

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: Wendel Stewart, Interim Executive Director & COO

DATE: September 2, 2020



RE: Board Update: August 1–31, 2020

Even if you have been a member of NSPE for a long time, it is possible that our paths may not have crossed. I have been serving as NSPE's senior director of finance and administration and, more recently, chief operating officer for three and half years. For the most part, my role with NSPE takes place behind the scenes, making sure the proverbial trains are leaving the station on time and staying on track when it comes to the Society's finance and administrative functions.

It is not the most noticeable job, but it is essential for the association to run in an efficient, transparent, and compliant manner. On some levels, it reminds me of the work performed by professional engineers—somewhat inconspicuous but a vital part of our society.

Recently, the Board of Directors appointed me to serve as interim executive director and CEO while it engages in a thorough search process to replace Mark J. Golden, FASAE, CAE, who departed in mid-August. I am humbled by the board's vote of confidence in me to temporarily take the reins through this transition. Along with my staff partners, I would like to assure you that we are committed to helping NSPE in whatever capacity necessary.

During the early part of August, the Executive Director Search Task Force was formed, and Immediate Past-President David Martini was appointed to serve as chairperson. The task force members are: Rick Guerra, President-Elect; Tricia Hatley, President; Adam Jones, SSEC President; Austin Lin, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Committee member; Stacey Ober, Director of Marketing (staff representative); David

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](#).

McCullough, Northeast Region Director; Eric Strack, Emerging Leaders Task Force Chairperson, and Kodi Jean Verhalen, Past President.

Staff liaisons supporting the task force are Human Resources Director Elizabeth Ryan-Drewyer and myself. This committee, with a deep and expansive knowledge of NSPE, has started the process to diligently search for a new leader by sending request for proposals to potential executive search firms. Once a firm is selected, which is anticipated to take place shortly, the task force will work with them to determine the planning and recruitment process. It is hard to predict how long the process will take, but I will make sure to keep everyone updated.

As we await the appointment of our permanent executive director and CEO, the staff is diligently working on the deliverables of our strategic plan. We are doing everything possible to stay on track when it comes to advocacy, certification, education, outreach, governance, and member services. As you know, nowhere is it business as usual. While we have our share of challenges ahead as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we also have a foundation of solid fundamentals upon which future growth can be cultivated.

I can point to several recent examples where staff members remained flexible, innovative, and hard-working. For example, taking the Professional Engineers Conference and related governance events virtual was a signature success for NSPE, considering the timing of these events. Please join me in thanking all the staff involved. They are to be commended for the great effort, customer-centricity, and hours they each committed to make things work, responding in real-time to technology challenges, weather impacts, and other disruptions thrown at them. They all have earned and deserve acknowledgment and gratitude for this success.

Virtual PECon 2020 had 405 attendees. For the second year in a row, there was an attendee representing every state. As always, the event generated a great amount of social media traffic, especially since the event was held in conjunction with PE Day (details below). If you have not yet claimed your PDHs from Virtual PECon 2020, please go to the conference webpage to access the PDH Claimer link and follow the steps. If you have any difficulty, please contact Latisha Harrison (lharrison@nspe.org) for assistance.

The House of Delegates General Assembly also met virtually, allowing state and national leaders to conduct the Society's business and receive reports from outgoing and incoming leaders. NSPE leadership was graciously hosted by President Hatley's firm, Freese and Nichols Inc. in Fort Worth, Texas, which served as the headquarters for the Assembly and the subsequent officer installation ceremony.

Following you will find updates on various events and activities for the month of August.

Champion

PE Day Celebration: The fifth annual Licensed Professional Engineers Day was held on August 5. Individual engineers and PEs, engineering firms, government agencies,

associations, and even loved ones of PEs all took part in the celebration and promoted the achievements and value professional engineers bring to society. While statistics on the #LicensedPEDay hashtag and social media reach of the campaign (as well as other activities from the day), are still being compiled, the flurry of photos, videos, articles, and official proclamations seen across social media channels indicate another successful celebration of the event.

PE Day is held the first Wednesday in August to coincide with the anniversary of the first professional engineering license being issued to Charles Bellamy in Wyoming in 1907. Next year's PE Day will take place on August 4, with plans to expand the outreach and success of the event.

New and Improved Advocacy Center: In the lead up to PE Day, the Government Relations team worked furiously to update the [Advocacy Center](#) with issue briefs, tutorials, and advocacy campaigns. Be sure to check it out.

Fireside Chats Gain Following: The Government Relations team held the first of three fireside chats in the week after the Virtual PE Conference. This series of web-based panel discussions features members of Congress and staff, along with industry leaders and NSPE partners, to discuss legislative issues affecting professional engineers and the future of the profession. Approximately 28 people participated in the first chat, and nearly 90 are now registered for the rest of the series.

Presentations to State Societies: Policy Associate Margaret Edwards gave a presentation to the Ohio Society leadership on current legislative issues and threats we expect to see when state legislatures reconvene next year. Approximately 20 members of Ohio's leadership team attended the presentation. GR Manager Stephanie Hamilton is scheduled to give a presentation the first week of September to the Illinois Society that will cover ARPL and its work to protect licensure for highly technical professions like engineering.

NSPE-CA Builds Legislative Connections: NSPE-CA is doing a great job to raise its profile in the state legislature. The organization's board of directors will be joined at its September meeting by California Assembly member Evan Low and staffer on the Business and Professions Committee Danielle Sires. Low will make brief remarks and take questions from the board. It's an excellent opportunity for NSPE-CA because both Low and Sires work on engineering-related statutes and regulations.

Looming Licensure Threat: As the country continues to wrestle with COVID-19, the Government Relations team has noticed a troubling narrative coming from antilicensure organizations like the American Legislative Exchange Council. Even while many states are still struggling to get a handle on the pandemic, these organizations are beginning to publish articles and op-eds claiming that the relaxed licensure standards that have been adopted on an emergency basis are evidence that licensure is unnecessary. Needless to say, their characterization is inaccurate at best, dangerous at worst. The Government Relations team is preparing an issue brief to share with state and national leaders.

Guide

Leadership Book Club: During one of the 2020 Virtual Professional Engineers Conference coffee talks, the group discussed favorite leadership books. Moderator James Taylor compiled the titles recently on the NSPE Open Forum. Taylor and Zohaib Alvi are determining the viability of an NSPE Book Club that would meet via Zoom and NSPE online communities to discuss the book of the month. If your favorite leadership book didn't make the list, [log in and be sure to share it on the NSPE Open Forum post.](#)

Your Reading Assignment: Last month, we granted permission to an NSPE member to use the July/August cover story "[Why Should I Care About Diversity in Engineering?](#)" He's a professor at Vermont Technical College, and the article, crafted by the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee](#), will be used as a reading assignment for bachelor's degree students in engineering technology in a fall course on how to manage an architectural engineering firm.

Advance

2020 Virtual Professional Engineers Conference: The first ever NSPE Virtual Professional Engineers Conference included education sessions worth 16 PDHs, 20 networking coffee talks, and 15 post-session discussions with speakers for Q&A. The week-long event hosted over 405 registrants, including 90 students. All sessions except for one are available for purchase at nspe.org. Some highly recommended sessions:

[The Role and Responsibility of Professional Engineers in Ensuring Safety of Our Nation's Infrastructure](#), Hon. Robert L. Sumwalt III, Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board

[Building the Team and Fighting for the Profession](#), NSPE's Manager of Government Relations Stephanie Hamilton and T. J. Cox, P.E. (D-CA)

[Present with Impact: A Professional Engineer's Guide to Making Effective Presentations](#), Roger Grannis

The event was definitely a success, and we're already planning to implement some of the best aspects of the virtual conference at the July 2021 conference in Philadelphia, but don't just take our word for it...

I wanted to thank you for the amazing work that you did preparing and putting on the 2020 Virtual PECon. A regular convention is usually a lot of hard work, but there is a template that can be followed. However, this year I am sure there were some of the same challenges and hard work, but no template to follow. You blazed some new ground and it worked very well. Thank you for your hard work. I enjoyed the conference...with the exception of people interaction. There is always next year and future years for that.

The PECON2020 was surprisingly interesting and effective for me. Thanks to all involved, and thanks for your help and Latisha's help when I had minor issues along the way. I always received very quick responses that helped.

Great Virtual Conference, once I got the hang of it.

Recently Announced Webinars:

[So, You Want To Launch a Forensic Engineering Consulting Practice](#)

September 30, 2:00–3:00 p.m. ET

[Vintage/Heritage Trolley Cars in Transit Use: Past, Present, and Future](#)

October 14, 2:00–3:00 p.m. ET

[Too Many Crashes at Your Roundabout? Learn Design Techniques to Optimize Safety](#)

October 21, 2:00–3:00 p.m. ET

Education Foundation Receives Generous Contribution: Earlier this year, the NSPE Education Foundation received a sizable gift from the Richard and Mary Jo Stanley Charitable Trust. Richard was a long-time NSPE member and recipient of the 2009 NSPE Award. He generously devoted his time, talents, and energy to the profession. The grant, in the amount of \$138,170, was an unrestricted donation designated “to promote the quality and professionalism of the engineering practice.” The first program supported by this generous grant was books purchased for each member of this year’s NSPE Emerging Leaders Program. The Foundation’s Programming Committee will continue its work to identify, evaluate, and recognize other potential programs and opportunities that fulfill Richard’s and Mary Jo’s wishes.

Scholarship Winners: Congratulations to our 2020 scholarship recipients! The NSPE Education Foundation was honored to recognize [five bright students and future stars](#) of the engineering profession with scholarships. New for this year, the Foundation created a video to recognize and showcase this year’s recipients. You can watch it on [NSPE’s YouTube channel](#) and on our social media channels.

New NICET Certification Program Moves Forward: To establish qualifications for individuals who design, install, test, and inspect in-building radio communication systems, NICET and an industry group of subject-matter experts, began working in January on a new certification program: In-Building Emergency Responder Communication Enhancement Systems (IB-ERCES). To date, they have completed the job-task analysis and validation surveys to confirm, or not, with a larger group of experts and practitioners that the JTA is accurate. In August, NICET and the subject-matter experts completed the content outline and exam blueprint. This significant milestone marks the transition to question writing for the exams. The first exam is expected to be released in early 2021.

Update on NICET Exam Centers: To deliver its certification exams, NICET uses Pearson VUE test centers. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and safety concerns, all Pearson VUE centers were shut down in March. Then, on May 1, centers gradually reopened, operating at 50% capacity. Since then, the following states have reopened at 100%: Arizona, Arkansas, the District of Columbia, New Hampshire, Vermont, Washington, and Wyoming. Maryland is scheduled to be 100% reopened by September 14 or sooner.

In August, NICET received 1,070 exam applications and administered 920 exams. This is approximately 84% and 89%, respectively, of the pre-pandemic averages.

NICET Pursues Remote Proctoring: Even prior to COVID-19, NICET was investigating the feasibility of offering certification exams anywhere with a sufficient internet connection through remote proctoring. A remote proctor serves the same role as an in-person proctor through software and an audio/video connection with the test taker. As you can imagine, there are many challenges to address, such as security, privacy, technology, and copyright. NICET has since increased the urgency of the investigation and expects to offer remote proctoring for the Level I Fire Alarm Systems exam by November.

Unite

NSPE House of Delegates Meets Virtually, Approves Bylaw Changes: The House of Delegates General Assembly was held online on Saturday, August 1, 2020. Delegates approved amendments to NSPE's Electronic Voting Procedures (Bylaw 24), aligning the process of electronic voting with the process of in-person voting at the Assembly.

Delegates viewed greetings from Ryo Moriyama, Ph.D., PMP, and president of the Japan Society of Professional Engineers and heard from various leaders in the Society, including outgoing President David Martini, P.E., F.NSPE, and incoming President Tricia Hatley, P.E., F.NSPE. Secretary of the Assembly and Executive Director Mark Golden, FASAE, CAE, was recognized for his accomplishments throughout the nearly eight years of his tenure.

Leadership also recognized the retirement of Arthur Schwartz, CAE, NSPE deputy executive director and general counsel and executive director of the National Academy of Forensic Engineers. Art served NSPE for nearly 38 years and provided the Society with a great depth of expertise in legal, licensure, and ethics matters that will be greatly missed.

At the Assembly, Britt Smith, P.E., F.NSPE, was elected vice president, and Brian Malm, P.E., was elected to serve as the NSPE Director, Membership-at-Large. Members of the [2020–21 Board of Directors](#) were affirmed along with members of the [2020–21 Candidate Screening Committee](#).

Susan Sprague, P.E., F.NSPE, reported on NSPE's financial status and the significant impact of the pandemic on revenue streams. Despite setbacks, positive signs continue to

build, and leaders are keeping an eye on additional pandemic issues and pressures that could affect the bottom line.

President Hatley emphasized how NSPE members and the Society have successfully navigated the challenges of 2020, acknowledging that we are “better when we work together.”

The Assembly was followed by a virtual Installation Ceremony in which Hatley and the 2020–21 Board of Directors were inducted into office.

Minutes from and the recording of the Assembly, as well as the recorded installation ceremony, are available in the [Governance Section of the Leadership Toolbox](#).

Road to the Summit! To empower, educate, and energize the Society’s leaders, NSPE has launched the Volunteer State Leadership Development Program. The program will provide state leaders with not only a strong understanding of the features and benefits of membership in NSPE, but also the managerial and communication soft skills that can enhance the opportunity for success. The program will include information on the leadership fundamentals that are needed to fulfill responsibilities to their state membership and NSPE in the following areas: advocacy, board roles and responsibilities, chapter management, membership lifecycle, strategic planning, and nondues revenue.

Content will be presented through online communities, video conferences and monthly meetings, and online resources in the Leadership Toolbox that will include checklists, program outlines, and prerecorded videos.

See the schedule and all the details in Trish Hatley’s post in the State/National Leaders forum.

Membership Opportunity in Puerto Rico: A major hurdle to driving membership in Puerto Rico may have been removed. PRSPE notified us that the Puerto Rico licensing board no longer requires PEs to join the Professional College of Engineers and Land Surveyors of Puerto Rico (Colegio de Ingenieros y Agrimensores de Puerto Rico). While the elimination of the legal requirement is still being contested by some, consensus is that the change will remain intact. CIAPR provides most of the same benefits that NSPE does, including continuing education, licensure protection efforts, ethics training, and others.

The current iteration of [NSPE’s Strategic Plan](#) represents *both* continuity *and* change: continuity with the Society’s unchanging goal of protecting the public health, safety, and welfare; and a recognition that we needed change in order to achieve more impact, through strategies backed by resources that will deliver real-world results.

COVID-19 has impacted all of us, but the organization remains focused on adapting to the externally imposed disruptions and remains active and effective in its continued pursuit of its mission.

Please remember, you always have access to numerous NSPE leadership resources in the [Leadership Toolbox](#). This includes [talking point](#) scripts and presentations for use by NSPE officers, board members, and other leaders during state visits, chapter meetings, or other venues to promote NSPE and its activities, updated on an at least quarterly basis.

The [State and National Leaders](#) community page is not only a direct means of engaging, sharing ideas, and asking for advice from your peers in leadership across the country, it is your link to data, reports, and analysis on membership, programs and activities to better inform and support your leadership duties at the national, state and chapter level.

Current board members can access an online library of board meeting materials (past, current and future) through the online board book site, ([BoardBookIt](#)).