



Columbus Engineer

Franklin County Chapter

A chapter chartered by the Ohio Society of Professional Engineers.

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President's Message

Nathan Abele, P.E.
- FCC President

Happy New Year! FCC-OSPE will be hosting a lunchtime program on January 19, 2023, please see the flyer for additional information and registration information. In February we will be joining other professional organizations for the E-Week luncheon on February 23, 2023, at Vila Milano. In March, we will be changing our programs to the first Thursday of the month to try to avoid overlapping with another professional society's meeting. We continue to need help with identifying presenters to talk on a technical, managerial, or ethical topic for our monthly programs. Please let us know if you have a topic or presentation for one of our programs.

The Imagine Engineering second-grade coloring competition is underway so please be discussing with any schools you have previously visited or have contact. MATHCOUNTS will happen in February and Science Day will happen in March. We always need additional volunteers to help with our programs and events.



OSPE-FCC January 2023 Luncheon Program

Date: Thursday, January 19th, 2023

Place: Schmidt's Sausage Haus

(located in German Village)

240 E Kossuth St, Columbus, OH 43206

Time: Registration: 11:30 am

Lunch: 11:50 am

Speaker: 12:00 pm

Closing Remarks: 1:00 pm

Cost: Members: \$25.00 & Non-Members: \$35.00.

SPE@OSU Students: \$10.00

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Registration: Pay at the door by cash or check. Please email Howard Jones at hrjones63@yahoo.com if you are planning to attend.

Title: Engineering Advocacy in the 21st Century-From Austerity to Abundance

Abstract: The various fields of engineering are ideally concerned not merely with technical soundness & efficiency, but, as the first principle of the American Society of Civil Engineers Code of

- Continued, page 2

January Program, continued –

Ethics puts it, “us[e] their knowledge and skill for the enhancement of human welfare and the environment.”

In February of 2022, the board of directors of the National Society of Professional Engineers promulgated a document “The Role of the Engineering Community in Addressing Climate Change” which states that “it is our duty and purpose to contribute our skills and knowledge of human-centered technologies and of the natural world to lead humanity out of the climate crisis with a focus on sustainable, resilient, equitable, and innovative approaches.”

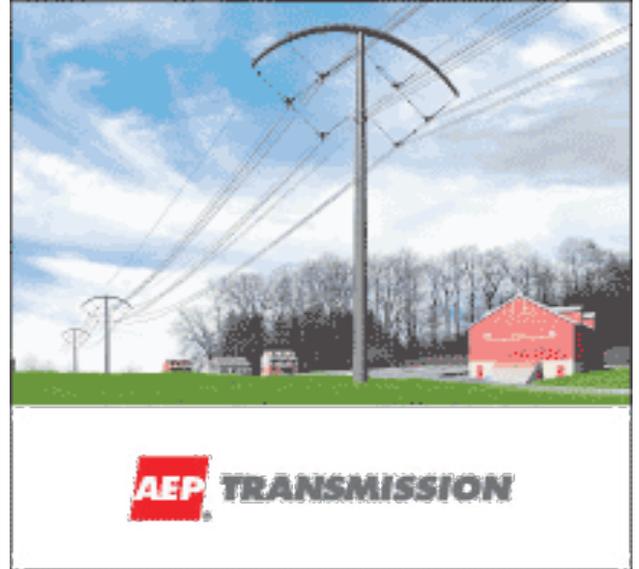
But what does this mean in practice in 21st-century America?

This talk will provide historical context about the austerity constraints that have been a feature of American engineering projects (in a variety of fields) for the first two decades of the 21st & how three huge bills passed by the American Congress in 2021 & 2022 have given engineers the golden opportunity to follow not merely the general moral call of the principle of utility but to adhere the specific call of the NSPE that engineers advocate” for public policies that address climate change... while also prioritizing public and private sector expenditures for adaptation.”



Presenter: Conrad Robinson has been an instructor at both the Humanities Department at Columbus State Community College & Philosophy Department at The Ohio State University off and on for over a decade where he has taught Ethics, Engineering Ethics, & Comparative World Religions.

A certificate for 1 hour of Professional Development for attending the program will be presented at the luncheon.



Save the Date for Engineer As Leader

Event poster for 'The Engineer As Leader' featuring David Bayless, PhD, PE. Includes text: 'The Engineer As Leader', 'Virtual Training Available, March 2-3, 2023', 'CLICK HERE TO REGISTER', and 'ONLINE 10 CPD HOURS'.

Register by February 23

CONTACT

Engineers Foundation of Ohio
efo@ohioengineer.com
614-223-1177

WHEN

Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 9:00 AM EST
-to-
Friday, March 3, 2023 at 3:00 PM EST

[Add to Calendar](#)

WHERE

This is an online event.

DOE Grants First-Round Civil Nuclear Credit Award—\$1.1B—to Diablo Canyon

The Department of Energy’s (DOE’s) first round of funding from its \$6 billion Civil Nuclear Credit (CNC) Program is poised to go to Diablo Canyon Power Plant, California’s only operational nuclear plant.

Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), Diablo Canyon’s owner, could receive up to \$1.1 billion in credits to extend the 2.2-GW plant’s operation for five years beyond its current license expiration in 2025 to bolster the state’s energy system reliability while additional renewable energy and carbon-free resources come online, the DOE announced on Nov. 21.

According to the DOE, the total credit award value of \$1,100,520,444 will be contingent on the completion of an environmental review and negotiation of terms of a redemption agreement, which essentially specifies a megawatt-hour production commitment for four award years (2023–2026). For now, Diablo Canyon is set to receive a maximum credit value of up to \$269 million for 2023, \$267 million in 2024, \$276 million in 2025, and \$289 million in 2026. “The conditional award value represents the maximum credit value and corresponds to the difference between the projected costs plus risk and revenues,” the DOE explained.

Final award amounts, however, will “be determined following completion of each year of the award period, and amounts awarded will be based on actual costs,” PG&E underscored in a statement on Monday. “While there are key federal and state approvals remaining before us in this multi-year process, we remain focused on continuing to provide

reliable, low-cost, carbon-free energy to the people of California, while safely operating one of the top-performing plants in the country,” said the utility’s CEO Patti Poppe.

First Award in a \$6B Contest

The DOE’s conditional selection is the first of a much-watched contest for the federal funding designated by the November 2021–enacted Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to keep open commercial nuclear reactors that are at risk of closure owing to economic reasons. The law outlines specific allocations of \$1.2 billion per year for fiscal years 2022 to 2026. The funds will be available until spent or can be allocated until the end of fiscal year 2031 (on Sept. 30, 2031).

But while the DOE formally opened the CNC contest on April 22, it revised its eligibility criteria for the first-award cycle on June 30 to respond to a request for adjustment from the California governor’s office to better address Diablo Canyon’s “unique circumstances.” The DOE’s changes—which clarified how it interpreted whether a reactor met IIJA eligibility requirements that a reactor only qualifies for CNC credits if it “competes in a competitive electricity market”—drew mixed reactions from an array of stakeholders from the power sector.

PSEG Nuclear, which operates the Salem and Hope Creek Nuclear Generating Stations in Lower Alloways Creek, New Jersey, and is a part owner of the Peach Bottom Nuclear Plant in Pennsylvania—all plants that compete in PJM Interconnection, for example, urged the DOE to instead “rethink the timing of the CNC Program to allow all reactors that truly compete in a competitive electricity market to immediately apply for Credits.” The company

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DOE Grants, continued -

suggested that because Diablo Canyon “receives a majority of its revenues outside a competitive market is insulated from those economic pressures and should not be eligible to apply.”

The DOE’s first CNC award cycle prioritized reactors that are most at risk of imminent closure or had already announced their intention to cease operations before Sept. 30, 2026. Only one other nuclear reactor—Holtec International’s now-shuttered 800-MW Palisades nuclear power plant in Michigan—had confirmed it submitted a federal grant application to the DOE’s CNC program. The proposal had backing from Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

On Nov. 18, however, Holtec spokesperson Pat O’Brien confirmed the DOE denied its request for funds. Permanent closure of the 50-year-old plant was “not the outcome many had hoped for,” he said. “We entered this process committed to working with our federal, state, and community partners to see if the plant could be repowered to return to service as a provider of safe, reliable, and carbon-free generation,” he added. “We fully understood that what we were attempting to do, re-starting a shuttered nuclear plant, would be both a challenge and a first for the nuclear industry.”

The DOE now anticipates launching the next award cycle in January 2023. The second CNC award cycle will prioritize reactors “that are projected to shut down due to economic factors within the next four years.”

A Major Boost for Diablo Canyon

The DOE’s conditional selection of PG&E, meanwhile, marks a notable reversal for Diablo Canyon’s near-term prospects, and possibly over the long term.

PG&E in June 2016 formally announced it would shutter the 1,138-MW Unit 1 and the 1,151-MW Unit 2 upon the expiration of the reactors’ operating licenses—November 2024 for Unit 1 and August 2025 for Unit 2. The units, both Westinghouse pressurized water reactor units, began operation in 1985 and 1986, respectively. At the time, PG&E cited challenges of managing “over-generation and intermittency conditions under a resource portfolio increasingly influenced by solar and wind production,” as well as potential costs for retrofits so the station could comply with a May 2010 California Water Resources Control Board policy restricting once-through cooling (OTC) systems for all the state’s water consuming power plants. Nuclear experts at think tank the Breakthrough Institute, however, suggest PG&E negotiated an agreement with anti-nuclear environmental groups based on a flawed study that until recently was broadly accepted by California’s legislators and regulators.

Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, Units 1 and 2.



The 2.2-GW nuclear power plant is located near Avila Beach, California. Courtesy: PG&E

While PG&E has remained largely quiet as the debate about its voluntary plan to shutter the reactors has raged on, recent backing from California’s

- **Continued, page 5**

DOE Grants, continued -

government to keep the plant open to bolster the state's energy security prompted the company to jump into action.

After Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration in April 2022 acknowledged the retirement of the nuclear plant may adversely affect California's stretched energy system, the governor in August proposed a plan, which in part included giving PG&E a \$1.4 billion loan. A less ambitious version of that proposal was enshrined in state law with the passage on Sept. 1 of Senate Bill 846 (SB 846). The measure effectively authorized the \$1.4 billion loan from the Department of Water Resources to keep Diablo Canyon open until at least 2030.

PG&E filed its application for the CNC funding on Sept. 2, the same day Gov. Newsom signed SB 846 into law. "SB 846 further directed PG&E to pursue funds from DOE, and any other potentially available federal funds, to pay back the loan and lower costs for customers should the plant's operating license be extended," the company said in a statement on Monday.

The San Luis Obispo County plant currently provides "approximately 17% of California's zero-carbon electricity supply and 8.6% of the state's total electricity supply," the utility said. An extension of five years beyond its current license expiration in 2025 could allow the plant to "be used to improve statewide energy system reliability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions while additional renewable energy and carbon-free resources come online," it said.

Without SB 846, PG&E's alternative "would have been for us and other load-serving entities in California to procure more expensive baseload clean power to replace what is today over 8% of all of

California's energy consumed, provided annually by Diablo Canyon," PG&E's head Poppe said during an Oct. 27 earnings call. "Replacing this power has proven challenging given clean energy supply constraints, and we estimate that this law will save customers several hundred million dollars relative to other potential baseload solutions."

PG&E Steps Up 20-Year Licensing Renewal Effort

However, Poppe has acknowledged ensuring extended operations at the plant will require much work and is complex. It will include securing casks and fuel, as well as navigating permitting and relicensing of the facility. On Oct. 31, PG&E took its first step, filing a letter with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, officially requesting that the agency review the utility's 2009-submitted license renewal application for Diablo Canyon Units 1 and 2.

The company is looking to extend the nuclear plant's licenses for another 20 years. "Although the energy mix that will be in place after Diablo Canyon's current licenses have expired has yet to be determined, extending Diablo Canyon's licenses for another 20 years through 2044 and 2045 for Units 1 and 2 respectively, will help ensure California will be able to meet the state's future energy demands with affordable, baseload, clean electricity, while allowing time for newer technologies to more fully develop," it said.

The investment is prudent, PG&E argues. "Increasing investment in renewable energy sources with a stronger focus on efficiency are important goals, but not enough to ensure we have enough abundant and affordable electricity to power California's massive energy infrastructure without adding significant amounts of greenhouse gases into

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DOE Grants, continued –

the environment,” it said. “Nuclear power is the only realistic option available for generating clean, baseload power, and that is why countries like United Kingdom, France, Italy, Japan and China are investing significant public funds into building their own fleets of nuclear power plants while also backing the development of alternative energy sources.”

It underscored: “In fact, even when renewable power technologies are fully developed and ready for widespread implementation, Californians will still need an abundant supply of dependable baseload power for meeting increasing demands, minimizing severe rate increases and ensuring the reliability of the state’s electricity grid.”

(Excerpted from NSPE DAILY DESIGNS, December 1, 2022 with hyperlinks removed prepared by Sonal Patel)



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Kiewit: Computer errors played role in Denver I-70 flooding



The I-70 eastbound lanes, pictured here in July. Retrieved from Colorado DOT.

Dive Brief:

- Kiewit Meridiam Partners found computer errors were responsible in part for flooding a low-lying portion of I-70 that nearly submerged cars as heavy rain slammed Denver this summer.
- The contractors were tapped to design, build and maintain the 10-mile, \$1.2 billion Central 70 project that runs through northeast Denver. Drainage systems did not perform as planned on the newly opened roadway and the pumps did not kick on automatically like they were supposed to amid an Aug. 7 flash flood. Firefighters had to rescue 11 people from vehicles, according to the Denver Post, but no one was injured.

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Kiewit: Computer Errors, continued -

- Kiewit is looking into the incident, and found technical errors were responsible for the pump problem. “Our investigation of the August malfunction determined that computer settings that manage the pumps were set incorrectly,” said Matt Sanman, spokesperson for Kiewit. “Although the investigation is still being finalized, that has been corrected and the main pump system and the backup system have been tested frequently and have effectively managed rainfall since the August event.”

Dive Insight:

Colorado DOT is also investigating, and is trying to figure out how much to fine the contractors involved. In August, the agency said the amount would be at least tens of thousands of dollars.

The Central 70 project, which began in 2018, was developed to address safety concerns on the aging road and meet growing transportation demand. It entails reconstructing I-70 between Brighton Boulevard and I-270 in northeast Denver, removing a 57-year-old viaduct, lowering the highway and installing express lanes, seven miles of sidewalks and a bike route. To cap it off, a 4-acre park is being built over the interstate.



The I-70 project has three main components. The flooding happened in the lowered portion. Retrieved from Colorado DOT.

Graphic shows project extends from York Street to Chambers road, with the highway lowered and fully reconstructed in the west portio, fully reconstructed in the central area, and widened in the east.

Progress has continued since the incident, which did not impact the timeline, according to Colorado DOT spokesperson Stacia Sellers. The express lanes opened on Aug. 31, marking the last major milestone on the project. Remaining work on the park portion will extend through 2023.

The day after the flood, Kiewit Meridiam Partners and Colorado DOT pointed to issues with the drainage system, which was supposed to withstand a 100-year storm event but was not yet complete. Besides the issue with the pumps, Colorado DOT said incomplete pavement may have played a role.

In addition, Colorado DOT said it is investigating several “non-conformance events” in connection with the incident. A NCE occurs anytime that the developer does not meet the performance requirement, Sellers said via email. Kiewit Meridiam has a set amount of time to remedy the issue and there are penalties for noncompliance.

According to Sellers, three requirements were not met on the project at the time of the incident:

- Each element of the drainage system is maintained to ensure that it functions correctly.
- Subsurface drainage and pumping systems are fully operational and clear of debris.
- Command, control and monitoring system provides the intended function of control, monitoring, communication and visual display of all connected systems including integration with other systems.

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Kiewit: Computer Errors, continued -

The construction industry is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and the I-70 incident is just one example of how jobsites are increasingly being hit by extreme weather. Heatwaves and intense storms can translate to equipment and jobsite damage, delays, lawsuits and other costly impacts. Besides a fine, no other action will be taken against the contractors for the flooding, according to Sellers. A silver lining of the incident is that it highlighted a key vulnerability before the project was finished.

“While the situation is unfortunate, having this happen while construction is still underway helped us identify additional improvements and safeguards that can be made to ensure this event does not happen again,” Sellers said.

(Excerpted from NSPE DAILY DESIGNS, December 28, 2022 with hyperlinks removed prepared by George Kevin Jordan, November 4, 2022)

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Smartphone data from drivers could help spot when bridges need urgent repairs

The system could provide live structural data more cheaply and quickly than existing methods—and help engineers prevent catastrophic collapses.

Nov 6: Smartphones could be used to monitor the safety of bridges much more quickly and cheaply than currently possible, providing engineers with data they can use to fix the structures before they become dangerously unstable.

Usually, bridges’ state of repair is monitored in one of two ways: either engineers visually inspect them for cracks and faults, or sensors collect data about their vibrations and movements. But a new method developed by researchers at West Point Military Academy and other universities avoids the need for either by collecting accelerometer data from smartphones in cars as they drive over the bridges.

In tests that involved driving across the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and a reinforced concrete bridge in Italy, they found that just two smartphones could provide data of similar accuracy to 240 stationary sensors. The phones pick up on naturally occurring vibrations from the bridges, allowing researchers to monitor their structural changes over time. Their research is described in [a study published in Communications Engineering today.](#)

The researchers estimate that monitoring this sort of smartphone data throughout a bridge’s life could extend the longevity of the structure by 30%, simply by helping maintenance crews to make more timely repairs.

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Smartphone Data, continued -

Making sure bridges are well maintained is vital, as demonstrated just a few days ago when a bridge collapsed in Gujarat, India, killing 135 people. It's a problem in other countries too. Although bridges in the US are required by law to be visually inspected every two years, that doesn't eliminate catastrophes like the collapse of the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis in 2007, which killed 13 people and injured 145.

Maintaining bridges is expensive. There are 600,000 of them in the US, and the organizations that own and maintain them can easily pay \$50,000 for sensor equipment alone, with further costs incurred by the need to maintain them and analyze the data they generate. Smartphones are a much cheaper option.

However, work still needs to be done to make this technique a reality, says Ahmet Emin Aktan, a professor of civil, architectural, and environmental engineering at Drexel University, who was not involved in the study. He believes it'll be a long time before the technique becomes widely adopted.

Aktan expects visual inspections to remain the primary method of monitoring bridges for the next 10 to 20 years, because both sensors and smartphones can produce data that's harder to interpret than what engineers see with their own eyes. Even something as ordinary as weather or variations in traffic load can affect the way structures behave and move, which can then affect the data. For example, they become stiffer in colder weather.

But eventually, he says, it's likely that the industry will want to use a combination of that visual observation with the data collected from smartphones.

(Excerpted from NSPE DAILY DESIGNS, November 26, 2022 prepared by Tammy Xu with Related Story removed)



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



2023 CALENDAR

DATE	TIME	DESCRIPTION
Jan. 6	5:00 p.m.	Deadline for January Columbus Engineer
Jan. 10	12:00 p.m.	FCC Board Meeting @ CEC, Inc. and Virtual
Jan. 13	5:00 p.m.	Deadline for February Columbus Engineer
Jan. 19	12:00 p.m.	Program: Title "Engineering Advocacy in the 21 st Century – From Austerity to Abundance" – Presenter: Conrad Robinson
Feb. 10	5:00 p.m.	Deadline for March Columbus Engineer
Feb. 11	8:00 a.m.	Regional MathCounts Competition @ CSCC
Feb. 14	12:00 p.m.	FCC Board Meeting @ CEC, Inc. and Virtual
Feb. 19 – 25		National Engineer's Week
Feb. 23	11:30 a.m.	Program: E-Week Luncheon - Villa Milano – Theme: "Creating The Future"
Feb. 22	8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Engineer for a Day Program
Mar. 2	12:00 p.m.	Program: TBD
Mar. 2 – 3		Engineer's Leadership Institute
Mar. 10	5:00 p.m.	Deadline for April Columbus Engineer
Mar. 11	8:15 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Ohio MathCounts Competition @ CSCC (OSPE, see www.ohioengineer.com)
Mar. 14	12:00 p.m.	FCC Board Meeting @ CEC, Inc. and Virtual
Mar. 24	12:00 p.m.	OSPE Lunchtime Legislative Briefing, Zoom meeting
Mar. TBD		District Science Day @ CSCC
Apr. 6	12:00 p.m.	Program: TBD
Apr. 11	12:00 p.m.	FCC Board Meeting @ CEC, Inc. and Virtual
Apr. 14	5:00 p.m.	Deadline for May Columbus Engineer
Apr. TBD		Legislative Day
May 9	12:00 p.m.	FCC Board Meeting @ CEC, Inc. and Virtual
May 12	12:00 p.m.	Deadline for June Columbus Engineer
May 18	6:30 p.m.	Chapter Officer Installation & Awards Dinner
June 1	12:00 p.m.	Program: TBD
June 2	5:00 p.m.	Deadline for July Columbus Engineer
June 13	12:00 p.m.	FCC Board Meeting @ CEC, Inc. and Virtual
June 30	12:00 p.m.	OSPE Lunchtime Legislative Briefing, Zoom meeting
July TBD	(TBA)	FCC Budget Meeting - Location to be announced

Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc.
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