

State News for NSPE Members

Biden-Harris Administration Invests in Rural Economy and Equitable Access in Puerto Rico

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on January 9 announced that the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service will invest \$1 million to improve access to El Yunque National Forest, according to a [news release](#).

This investment is meant to ensure rural communities have equitable access to the infrastructure and economic opportunities they need to grow and thrive.

"El Yunque is a special place to the people of Puerto Rico and USDA is committed to investing in the Forest to promote visitation, recreation, and economic development -- outcomes that can be maximized through collaboration and partnerships with the public and private sector," said Secretary Vilsack. [Read more](#).

People-Centered Internet Launches Puerto Rico Prosperity Initiative

The People-Centered Internet ("PCI") is launching the "Puerto Rico Prosperity Initiative" ("PRPI"), an initiative designed to bring businesses, nonprofit organizations, and governmental agencies together to provide increased digital access to key resources and services from the government for future prosperity.

PCI, who developed the Digital Recovery Plan for Puerto Rico under FEMA, is engaging with partners from the US government, Puerto Rico's Department of Economic Development and Commerce ("DEDIC"), the private sector, and local communities to act on key mandates to improve energy and communications infrastructure.

"Puerto Rico is an emerging testing ground for digitization, as \$120 billion in federal funding flows to the people of Puerto Rico and the beachhead for the Federal Long-Term Plan for Resilience and Recovery," said Jascha Stein, PCI's chief strategy officer. [Learn more](#).

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

NSPECon23 Call for Presentations

Share your expertise with professional engineers during [NSPECon23](#) in Louisville, Kentucky, August 2-4. Presentation proposals are being accepted on a [submissions site](#) until **January 25**. The sessions will focus on three topics: amplify your leadership human skills; stay informed about issues and trends impacting the profession; and invest in your career.



Accepted presenters will receive:

- The unparalleled opportunity to give back to the professional engineer community at a nationally recognized conference.
- Recognition on the conference website with a headshot photo, biography, and session description.
- A customized press release announcing your participation and contribution to the conference to share with your employer and/or clients.
- Assistance with (and guidelines for) promoting your session on social media outlets.
- Follow-up survey results and comments related to your presentation.

Get Ready for Engineers Week: Creating the Future!

Engineers Week (February 19–25, 2023) is dedicated to ensuring a diverse and well-educated future engineering workforce. The latest theme for Engineers Week seeks to inspire the next generation by celebrating all the way engineers are Creating the Future! A free **Countdown to Engineers Week webinar** will take place on **Wednesday, January 18**, at 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. (ET). [Register and attend the webinar](#) to receive an Engineers Week planning guide and



starter pack.

[Access more information and resources.](#)

New Board of Ethical Review Cases

The NSPE [Board of Ethical Review](#) (BER) annually provides advisory opinions to provide guidance on ethical dilemmas. The Board of Ethical Review (BER) has [released a new set of cases](#) on various topics including on conflict of interest, duty to report, and professional qualifications.

Check out a BER case focused on the PE role in protecting the public health, safety, and welfare.

Facts: City passes an ordinance requiring a sprinkler system in residences with less than eight feet between them and makes the ordinance effective as to all construction which has not yet received an occupancy permit. This means that projects under construction must have a sprinkler system added. Engineer A, who happens to have both structural and fire protection credentials, is hired by Homeowner to design a retaining wall system to stabilize a rear yard. Homeowner allowed Engineer A to store equipment in the integral garage. Engineer A observes that the builder routed the piping for the retrofitted sprinkler system through the unheated garage, exposing the pipes to freezing temperatures.



Questions: What are Engineer A's obligations?

[Access the full case to read the BER's discussion and conclusion.](#)

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