State’s First Utility-Scale Battery Storage System Opens in Pascoag

Governor Dan McKee touted the recent installation of the state’s first utility-scale battery storage system as being an important step for Rhode Island in combatting climate change. The Pascoag Utility District and the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources announced the official opening of the facility in the PUD in mid-August.

“This battery technology, which allows for the storage of energy and deploys it when it is most needed, is a vital link in our state’s transition to a 100% clean electricity grid by 2033,” he said in a news release. Additionally, the facility should ensure reliability for electricity customers.

Agilitas Energy installed and currently operates the 3 MW battery facility from a leased industrial site in Pascoag. The battery energy storage system went into commercial operation in early July 2022 and has already begun to help PUD lower its peak load during times of highest usage, the governor’s office reports.

Providence Schools to Get Upgrades for STEM, 21st Century Learning

This year, 30 schools in Providence will receive much-needed renovations to give students a 21st Century environment in which to learn, The Providence Journal reports. Recently, for example, ground was broken on a $21-million renovation at William D’Abate Elementary School. The construction will include combined arts and science labs, air-conditioning, an elevator, and other upgrades that will add 6,000 square feet to the building.

The renovations were funded by $250 million school construction bond passed by voters four years ago.

An additional $300 million bond will be voted on in November for school upgrades, including incentives for technical education facilities and STEAM (science,
technology, engineering, arts, and math) facilities.

“Students want to learn ... when they have 21st-century buildings,” Superintendent of Schools Javier Montañez said.

Stay up to date on legislative issues through the NSPE Advocacy Center.

Honoring Excellence in the Profession

NSPE members were honored for their outstanding contributions to the profession during NSPECon22 in Philadelphia.

NSPE Award

Howard (Skip) Harclerode II, P.E., F.NSPE, F.AIChe, received the Society’s most prestigious award presented to a professional engineer who has been committed to the profession, public welfare, and humankind. Harclerode, the founder and president of KBD Engineering Company Inc., based in Phoenix, Maryland, has been an active member of NSPE and the Maryland Society of Professional Engineers since 1980. He is also a past chair of the Maryland Board for Professional Engineers.

Engineering Education Excellence Award

Mohamed El-Sayed, Ph.D., P.E., a professor of mechanical engineering at Eastern Michigan University, received this award for licensed engineering faculty who have demonstrated the ability to link engineering education with professional practice. El-Sayed has vast technical and industrial expertise in the areas of vehicle realization, quality, reliability, durability, and optimization. He has also worked in various positions in the automotive industry. He has several granted patents, one authored book, and over a hundred technical and educational publications.

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.

Holly Ahumada, P.E., CFM, is employed with Freese and Nichols in the firm’s stormwater group. Throughout her career, Ahumada has specialized in stormwater and floodplain management, as well as supporting public
entities with long-term planning, and the analysis and mitigation of flooding issues. She is an active member of the Fort Worth Chapter of the Texas Society of Professional Engineers and serves as the chapter’s president.

**Dylan Ward, P.E., MPA**, is a project manager for the City of Henderson in Kentucky and oversees the Engineering, Mass Transit, and Safety/Training divisions. For the Kentucky Society of Professional Engineers, he serves as vice president for the Western Region and is president of the Green River Chapter.

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**Fact Check: The Myths of Anti-Licensing**

Time and again, calls for anti-licensing return to a handful of myths and purported problems that can only be solved by drastically weakening or outright eliminating licensing. The NSPE-led Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing takes a closer look at those myths and sets the record straight.

*Myth #1: Education requirements to obtain licenses are too onerous and arbitrary.*

**Fact:** Some occupations are rightly calling for a careful review and recalibration of the education requirements to become licensed. This is what should be done. It is not, however, what anti-licensers are calling for. What anti-licensing seeks to do is broadly and arbitrarily lower education standards for all professions. Some proposals go so far as to disallow minimum education requirements for highly complex, technical professions that impact public safety and welfare.

*Myth #2: Licensing creates an undue burden for spouses of military personnel who have to contend with red tape and new costs every time they move.*

**Fact:** Well-designed professional licensing systems already include interstate practice and mobility and provisions for military spouses. The real threat comes from “universal licensing” proposals that would dilute existing mobility systems that have been working well for military personnel and the public for decades. What’s more, some of these proposals impose arbitrary residency requirements that create new barriers to practicing that would otherwise not exist. Most importantly, “universal licensing” will create a race to the bottom, hurt the public’s welfare, and
create business insurance and liability implications.

**Myth #3: Licensing creates barriers to employment for women, minorities, and the socio-economically disadvantaged.**

**Fact:** Licensing helps level the playing field for women and minorities. A 2021 study by Oxford Economics finds that licensing narrows the gender-driven wage gap by about a third and the race-driven wage gap by about half. In any industry, responsible licensing systems create well-defined career paths for workers—regardless of gender or ethnicity—and opportunities to achieve higher earnings.

**Myth #4: Licensing is anti-competitive.**

**Fact:** Licensing is pro-consumer and pro-competition because it enables consumers to choose from a pool of qualified licensed professionals. These qualifications are verified upfront by independent licensing boards composed of experts in a given professional field. Licensing also helps level the playing field for women and minorities, increasing fairness, competition, and merit-based career opportunities.

Read more on the truth about professional licensing.

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**EJCDC Documents: 2022 Construction Manager as Advisor Series**

The Engineers Joint Contract Documents Committee has released the 2022 Construction Manager as Advisor Series. This series is completely new to EJCDC and is intended for projects in which the owner’s primary representative during construction will be the Construction Manager as Advisor (CM).

The CM as Advisor Series is an alternative to the use of the EJCDC Construction Series, in which the engineer that prepared the design subsequently serves as the owner’s construction contract administrator. The CM as Advisor Series is comprised of contract documents, administrative forms, bonds, bidding, and procurement documents.

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