TO: NSPE Board of Directors
cc: State Society Executives Council

FROM: Mark J. Golden, FASAE, CAE
Executive Director

DATE: 15 June 2015

RE: Board Update: June 1 – 15, 2015

1. Member Value

We are in the final stages of preparation for the 2015 Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington. Registrations are level or slightly ahead of where we were at this time last year, and the entire room block at the Seattle Renaissance Hotel has been sold out. (NSPE has set up a micro-site on the annual meeting webpage to assist members finding alternative hotel space).

The meeting offers an extremely robust menu of seminar offerings, including educational content tailored to the new state/national leader, advanced training for veteran leadership, a general education track for the individual member, and programs specifically for young engineers.

2. Advocacy

As reported in my March 3rd update NSPE joined in a “friend of the court” brief before the Virginia Supreme Court in support of an appeal of a lower court decision in the case of William H. Gordon Associates, Inc. v. Heritage Fellowship, United Church of Christ, a/k/a Heritage Fellowship Church, et al. The circuit court had ruled that the engineer breached his duty of care by relying upon the representations made by the manufacturer as to specified building material’s suitability for use in his design rather than independently testing and verifying the accuracy of the product manufacturer’s representations. The circuit court ruling also erred (in NSPE’s view) in extending the statute of limitations during an extended period after the engineer had completed and delivered sealed plans to the client but the construction was postponed, while the owner faced financing and permitting delays and by failing to enforce the contractor’s obligations, which were clearly defined in the contract. I am pleased to be able to report that the Virginia Supreme Court has agreed to hear the appeal.

On June 11th Florida Governor Rick Scott vetoed Florida House Bill 217, legislation that would have changed the existing PE law to establish discipline-specific structural engineering licensure in Florida. As articulated in Governor Scott’s statement:
This bill creates additional requirements and a new license for current and future engineers who wish to practice structural engineering. These new requirements include passing 16 hours of examinations, but provides an unwarranted mechanism to exempt currently licensed engineers from having to take and pass the qualifying examinations.

Presently, a licensed professional engineer may practice in the area of structural engineering, but beginning on March 1, 2017, the bill prohibits anyone from practicing in that subspecialty unless they meet the new requirements and receive the new structural engineering license. The “grandfathering” provision provides a needless process to exempt currently licensed engineers from the new examination requirement. If there is a need to raise the standards for structural engineering there is no reason to have different requirements for new or existing professionals in the same field.

For the reason stated above, I withhold my approval of Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill 217 and do hereby veto the same."

NSPE’s longstanding position has been to support licensure of engineers only as a “professional engineer” and opposes licensure status by designated branches or specialties. The PE is predicated upon and justified only as a means to protect the public health, safety and welfare and the public is best served by licensing all qualified individuals under that credential. The current system recognizes that the line between disciplines can at times be difficult to demarcate and therefore, allows the individual professional to exercise the appropriate professional judgment, autonomy and discretion similar to other professionals, such as MDs, JDs, etc., rather than controlling by rigid, bureaucratic means.

The veto can be overridden by a 2/3-majority vote in favor of the bill in both the Florida House and Senate. This prospect is considered unlikely but it is possible. The current special session is slated to end on June 20th. Consideration of a veto is more likely to come up in the 2016 regular legislative session.

NSPE’s Florida affiliate (the Florida Engineering Society or FES) has taken a position in support of this legislation, but has not committed resources to advocating for its passage. National/state discussions with FES on this subject have been extremely cordial and professional, including FES printing a letter to the editor from (then) NSPE President Robert Green expressing national’s long-standing position in this matter in their magazine. Respecting the autonomy of the state society, national has not engaged directly or indirectly on this matter within Florida, beyond going on the record in their magazine.

If you have any questions, please email Senior Manager, Government Relations Arielle Eiser.

3. Content

Work continues to revamp our communications strategy to not only increase the volume of valuable information created and shared by NSPE, but to make it more obvious and accessible to our members. The overarching goals of our content strategy include:
• Keeping members up-to-date on the news of the profession and NSPE;
• Continuing to deliver the same quality content and increasing the volume, even though PE magazine itself will be published less frequently;
• Publishing timely news, particularly legislative and licensure news;
• Giving members a publication with a fresh, new look;
• Keeping members informed about Society news and events at the national and state level;
• Using content to engage younger members and utilizing more multimedia and social media;
• Getting members to contribute content through crowd-sourcing efforts, such as video and photos (ex., A Day in the Life of a PE);
• Providing a level of content that will pull members to the NSPE website rather than only clicking on the content we push at them; and
• Enhancing NSPE’s standing as an information source by sharing interesting content from other sources.

In short: Make people say, “If I want to know what’s going on that matters to the licensed engineer and the public it serves, I need NSPE.”

Tactics in this strategy include:

• **PE Magazine**: Published six times a year in print and digital editions.

• **NSPE in Action (placeholder name only)**: A monthly eNewsletter replacing the electronic *NSPE Update*, covering news of the national and state societies (upcoming events, new products/services, legislative news, etc.) and showing how NSPE is working for the PE. It will be pushed to members, former members, and others who have an established relationship with NSPE.

• **PE Now**: A new, electronic newsletter that will be published six times per year in months alternate to *PE* magazine.

This newsletter will include news and features about the profession, opinion, social media, and links to interesting content from other sources. It will also include important NSPE news, although this kind of content will be reserved primarily for *NSPE in Action*. Articles in *PE Now* will be published in the PE section of the website rather than a separate page within the newsletter itself (as is currently the case with *NSPE Update* and Interest Group newsletters).

Subscriber list will include members and nonmembers, although some content will be labeled as “premium” and available to members only.

• **Revamped PE section of Website**: The *PE* magazine’s main landing page will transition to a news site for all of our *PE* and *PE Now* content. It will include the latest headlines, links to the most recent issue of *PE* and the *PE* archive, and anything else we want to highlight. It could also include a scrolling news feed and other cool things that help us deliver content.
This new mix will increase the total number of push communications per year to 24 (6 issues of PE, 6 issues of PE Now, and 12 issues of NSPE in Action) from 22 (10 issues of PE, 12 issues of Update), as well as create a more robust news site to highlight our content.

The annual Engineers Joint Contract Document Committee’s (EJCDC) report on “Recent Court Decisions of Relevance to Contract Documents” has been posted to the NSPE website, as well as publicized in the PEPP and PEC eNewsletters. This valuable content will also be covered in an upcoming PE magazine. (NSPE is a partner in this joint venture entity.)

4. Collaboration

In addition to the formal governance sessions scheduled during this year’s annual meeting, there will be extended opportunities for open forum discussions during a town-hall style meeting for national and state, volunteer and staff leadership (Thursday evening, July 16th), and a pre-General Assembly House of Delegates caucus (Saturday morning, July 18th).

Picking up on a theme I touched on in my last board update, NSPE is reaching a tipping point in our efforts to align activities with the Strategic Plan and engineer breakthroughs in the strategically critical areas of:

- Membership;
- Member value;
- Professional practice and public policy;
- Communications and PR; and
- Defining, promoting and protecting the value of licensure.

All of these are on the agenda throughout the meetings in Seattle; none of these are issues that either national or the states can tackle alone. We can only address them together. While we have been making steady progress in the last year, Seattle will provide an unparalleled opportunity to set plans and actions in motion to take us over the top.

And as if our schedules were not full enough, we are working on one-on-one meetings in Seattle with national leadership and attending strategic alliance partners and interest groups.

I participated in the EWeek Steering Committee and Diversity Council’s meeting June 8th in Washington, along with NSPE past presidents Kathryn Gray and Dan Wittliff (who both sit on the National Engineers Week Foundation (DiscoverE) board). The agenda focused on moving forward with the 2015-16 plan of work for this important alliance partner.
5. **Member Engagement**

This is an extremely busy time of year for state society meetings with NSPE officers or directors representing national at state society meetings in the District of Columbia, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Maine, Michigan, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Wisconsin and a joint meeting of New Hampshire and Vermont, as well as Engineers Canada in the past month alone.

Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, and the joint Alabama-Mississippi meeting are still to come this month, with each getting a national representative.

6. **Finance, Administration, Operations and Staff Alignment**

During its April 29, 2015 meeting, at the time of the FY2016 budget approval, the board directed the NSPE Executive Committee and staff to develop a three-year strategic Business Plan that would take a more comprehensive and holistic look at NSPE activities, instead of completing this evaluation only on a yearly basis within the necessarily more operational and time limited focus of the annual budgeting process. A key component of developing the business plan is to develop the framework or structure of the organization’s efforts for the upcoming operational year.

The purpose of the Business Plan is to set forth the principles and strategies to create or maintain a strong financial position for NSPE in order to ensure that adequate resources are available and invested where they will have the maximum value for the membership. One key consideration in this evaluation is the organization of NSPE boards, committees, and task forces, as well as the involvement of NSPE legacy Interest Groups in supporting NSPE's Strategic Plan. The primary focus in developing the Business Plan will be to emphasize attention on the key areas necessary to ensure that NSPE remains a strong and relevant society.

The Business Plan is another step in furthering the *Race for Relevance* effort. Indeed, the authors recommend that associations “support strategy by approving budgets, necessary investments, and other resource allocations.” To accomplish this, NSPE’s general operating structure should be examined and evaluated. That evaluation will be part of the Business Plan development.

Development of the Business Plan will be a major focus of the agenda for the Board’s August 14-15, 2015 face-to-face meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

7. **Governance**

Incoming and continuing board members are reminded of the earlier-than-typical scheduling of this first, face-to-face meeting of the new year (after the annual).

An orientation webinar for the House of Delegates is scheduled for June 25th at 2:00 PM Eastern time. Advanced reading materials will be distributed later this week.
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.

You can view information on NSPE’s Race for Relevance and strategic direction here:

You can also review a detailed calendar of NSPE and state society events on the website here.