

State News for NSPE Members

Alaska Society of Professional Engineers in Action

Here's the latest news on how the Alaska Society of Professional Engineers is working on behalf of members

The Alaska Society of Professional Engineers statewide organization along with its three regional chapters in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau have been busy with numerous online activities and Zoom meetings. One of our more significant projects was modernizing and updating the ASPE and chapter websites.

After a detailed online leadership discussion on Monday, November 16, we decided to contract with Julie Rehaume of [Visualize Design](#) who has done excellent work for our sister nonprofit organization, the Alaska Engineering Education Foundation (AEEF), and whose contract proposal for a complete website and updating package came in well under budget. Submission of information from the state and the regional leadership databases is underway right now.

On Monday, November 30 we participated in a Legislative Preparatory meeting hosted by NSPE with presentations and guidance provided by three of the national staff members. This was a well-attended event with leaders of the three major players—ASPE, AEEF, and the Alaska Professional Design Council—all attending and participating via Zoom.

On Wednesday, December 2, the Fairbanks Chapter of ASPE presented an online forum featuring several members of the [Alaska State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors \(AELS\)](#). A large turnout from across the state tuned in to ask questions and to hear about the latest news on testing procedures under COVID-19, comity accommodations for military spouses, continuing education courses and requirements, electronic sealing, and much more.

Governor Offers \$350 Million Infrastructure Project Bonds

in Proposal to Revive Economy

Governor Mike Dunleavy is pitching large Permanent Fund dividend payments and a \$350 million infrastructure bond package as the primary elements of his fiscal year 2022 budget plan to pull the Alaska economy out of the pandemic-induced slide, according to a recent *Alaska Journal of Commerce* article.

The governor's overall 2022 state budget proposal is another stark departure from his initial plan in 2019 to cut roughly \$1.2 billion in spending and balance the budget without new revenue, which was roundly rejected by a majority of the legislature. The 2022 operating budget plan contains \$295 million in spending cuts Dunleavy said in an interview prior to the budget release.

"It's been an unprecedented, extraordinary time in history and it's with that backdrop that we developed this budget," the governor said, adding that the drastic spending cuts needed to balance the budget would do more harm than good at this point. "The focus is on the economy; saving it, salvaging it and putting it on a trajectory that will get it growing again."

Administration officials have not yet finalized a list of projects for the bond package but Dunleavy said he would like it to focus on "roads to resources," renewable energy projects and deferred maintenance. The final package will be negotiated with the legislature.

[Read more.](#)

Changing Climate Means More Landslides in Alaska's Future

The December 2 slope failure at Beach Road that left two residents missing is at once tragic and unexpected, and also not at all surprising for Southeast Alaska, according to state geologists. The region is prime landslide territory and a changing climate-trending toward warmer, rainier winters-is likely to increase the frequency of slides in the future.

A recent *Chilkat Valley News* report highlights how statewide, there's a lack of data and resources available to help municipalities incorporate slope stability assessments in community planning—a problem scientists have been trying to address.

"Water and the steepness of the slope, those are the key ingredients to landslides in Southeast Alaska," said Engineering Geology Section chief for the Alaska Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys (DGGS) De Anne Stevens, who's coordinating DGGS geological assessments in Haines in the wake of the slide.

Until recently, Southeast was covered with glaciers. Deglaciation left behind the

steep, stunning peaks that characterize the region's landscape. The area is also a rainforest, "a climate with weather systems coming through where there's so much rain," Stevens said.

[Read more.](#)

[Also learn how officials are rebuilding infrastructure to withstand extreme weather.](#)

US Army Corps of Engineers Denies Permit for Pebble Copper Mine

The US Army Corps of Engineers has denied a permit for a proposed large, controversial copper/gold/molybdenum mine in southwest Alaska after finding that the project plan for the discharge of fill material in wetlands does not meet federal Clean Water Act standards.

Pebble Limited Partnership, a subsidiary of Vancouver, B.C.-based Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd., expressed disappointment in the decision and said it would likely file an appeal. Northern Dynasty has been working for almost 20 years on its plan to develop Pebble, a mineral prospect about 200 miles southwest of Anchorage. About \$800 million has been spent over the years in exploration, environmental and engineering work at Pebble.

In a statement, Col. Damon Delarosa, the Army Corps of Engineers' Alaska District Commander said: "The decision on the proposed Pebble Project culminates a review process that lasted nearly three years and involved the development of an environmental impact statement. That assessment included an in-depth analysis of project alternatives along with an examination of supplemental technical information provided by cooperating agencies and the public."

Delarosa added, "This action is based on all available facts and complies with existing laws and regulations. It reflects a regulatory process that is fair, flexible and balanced."

[Read more.](#)

Where Does Alaska Rank on Highway Performance?

Alaska's highway system ranks 49th in the nation in overall cost-effectiveness and condition, according to the Annual Highway Report by the Reason Foundation. This is the same as the previous report, where Alaska ranked 49th overall.

In safety and performance categories, Alaska ranks 44th in overall fatality rate, 38th in structurally deficient bridges, 5th in traffic congestion, 17th in urban

interstate pavement condition, and 48th in rural interstate pavement condition. On spending, Alaska ranks 48th in total spending per mile and 49th in capital and bridge costs per mile.

“To improve in the rankings, Alaska needs to improve its rural pavement condition and reduce its fatality rate. Alaska ranks in the bottom three states for rural Interstate and rural arterial pavement condition and in the bottom six states for each fatality ranking. Compared to nearby states, the report finds Alaska’s overall highway performance is worse than Idaho (ranks 5th), Oregon (ranks 28th), and Washington (ranks 45th),” said Baruch Feigenbaum, lead author of the Annual Highway Report and senior managing director of transportation policy at Reason Foundation. “Alaska is doing worse than comparable states like Montana (ranks 10th) and Hawaii (ranks 42nd).”

The foundation’s Annual Highway Report measures the condition and cost-effectiveness of state-controlled highways in 13 categories, including pavement condition, traffic congestion, structurally deficient bridges, traffic fatalities, and spending (capital, maintenance, administrative, overall) per mile.

[Access the full report.](#)

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

NSPE Government Relations Staff Releases 2020 Advocacy Report

NSPE’s Government Relations staff has released its year-end report—**By the Numbers**—a semi-deep dive into how advocacy campaigns performed, which issues staff tracked and how often, and which members of Congress were most and least supportive of NSPE issues.

The report provides summaries of lessons learned and establishes best practices. It also draws some fact-based conclusions on who are NSPE allies on the Hill, and which offices need a little more prompting before they get on board. It’s an excellent capstone to an unexpected and difficult, but ultimately successful year!

[Access the report.](#)

Education Foundation Celebrates 60 Years of Giving Back



For 60 years, the NSPE Education Foundation has been a major source of support for the educational and ethical practice needs of engineering students, engineering teachers, and practicing professionals.

This past year, the foundation gave out five scholarships to [deserving engineering students](#) and supported young professionals in NSPE's [Emerging Leaders Program](#). In the coming year, the foundation will explore additional programs to broaden its reach and impact, and NSPE member support will mean more than ever before.

In this season of giving, and in honor of the NSPE Education Foundation's 60th anniversary, a donation of \$60 will help further its mission to support students, educators, young professionals, and the profession at large.

[Donate today.](#)

EJCDC Releases New Owner and Engineer Task Order Docs

The Engineers Joint Contract Documents Committee has released a new document: [EJCDC E-505 2020, Agreement Between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services—Task Order Edition](#). This document is available to NSPE members at a 50% discount.

EJCDC E-505 defines individual task orders for specific professional assignments. In a task order, the owner and engineer agree to task-specific terms, such as scope of services, schedule, and compensation, for each specific assignment. When a task order is issued, no drafting or negotiating is needed for provisions such as indemnification, insurance, claims, dispute resolution, suspension, or termination because these provisions will have been negotiated previously and set in place in the E-505 Main Agreement and its exhibits.

The E-505 is designed for multiple or recurring assignments (“tasks”) related to one or several projects; it is similar to the E-500 Agreement Between Owner-Engineer

for Professional Services in structure, terminology, and conditions. Updates to the EJCDC E-505 include enhanced and reorganized exhibits to the E-505 main agreement and task order form to reflect evolving contract practice and improve ease of use. This edition is published in four parts, which are included in a downloadable zip file.

[Learn more.](#)

It's Not Too Late: Get Your 15 Free PDHs for 2020

Act now to take advantage of the annual NSPE membership benefit of 15 free PDHs. Access to the [2020 lineup of courses](#) will end after **December 31**.

Members may earn credits by viewing the webinars from the comfort of their home or office and will receive an attendance certificate after passing a quiz with a score of 70% or higher. PDHs from these courses are recognized by most US states, including Florida.



Don't have time to view the 15 free courses before December 31? Simply "purchase" the webinars by December 31 and add them to your NSPE member account. That way you can view them when you are ready. Webinars in your account can be accessed for up to one year.

Here's a sample of available webinar topics:

- [Engineering Ethics: The obligation to conduct themselves honorably, responsibly, ethically and lawfully](#)
- [Drones: The Sky's the Limit](#)
- [How Not to Fail as a Leader](#)
- [Professional Engineer's Role on Application of Artificial Intelligence and Technology](#)
- [Texts and Emails That Fuel Engineering Success](#)

Act now to access the [2020 free courses](#) .

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