



TO: NSPE Board of Directors

cc: NSPE House of Delegates
NSPE Committee, Task Force, Council and Interest Group Chairs
State Society Leadership
State Society Executives Council
NSPE Past Presidents

FROM: Mark J. Golden, FASAE, CAE 

DATE: 17 December 2015

RE: Board Update: December 1-15, 2015

Progress continues along both branches of NSPE's two-pronged strategy to fuel growth and long-term sustainability in membership. The two initiatives, pursued simultaneously and in parallel, address short-term membership stimulus and engineering a long-term, sustainable future for integrated (three-tiered) membership.

The short-term stimulus will be addressed through three campaigns: a member-to-member recruitment campaign; a lapsed member campaign; and a recruitment campaign targeting non-member segments based on career-stage. Priority focus has been given to the member-get-a-member campaign plan, which will launch in January and run through March, with a goal of 250 new three-tiered members. Development of the other two campaigns are in initial planning and will begin to rollout after the holidays.

Addressing long-term membership growth, we continue to make progress in our effort to apply sound business principles to creating a new business plan and dues model that supports membership at all levels into the future. Initial benchmarking of NSPE data and structure against other associations' dues models and effective practices has been completed by our advisors. Initial discussions with key stakeholders (the membership committee and representative state executives, volunteer leaders and board members) have been conducted and in-depth interviews are underway.

In the next month, the results from these interviews will be incorporated into a marketing survey to capture data providing a clear and actionable picture of the current membership experience at the national, state, and local chapter levels. Additionally, we will assess members' expectations and areas of unmet need in order to allow NSPE to identify opportunities to enhance member value and satisfaction. We will also measure pricing tolerances related to dues and perceptions around dues paid versus value received.

Phase two interviews with key stakeholders will then be conducted to refine options. Following a preliminary review of findings with the Membership Committee, an in-depth presentation of findings and model options will be made by McKinley Advisors to the NSPE Board of Directors during its February 27–28, 2016, face-to-face meeting in Washington, DC.

Additional details can be found [online](#) in the Leadership Toolbox.

1. Advocacy

NSPE's insistent and persistent efforts to bring attention to the consequences of the failure to involve licensed engineers in critical activities affecting public safety and welfare, as demonstrated by the [Gold King Mine disaster](#), continues to build momentum. In a congressional hearing on December 9th, Representative Bruce Westerman, P.E. (R-AR) questioned Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell on the role of the PE. In response to Westerman's statement that "professional engineers nationwide have called for improved standardized best practices that must be adhered to for all federal engineering projects," Secretary Jewell indicated support for strengthening engineering standards in her agency. Westerman's line of questioning referred to NSPE President Tim Austin's [November 9th letter](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Interior calling for collaboration between NSPE and the two agencies to establish standards and best practices to ensure appropriate PE involvement in engineering projects within *all* Federal agencies. Pressed by Westerman, Jewell responded: "I think we would support that recommendation.... I think the [Department of Interior's [internal investigation](#) on the Gold King Mine disaster] clearly indicated that we could have stronger standards across the federal family on the cleanup of abandoned mines." NSPE is working with Westerman, House Natural Resources Committee staff, and the Department of the Interior to proceed with this initiative.

On December 10th, President Obama signed the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) into law, replacing the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. The new education law is significant because it incorporates many key provisions NSPE has long advocated. In particular, the new law includes a funding provision allowing states to refine their K-12 STEM curriculum standards by *integrating engineering design skills and practices for the first time*. In addition, more flexible funding grants will allow states and school districts to utilize federal funds for teacher professional development and high quality instruction in engineering. The bill was passed in the House by a vote of 359 to 64 and was also overwhelmingly approved in the Senate by an 85 to 12 margin.

Following up on NSPE and the California Society of Professional Engineers' December 1st [joint letter to the California Department of Motor Vehicles](#) (CDMV), which has been charged with creating the first state-level regulations for fully autonomous vehicles, NSPE and CSPE leadership met by conference call with CDMV professional staff on December 8th, securing an ongoing role for the Society in the ongoing rulemaking, which is seen as a pilot for nationwide Federal standards in this area of concern, both for PEs and the public they protect.

On December 7th NSPE announced the 34 [Federal Engineer of the Year \(FEYA\) Agency](#) winners for 2016. From these finalists, a list of FEYA "Top Ten" winners will be announced in early January, and the 2016 NSPE/FEYA winner will be announced at the annual recognition ceremony at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, on February 26th. (The full board will be in

attendance at the ceremony, which is being held during the board's face-to-face meeting at the historic Willard Hotel.)

On December 5th, President Obama signed [the first long-term highway bill in a decade into law](#). The *Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act* provides for a comprehensive five-year, \$305 billion surface transportation authorization, ending a decade of 36 short-term extensions. The House and Senate conference report on the bill was approved overwhelmingly in the House of Representatives by a vote of 359-65 and an equally impressive tally of 83-16 in the Senate. Passage of the *FAST Act* will enable PEs to properly plan, design, implement, construct, operate and maintain our nation's infrastructure systems without lurching from one-short-term extension to another.

2. Member Value

On December 1st and 8th, NSPE President Tim Austin held group conference calls with all committee chairs and interest group executive board chairs (respectively), to share updates on their programs of work for the year. Among the highlights discussed:

Membership Committee: The committee is supporting the membership initiative (discussed earlier in this report) through such efforts as organizing the library of tools, scripts, and samples that will empower those who participate in the member-get-a-member campaign and filling out its network list of designated membership contacts in each state.

Communications Committee: The committee is working with staff to ensure consistency of NSPE messages and a diversity of content distribution venues to reach members with valuable content when, where, and however they prefer to receive it.

Financial Technologies Task Force: The task force is developing a white paper on blockchain technology, the threats and opportunities it creates for the professional engineer, and actionable options that NSPE may pursue to optimize the benefit of emerging financial technologies.

Professional Liability Committee: The committee is wrapping up its charges for the year, finalizing its [State-By-State Summary of Liability Laws Affecting the Practice of Engineering](#), evaluating and soon publishing its survey of [professional liability insurance](#) products available from 15 nationally recognized carriers, and evaluating and designating a "[commended](#)" professional liability insurance program.

Honor Awards Committee: The committee is on track for completing the process of soliciting candidates and designating winners of the NSPE Award, the Distinguished Service Award, and the Young Engineer of the Year Award. The committee has also completed its transition from paper-based systems to electronic distribution of nominations materials, in order to streamline operations.

Board of Ethical Review: The board is on track to complete its charges, preparing and publishing 12 BER cases. The cases will be used in the *PE* magazine's *On Ethics* column, the 2016 Spring Engineering Ethics Forum, and the Milton F. Lunch Ethics Contest.

Committee on Policy and Advocacy: COPA has been restructured to provide more nimble response to association policy activities, including threat assessment, policy development, and advocacy resources. The committee is on track to meet the tight deadlines for the first five issues assigned to it by the board: discipline-specific licensure, certifications, autonomous vehicles, educational requirements, and licensure mobility.

Young Engineers Advisory Committee: The YEAC is working with the Membership Committee and PEHE on the Order of the Engineer initiative. The committee is also working on the Young Engineer of the Year Award and recognition programs; conducting outreach and coordination with early-career engineers through the interest groups; and evaluating re-engineering the YEAC structure to be more effective.

NSPE Educational Foundation: The foundation is starting the process for awarding its five national scholarships in the April-June time frame; improving its capacity to serve as a conduit to scholarship opportunities offered at the state level; exploring ways to reach soon-to-be-graduating from high-school and college entry candidates with information on national and state society scholarship availability; and partnering in NSPE future engineer pipeline development, through its liaisons on the EWeek and MATHCOUNTS boards.

Collaboration Group Development Task Force: This newly-formed group is in start-up mode, but beginning to develop its plan for reaching its first target group: municipal engineers. The task force is exploring mechanisms to allow multidisciplinary and multi-practice area communities with specific common interest to interact and work together, without creating silos rigidly defined by practice area or specialty and without creating bureaucratic structures and cost.

2016 Professional Engineers Conference Planning Committee: The committee is hard at work on logistics and content design, a call for presentations (discussed below), and other planning for the 2016 conference.

Professional Engineers in Higher Education Executive Board: The board is working to establish Order of the Engineer links on the campus of every college of engineering; finding ways to leverage faculty to communicate the values that form the basis of professionalism, licensure and ethics to their classes; developing a list of topics that can be used in the soon-to-launched community platform on the NSPE website; and documenting best practices for student chapters.

Professional Engineers in Private Practice Executive Board: The board's early efforts have been primarily focused on gathering practice division input on proposed updates to professional policies. The PEPP board will next start reviewing and developing its future work plan.

Professional Engineers in Government Executive Board: The board has been working to support the FEYA and PEGASUS awards.

3. Content

The joint NSPE/TxSPE Professional Engineers Conference will consist of three tracks plus a young engineer track, offering over 15 PDH opportunities. The conference will take place June 22-26, 2016, at the Fairmont Hotel in Dallas, Texas. The goal is to engage the multidisciplinary NSPE membership through panel discussions, Q&A opportunities, workshops, and social events, as well as great networking opportunities. Conference attendees will include professional engineers from cities and states across the country as well as engineers with diverse background and work environments, including industry, government, education, construction, and private practice.

An open [call for presentations](#) is now accepting proposals from members interested in offering a workshop at the conference. The purpose of the workshops, seminars, and sessions is to provide continuing education courses that will allow NSPE members in all disciplines to meet continuing professional competence requirements for PE license renewal, as required by the their respective state licensing boards. These sessions should focus on topics of interest to engineers from all engineering disciplines and work environments and expand upon the conference theme: *Innovate, Lead, Change the World.*

The deadline for submission of proposals is January 15, 2016.

4. Collaboration

On December 9th, NSPE President Tim Austin wrote to all state society presidents and state society executives, formally inviting them to join in NSPE's Order of the Engineer initiative, with its goal of having all graduating engineering students take the Obligation by the year 2025. Achieving such a goal will take time, commitment and discipline and while the effort required is substantial, it is no more of a commitment than when NSPE launched Engineer's Week in 1952, MATHCOUNTS in 1983, and Future City in 1992. The success of those programs has been the direct result of the efforts of NSPE, its state partners **and** its volunteer members that went before us. As I have previously stated, "Building appreciation for licensure begins early and is the key to those on the pathway to licensure staying the course through to earning the designation. Replenishing the population of licensed engineers who appreciate the importance of licensure (beyond a mere regulatory, occupational requirement) is the key to future membership. Focusing on the Order of the Engineer at the collegiate level is a strategy towards achieving that end."

5. Member Engagement

The city of Atlanta has been selected as the site of the 2017 Professional Engineers Conference (NSPE's annual meeting).

6. Finance, Administration, Operations and Staff Alignment

I am pleased to report completion of the annual audit of NSPE and its controlled organizations (the National Engineers Week Foundation and the NSPE Educational Foundation), with all three receiving completely clean opinions from the independent auditors.

In the area of non-dues revenue, NSPE has received \$50,000 in royalty payments from Victor O. Schinnerer for the 2015-16 program year. Net revenues to NSPE from our online job board are already up \$4,700 over last year, without including November and December payments yet to be made. Both of these are best practice non-dues revenue programs: creating revenues which can be invested in NSPE's non-revenue generating, but mission-critical programs (such as advocacy, licensure and professional practice, and communications) **and** providing member services (such as cost effective liability insurance, and support to both job seekers and employers) that directly benefit the members who use them.

Finally, please remember that access to NSPE leadership resources is always available to you in the Leadership Toolbox at www.nspe.org/toolbox. You will need to log in with your user name and password.

This includes [links](#) to current 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. There are three versions of the presentation to suit your presentation style and skill – an animated PowerPoint with moving graphics and text, a static PowerPoint with no animation, and a Word document with an outline overview of the presentation.

You will also find other [sample presentations](#) for volunteer leaders, [sample](#) promotional and other materials for membership, advocacy, association management, meetings, governance and other areas, and the [latest advocacy news](#).

There is also great material on NSPE's purpose, mission, vision and a history of the *Race for Relevance* and the resulting Strategic Plan in a section called "[Who We Are and What We Do](#)."

You can also review a detailed calendar of NSPE and state society events on the website at: www.nspe.org/AboutNSPE/Events/index.html.