

Professional engineer licensure pays off, says NSPE salary survey

PEs earn an average of 20% more in salary than engineers with no professional license, according to findings from the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE), Alexandria, Va. "The Engineering Income & Salary Survey," conducted each year by NSPE, found that the median income for an engineer with no professional license is \$69,000 while a licensed PE earns a median salary of \$86,000. Other certifications, in addition to the PE license, can push that number even higher. PEs who are also certified land surveyors earn \$99,500, while those who hold a certification in forensic engineering earn a median salary of \$106,624.

Data from past surveys also show a marked rise in salaries for PEs over the past few years, while engineers with no

license only saw moderate salary increases. PEs earned a median salary of \$77,000 in 2005, which then rose to \$82,000 in 2006, and then on to the current salary figures. Engineers without a PE license earned \$65,464 in 2005, compared with \$66,600 in 2006. While many conclusions could be drawn from these figures, say NSPE officials, it is safe to say that salaries for PEs are not only healthy, but also continuing to grow.

"This year is the 100th anniversary of engineering licensure, and we'd like to think there is now a greater significance to becoming a professional engineer," said NSPE executive director Lawrence Jacobson. "Especially with recent events, the PEs level of competency and their commitment to the public health,

safety, and welfare should be perceived as a huge bonus to employers, and the clients and public they serve."

Those on the path to licensure, engineers-in-training/engineering interns, also saw healthy increases in their salary numbers. The median salary for a trainee in 2007 was \$55,000, compared to \$52,500 in 2006 and \$51,450 in 2005. And beyond increased salary figures, many companies are now offering them bonuses and incentives for taking and passing the PE exam. In addition to monetary compensation, many can take paid time off to study for the exam or have their examination preparation courses and materials paid for by their employers.

NSPE has been conducting salary surveys since 1952.