

**TO:** NSPE Board of Directors

**cc:** NSPE Committee, Task Force, Council and Interest Group Chairs  
State Society Presidents and Presidents-Elect  
State Society Executives Council  
NSPE Past Presidents

**FROM:** Mark J. Golden, FASAE, CAE   
Executive Director & CEO

**DATE:** May 4, 2020

**RE:** Board Update: April 15–30, 2020

As we continue to grapple and adjust to Covid-19 conditions, let me start with a piece of good news, signaling the start of a shift from survival mode to recovery....

Pearson Vue will start reopening testing sites on May 1. NSPE certification and government relations staff worked diligently with the company to ensure that NSPE's certification services were deemed "essential," putting us in a priority tier for resumption of testing.

There are some significant caveats to keep in mind: For social distancing purposes and the protection of staff and candidates, Pearson Vue testing centers will be operating at 50% capacity and for limited hours. In addition, all candidates who were scheduled for testing when the centers closed will have priority for available testing sites and appointments. This means the available capacity to handle new testing needs still faces delays of uncertain duration. Also, Pearson Vue testing centers will not be reopening (due to locally imposed restrictions) in Pennsylvania and Alaska.

The reopening of Pearson Vue testing centers (which are also used by NCEES) should also mean that resumption of PE examinations should also be possible in the very near future. I have no information at this time on the potential schedule for that.

So, while not immediate or total, we are starting to see the major impact of the Covid-driven economic shutdown begin to ease up, which should begin to provide some welcome relief for NSPE as a business operation, and in our capacity to fully serve mission-driven goals.

We are working to ensure that NICET testing operations are supported to the fullest extent possible during this gearing-up process and beyond in order to maximize

*NSPE encourages states to use the information in this report in newsletters or other updates to their membership to inform members on the activities of NSPE. As a suggestion, it may be most useful to take the bullets of most interest from the transmittal email. The full report (and past reports) can always be found [online](#).*

productivity in processing candidate evaluations, candidate applications, customer service needs, website support to communicate current information, recertification, etc.

## Champion

**Championing engineering qualifications has not been put on hold for the virus.** Despite the ongoing challenges of Covid-19 and the economic shut down, work continues to advance NSPE’s mission of advocating for appropriate licensing and credentialing of the entire engineering team, to protect the public interest. Both of our interprofessional coalitions—the Alliance for Responsible Licensing and the Professional Certification Coalition—remain focused on their respective missions and objectives, with an eye toward postpandemic strategies.

ARPL recently developed a detailed strategic focus for the 3rd and 4th quarter of this year that takes into account recent Covid-19-related adjustments that many states have made to licensing requirements. Licensure opponents are already using these changes to advocate for permanent lowering of standards, and ARPL is developing messaging and communications strategies to counter these attacks.

PCC continues to track and respond to dozens of bills in state legislatures that pose a threat to licensure and/or certification.

NSPE continues to exert a leadership role in both coalitions.

**Asserting the PE’s Role in Autonomous Vehicles and Artificial Intelligence:** NSPE recently submitted public comments in response to the Department of Transportation’s Automated Vehicles 4.0 policy guide. DOT continues to take a laissez-faire approach to autonomous vehicles, preferring to allow companies to self-certify their autonomous vehicle’s safety. NSPE challenged this approach, focusing on the very real risk posed to the public, as seen already in AV accidents that have resulted in injury and death.

Additionally, the government relations staff responded to a request for comment from the Office of Management and Budget, regarding the creation of “best practices” for the development and implementation of artificial intelligence. NSPE urged OMB to include professional engineers with subject-matter expertise in the development of AI regulations and guidelines, and to prioritize finding solutions to ethical issues such as unintended biases.

**Virginia and Maine both saw progress on eliminating the gas utilities PE exemption.** Virginia’s governor signed [legislation](#) on April 7 that ends the PE exemption for natural gas pipeline projects that pose a material risk to the public. The law takes effect on January 1, 2021.

Meanwhile, Maine’s licensing board informed the National Transportation Safety Board that it will clarify language in state law to ensure that all future natural infrastructure projects are designed, stamped, and overseen by a professional engineer. The board will

introduce legislation for the 2021 legislative session and advise natural gas companies about the PE oversight requirement.

## Guide

**New Contract Documents Released:** NSPE's joint venture, the Engineers Joint Contract Documents Committee has released two new documents from its Engineering Series:

- The 2020 edition of the [EJCDC E-500, Agreement Between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services](#), and
- The [2020 edition of the EJCDC E-570, Agreement Between Engineer and Subconsultant for Professional Services](#).

EJCDC documents are the first choice, and most user-friendly, among standard documents for infrastructure and public works construction in the United States. They are available to [NSPE members at a 50% discount](#).

## Advance

**New Professional Development Opportunities, Discounts Available:** NSPE continues to add new and online educational offerings at a rapid pace. Newly added last week is "[Ethics in our Changing World](#)," scheduled for June 10, 2020.

In addition, NSPE is discounting webinars to \$99 for members (normally \$129) and \$129 for nonmembers (normally \$189). This effectively allows nonmembers to see the value of membership at standard member rates and provides an additional 25% discount to members.

Upcoming PDH opportunities include:

- [May 20: Engineering Exemptions and Education: Diminish the First and Enhance the Second](#)
- [May 27: "Negotiate It! How to Crush Your Fears, Develop Your Negotiation Muscle, and Gain Power in the Workplace"](#)
- [June 3: Fire Protection Engineering in Property Risk Management](#)
- [June 10: Ethics in our Changing World](#)
- [June 24: Engineers, Building Water Systems and Legionella; What You Need to Know](#)

**NSPE Resource Highlighted by AWWA:** NSPE's *A Field Guide for Inspection of Sewage and Drainage Construction* was the a "feature of the week" in the American Public Works Association's [weekly update](#) on April 14.

## Unite

**Communicating and Connecting Across the National/State Partnership:** State society newsletters produced by NSPE continue to be produced and distributed on schedule. These newsletters are delivered to members of the 19 eligible integrated state affiliates and NSPE members in the five states with nonintegrated affiliations. Open rates for the April 16

editions in 16 out of 19 showed increases of up to 22% over the prior month. The open rates for each of these publications are a very strong 25% to 64%.

In my last update, I reported on a comprehensive plan to boost social media messages, both from NSPE and individual leaders, to increase the sense of connection and community during this time of social isolation. Web analytics indicate these efforts generated increased traffic to the NSPE website of up to 26%.

## During the Outbreak, NSPE is in Your Corner

Finally, remember that although the world finds itself today in a crisis unlike any in recent memory, and while members of the engineering profession are facing the same uncertainties as everyone else, NSPE's volunteer leaders and staff are firmly committed to doing the very best we can to help you through this very difficult time.

As you strive to stay on top of your professional and personal life, remember that NSPE is a resource for you.

- You can watch my video message, "[Dark Days Shine New Light on Profession, Community.](#)" It is an early look at my column for the May/June *PE* magazine. ([Read it on the NSPE Blog and leave a comment!](#))
- You can access [NSPE's dedicated pages of resources](#), including public documents from NSPE's government relations team that aggregate state-level legislation on support for [small businesses](#) and [changes to licensure renewals and requirements](#). The documents update in real time.
- If you missed our sold-out webinar, "[How will COVID-19 Affect your License and Small Business?](#)" members can view it on-demand for free; nonmembers can view it for \$25.
- Stay in touch with fellow members of the profession and share your experiences through the [Open Forum](#) in NSPE's Communities. Recent topics include [remote work](#), [Coronavirus and engineering companies - best practices](#), and [Coronavirus and engineers](#).
- Plan to remotely attend our upcoming webinars on topics like [engineering ethics](#), [strategies for navigating unconscious bias](#), [the 2020 EJCDC engineering contract agreements](#), and [others](#).
- Tap into the [15 free webinars](#) that are included in your membership.
- Connect with NSPE and your colleagues on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).
- Don't forget to check out what your state society is doing for you. Visit your [state society's website](#) so you can learn more about the local resources available to you.

- Look for coverage of how the pandemic is affecting NSPE members and affiliated organizations in the May/June issue of [PE magazine](#).

And most importantly: Stay safe and stay strong. There is light at the end of the tunnel, and we *will* come through this, stronger and more resilient than ever, if all just stick together.