

State News for NSPE Members

Arecibo Observatory Suffers More Damage

A second cable has fallen at the Arecibo Observatory, which suffered damage when an auxiliary cable snapped and hit the dish in August, [according to the Weekly Journal](#). In November, additional damage was done to the dish and other cables when a main cable broke and fell. Officials haven't determined why the main cable failed, but they suspect it is related to the extra load being carried since August. Both cables that broke were connected to the same tower.

No one was hurt. A safety area has been set up and engineers are working to stabilize the structure. Repair work addressing the initial damage had been expected to begin in early November. The firms WSP, Thornton Tomasetti, and Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates Inc. were hired to do repairs at the facility, which is managed by the University of Central Florida in cooperation with Universidad Ana G. Méndez and Yang Enterprises Inc. for the National Science Foundation.

FEMA Funding to Improve Power Resiliency for Puerto Rico

FEMA, in coordination with the Puerto Rico Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience, or COR3, allocated more than **\$26.2 million** to the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority under the Agency's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. The funds will go toward the engineering and design phase for the installation of a new combined cycle generation plant at the Palo Seco Energy Plant, and the acquisition of eleven gas turbines for five additional PREPA facilities.

The project should cut down on the recovery time for power outages and shore up the island's electrical grid, improving resilience during emergencies. After Hurricane Maria hit the island in 2017, it took 11 months for power to be restored.

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

PEs, Technicians, and Teamwork

Construction projects come with numerous roles and responsibilities that must be carried out with skill and efficiency to achieve success. For professional engineers, perhaps the most critical relationship is with the project's engineering technicians.

In a recent [NSPE webinar](#) on PEs, technicians, and the engineering team, Shannon Looney, P.E., F.NSPE, called the contributions of skilled technicians "invaluable." As the senior project manager for the Glenn E. Mitchell and Company Inc. in Knoxville, Tennessee, Looney specializes in concrete construction. He relies heavily on the data collected by technicians—"the technicians with their hands on the ground that work directly with the labor force and is able to tell us the data we need...to make real-time decisions on important aspects of production."

The webinar covers many aspects of the PE-technician dynamic and the factors that make a strong team. In addition to Looney, the webinar panel included Kent Dvorak, P.E., of Terracon's Salt Lake City office; John Quidley, SET, president and senior quality consultant with Caliber Consulting Services LLC; and Kenny Johnson Jr., P.G., with expertise in the geotechnical and materials testing industry.

The webinar, "Put Me in, Coach! The Engineering Team from Concept to Completion," can be [accessed online for free](#).

Georgia Adopts Structural PE Requirement

Beginning January 1, a professional engineer who designs, signs, and seals plans for "designated structures" in Georgia must be licensed as a structural engineer. Legislation signed into law in August, creates a professional structural engineer licensing process, which includes a requirement that a licensure applicant take the 16-hour PE Structural exam.

The process [establishes several paths](#) for current licensees to be grandfathered into obtaining an SE license, which is supplemental to the PE license. An individual licensed in Georgia will have to submit an affidavit form and pay fees to the [State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors](#) from November 1 to December 31, 2020 to participate in this grandfather process.

In June, NSPE and the Georgia Society of Professional Engineers expressed concerns that a SE license requirement would create an additional layer of bureaucracy, requiring an engineer who is qualified to practice in more than one area to obtain multiple licenses.

NSPE believes that fragmenting the professional engineering license into discipline-specific title or practice acts weakens rather than strengthens the

integrity of the license. The Society advocates for an alternative structural engineering certification that could be obtained after earning a PE license to offer more flexibility and without drawing a hard line between structural and other engineering disciplines.

Officer Nominations Open

Nominations are now open for the positions of NSPE 2021–22 vice president and 2021–23 treasurer. The individual nominated for vice president will advance to president-elect in 2022–23 and president in 2023–24. The deadline for submitting nomination packages for either position is **January 11, 2021**.

Please share this information with those you believe should be considered for the next leaders in our Society. Additional details can be found in the [Leadership Toolbox](#). If you have any questions, email the NSPE Executive Office at executive@nspe.org.

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22314**

