for their outstanding contributions to the profession during NSPECon23 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Engineering Education Excellence Award

This award recognizes licensed engineering faculty who have demonstrated the ability to link engineering education with professional practice. It is sponsored by the Professional Engineers in Higher Education (PEHE) interest group.



Waterloo Tsutsui, Ph.D., P.E., is a senior research associate in the School of Aeronautics and Astronautics at Purdue University where his primary aim is to provide a rigorous education that nurtures an engineering mindset among students and empowering them to analyze, communicate, and solve complex problems. He ensures students derive maximum advantage from meticulously designed educational experiences integrated into their curriculum, fostering lasting knowledge and capabilities that extend far beyond the confines of the classroom for the ultimate benefit of students. As an example, Tsutsui implemented virtual labs and visualization in lab courses as an innovative way to link engineering practice to education.

New Professional of the Year 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.



Sri Kumar, P.E., is the president and CEO of Connico, a national consultancy serving the aviation, civil, and transportation markets. In his current role, he is responsible for outlining the company's strategy for the future, ensuring the company continues to execute its goals, and delivering excellence to clients from Tampa to Seattle. He is also committed to building Connico's employee-focused culture and is passionate about developing a strong, diverse, and uniquely talented team who work each day on solving some of the nation's most complex infrastructure challenges.

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](#).

The 2024 ELP syllabus and related time-commitments are available and the application for the program is due by **Thursday, August 31**.

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