

State News for NSPE Members

Rhode Island Receives \$60.3 Million to Boost Roads, Bridges, and Infrastructure

US Senator Jack Reed, a senior member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, recently announced a \$60.3 million boost for Rhode Island road and bridge work to help move transportation projects forward ahead of schedule, [Newport Buzz reports](#).

The new money comes from the Federal Highway Administration's annual August redistribution. Each year, FHWA shifts transportation funding authority from states unable to utilize the full amount of funding originally authorized to them, as well as from federal transportation grant and loan programs that were underutilized in the current fiscal year, to states that have shovel-ready projects and are able to utilize the funding before the close of the fiscal year, which ends on September 30.

"This extra \$60.3 million in federal spending authority for Rhode Island road improvements and infrastructure upgrades is great news for the state. I commend Director Alviti for his strategic and cost-effective planning and management. His leadership of RIDOT is helping to modernize our transportation network. I know he and his team will put these federal funds to good use, completing projects and getting them done on budget and ahead of schedule," said Senator Reed, who supported RIDOT's request to the Federal Highway Administration. [Read more](#).

NUWC Division Newport Program Teaches Students about Engineering

When high school students arrive at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Division Newport each summer to work alongside scientists and engineers for the Undersea Technology Apprentice Program (UTAP), they usually don't know each other or much about underwater robotics. That, [according to DVIDS](#), changes quickly.

Held in two, three-week sessions, Monday through Thursday, in Division Newport's

Undersea Collaboration and Technology Outreach Center, the 25 students in each session are randomly sorted into five teams of five students. Once in teams, the students assign themselves specific roles and responsibilities.

Each day from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., the students design, build, test and modify underwater remotely operated vehicles (ROV). Each team is provided a set of specifications to build a basic ROV with instructions from SeaPerch, an international program which UTAP is based upon. Teams are also given a budget for materials, which impacts how they design and make changes to their vehicles.

During the competition, each team member must spend an equal amount of time steering the vehicle. What makes maneuvering the ROV especially difficult during the competition is the tank is covered with a tarp, forcing the drivers to rely on a video feed captured by a camera the team attaches to their vehicle. [Read more.](#)

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

Workability Webinars Series to Focus on Emerging Tech

NSPE offers a live webinar series free to members—“WORKability Wednesdays”—to support members with their professional development goals. The first webinar of this season took place on September 13 - [How New PFAS Regulations Will Impact Water and Wastewater Utilities](#). A webinar on [What Utilities Want Fleets to Know About Moving to Electric Vehicles](#) will take place on September 27.



NSPE members get free access to the webinars, but must register to attend. Visit the [PE Institute](#) to review the full series line-up and to mark your calendar for these live, online events.

Registration Open: 2023 NSPE Women's Leadership Virtual Fall Symposium

Join us for these live, one-time events to hear from experts in the field and join your colleagues in important discussions organized by NSPE's Women Leadership Program Task Force: [The Cost of Leadership](#); [Leading Yourself: Learning to Increase Your Emotional Intelligence](#); and [Networking Strategies: An Unconventional Approach to Connecting with Others](#). The webinars will take place on October 12, October 19, and October 26 at 1:00 p.m. (ET). This exclusive package is free and includes all three live, one-time sessions. The sessions will not

be recorded and PDH credits will not be issued for them.

[Register now.](#)

#NSPECon23 Revisited

NSPECon23 provided an opportunity to learn and build community in the heart of Louisville, Kentucky. Find photos from the All Things Louisville reception, the first-time attendee mixer, PE Day celebrations, recognition and installation ceremonies, and more on [NSPE's Flickr account](#). Relive the fun and excitement with all your PE peers that gathered to celebrate the engineering profession.



Save the Date: NSPECon24—Raleigh, North Carolina—August 7–9



A False Solution for Our Workforce Challenges

The Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing (ARPL) recently posted an opinion column that highlights the risks of weakening professional licensing requirements to address workforce challenges. NSPE is a member of ARPL.

Workforce shortages, talent pipelines at a trickle and expensive labor are all-too-familiar challenges facing businesses and the public sector. In an attempt to tackle these problems, there is a growing trend of exploring the weakening or elimination of certain key job requirements. These proposals include getting rid of college degree requirements without equivalency alternatives, doing away with requisite testing, and downgrading credentials and licensure for professionals.

To be sure, there are some elements of the occupational licensure process that require continuous improvement and elimination of impediments disparately impacting underrepresented groups. However, in the rush to address workforce challenges, legislators and other policymakers must be cautious not to create new problems that leave employers and the public at risk.

Weakening professional licensing requirements is a false solution to various workforce ills. Minimum qualifications ensured by licensing exist to protect employers and the public they serve. This is particularly important for technical professions with high public impact, such as architecture, certified public accountancy, engineering, landscape architecture and land surveying. Care must be taken to ensure that critical licensing systems for such professions, designed to ensure public and economic protection, are not compromised and swept up in

broad-brush calls for occupational licensing reform. [Read more](#) .

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