

Ohio Engineers Legislative Day

Virtual Program — Friday, April 24, 2026 — 9:00 AM-1:30 PM



Earn 4.0 CPD hours during our virtual program.

Registration Fee:

\$40 for members of NSPE / NSPE-Ohio / IEEE
\$57 for nonmembers

Please have your lunch with you, as we will be continuing through the lunch hour to the program's conclusion.

[Register online by April 15.](#)

Full program details and policies are in the link.

Schedule, topic data & speaker bios follow ...

SCHEDULE:

Friday, April 24, 2026, 9:00 AM-1:30 PM

9:00 am

Welcome

*Travis L. Rhoades, PE, F.NSPE, Vice President,
Legislative & Government Affairs,
Ohio Society of Professional Engineers*



9:05 am-9:35 am (0.5 CPD HOUR)

Ohio Business Legislation: Implications for Professional Engineers

*Sydney Sanders, Director of Policy & Communications,
Governmental Policy Group, Inc. & RH Resources*

9:40 am-10:10 am (0.5 CPD HOUR)

House Bill 433: Understanding Ohio's Amusement Ride Classifications

State Representative Roy Klopfenstein, House Agriculture Committee, Chairman

10:15 am-11:15 am (1.0 CPD HOUR)

Legislative News in Ohio: Public Policy Impacting PEs

State Senator Louis W. Blessing, III, PE

11:25 am-12:25 pm (1.0 CPD HOUR)

Delivering Cleveland's Lakefront Future:

Infrastructure Decisions and Development Feasibility

Mackenzie Makepeace, Managing Director, DiGeronimo Development

12:30 pm-1:30 pm (1.0 CPD HOUR)

Energy Policy Panel

Moderator: Travis Rhoades, PE, F.NSPE

Panelists:

- *State Senator Brian Chavez, Senate Energy Committee, Chairman*
- *State Representative Adam Holmes, House Energy Committee, Chairman*
- *Dr. Carol Smidts, Director, Reliability and Risk Laboratory & Professor,
Department of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, The Ohio State University*

1:30 pm

Program Concludes

TOPICS & SPEAKERS

“Ohio Business Legislation: Implications for Professional Engineers”

This seminar examines business-related legislation before the Ohio General Assembly and discusses how key bills may affect engineering practice, risk management, and professional decision-making.

Participants will learn:

- Identify key business-related bills before the Ohio General Assembly that may affect professional engineering practice.
- Apply legislative insights to informed decision-making within engineering firms and projects.



Sydney Sanders is the Director of Policy and Communications at Governmental Policy Group, Inc. Sydney is a graduate of Xavier University where she studied political science and communications. She began her political career as a Legislative Service Commission Fellow in the Ohio House of Representatives where she served in the office of the Speaker of the House and with the Majority Communications Department.

Sydney and the whole team at Governmental Policy Group, Inc. represent a wide range of clients as legislative and executive lobbyists to support their efforts in dealing with national, state, and local governments. She is a member of the Ohio Lobbying Association and Ohio Women in Government.

“House Bill 433: Understanding Ohio’s Amusement Ride Classifications”

This session will feature a presentation by State Representative Roy Klopfenstein discussing his legislation, House Bill 433, which seeks to alter the current amusement ride classification structure in Ohio. As Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Representative Klopfenstein will share insights into the legislative process and where the bill stands today.

Participants will learn:

- Understand House Bill 433 and why it's important to PEs.
- An overview of the legislative and committee process.



State Representative Roy Klopfenstein is currently serving his second term in the Ohio House of Representatives. He represents the 82nd House District serving the people of Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert counties and the southern portion of Defiance County.

In addition to serving as Chair of the House Agriculture Committee, Klopfenstein is a member of the House Energy, Local Government, and Transportation committees.

Klopfenstein is a lifelong farmer that has been farming with his family in Paulding County for more than 43 years. He is a former state committee member of the USDA Farm Service Agency and is a current member of the Ohio Soybean Association, Ohio Corn and Wheat Growers Association, and Ohio Farm Bureau. He is also a former chairman of the Paulding County Extension Advisory Committee and The Ohio State University State Extension Advisory Committee. Klopfenstein is a strong supporter of 4-H and FFA. Prior to being elected as a state representative he served for ten years as a Paulding County Commissioner.

He has been married to his wife Deborah for more than forty years. They have been blessed with four sons, Andrew, Evan, Gary and Matthew, two daughters-in-law, Brianna and Mary, and six terrific grandchildren.

Klopfenstein and his family worship at the Apostolic Christian Church in Latty. He strives to use his faith and life experience to make Ohio a better place for the generations to come.

“Legislative News in Ohio: Public Policy Impacting PEs”

As the only professional engineer and NSPE-Ohio member in the legislature, State Senator Bill Blessing will discuss artificial intelligence policies, his primary sponsored legislation, and additional bills impacting PEs in Ohio.

Participants will learn:

- AI policies and legislative efforts in Ohio.
- An overview of important legislation from the 136th General Assembly specifically impacting PEs.



State Senator Louis W. Blessing, III, PE, is serving his second term in the Ohio Senate. He currently represents Ohio's 8th Senate District, which encompasses a portion of Hamilton County. He began his career in the legislature serving as a member of the Ohio House of Representatives, representing the 29th Ohio House District.

Senator Blessing has an extensive background in electrical engineering. He currently works as an engineer at Super Systems, Inc. in Cincinnati and previously worked at Duke Energy and Nova Engineering.

He earned his Bachelor of Arts in mathematics and Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering at the University of Cincinnati. The Senator is a licensed professional engineer and is a member of the Ohio Society of Professional Engineers. He currently resides in Colerain Township with his wife Heather and their three sons.

“Delivering Cleveland’s Lakefront Future: Infrastructure Decisions and Development Feasibility”

Cleveland’s lakefront is undergoing a generational transformation requiring unprecedented coordination among engineers, policymakers, and private developers. Speaking from her experience leading complex, multi-phase projects, Mackenzie Makepeace will explore how infrastructure decisions, financing tools, and public-private collaboration shape the feasibility, sequencing, and long-term success of major waterfront redevelopment efforts.

Participants will learn:

- Identify how infrastructure planning and public-realm investments affect development feasibility, phasing, and long-term project outcomes.
- Recognize how policy and financing tools shape the timing, risk, and delivery of large public-realm and mobility investments.
- Understand how developers coordinate with engineers and public agencies to align project goals, timelines, and constraints.



Mackenzie Makepeace is a Managing Director at DiGeronimo Development, where she leads the company’s expanding portfolio of transformative real estate projects. As part of the DiGeronimo Companies—a family of vertically integrated firms spanning heavy civil construction, demolition, construction management, and development—she leverages the organization’s ability to self-perform critical phases of the building process. This integrated model enables seamless collaboration, cost efficiencies, and exceptional quality across every stage of project delivery.

Mackenzie oversees DiGeronimo Development’s work in acquisitions, entitlements, ground-up development, and property management, with a particular focus on large-scale, mixed-use communities. She leads the company’s flagship development project, Valor Acres, a 70-plus-acre, multi-phase development in Brecksville, Ohio, designed to integrate residential, office, retail, and hospitality uses into a cohesive, high-performing district.

Before joining DiGeronimo Development, Mackenzie served as Director of Strategic Initiatives and Market Research at Forest City Realty Trust, a national real estate developer and owner/operator with more than \$8 billion in assets. She later continued her work with the Ratner family at The Max Collaborative, where she served as Director of Development and oversaw the creation of more than 1,000 multifamily units totaling \$625 million in development costs.

Mackenzie holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Business Administration from Washington and Lee University. She is deeply engaged with the Urban Land Institute, where she serves as Chair of the Americas Women’s Leadership Initiative, sits on the Americas Executive Committee, and contributes to ULI Cleveland’s Governance Committee and Advisory Board, the YLG Governance Committee, and the Urban Development and Mixed-Use Council (Bronze Flight). She lives in Shaker Heights, Ohio, with her husband and two children.

“Energy Policy Panel”

This panel explores Ohio’s evolving energy landscape, with a focus on small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs), grid modernization, and data center infrastructure. Experts from government, academia, and industry will discuss policy, safety, and workforce needs as Ohio positions itself at the forefront of advanced nuclear and resilient energy solutions.

Participants will learn:

- Understand the role of advanced nuclear safety, risk assessment, and public trust in the deployment of SMRs in Ohio.
- Explore how university-led initiatives, like OSU’s NuScale E2 Center, are preparing a skilled workforce for Ohio’s emerging nuclear energy sector.
- Gain insight into the integration of academic research with state energy policy and infrastructure planning.

Panel Moderator



Travis L. Rhoades, PE, F.NSPE, is a licensed professional engineer with more than 24 years of experience in bridge and transportation infrastructure. Based in Toledo, he leads CEC’s Transportation Practice in that office and is actively engaged in advancing ethical standards in the profession. Travis currently serves as Chairman of the NSPE Board of Ethical Review, where he has served since 2023, and also chairs the NSPE-Ohio Ethics Committee. Since 2023, he has served as NSPE-Ohio’s Vice President of Legislative & Government Affairs. A frequent contributor to

OhioENGINEER, he writes on topics ranging from licensure and public policy to the ethical challenges posed by emerging technologies. Outside of work, Travis and his wife, Elizabeth, enjoy traveling and catching Broadway musicals. He’s also a lifelong history buff and a dedicated board game collector and player.

Panelists



Senator Brian Chavez is serving his first full term in the Ohio Senate. He serves the people of the 30th Senate District which encompasses Washington, Athens, Belmont, Meigs, Morgan, Monroe, Noble, Harrison, and Jefferson counties, and part of Guernsey County. Born and raised in New Mexico, Senator Chavez earned a degree in Chemical Engineering and then joined Intel Corporation making computer chips. There he met his wife Christy, an Industrial Engineer and the safety manager of the Intel manufacturing

facility. After 12 years at Intel, they decided to pivot their careers and move to Christy’s hometown in Ohio to raise their two boys. Along with his wife, Senator Chavez has been involved in a family oil and gas business that had its beginnings more than 50 years ago. The Marietta Area Chamber of Commerce honored the couple with its Business Leaders of the Year award (2017). Prior to his appointment to the senate, Chavez was appointed by the governor to be a member of the Oil and Gas Commission. The commission is a quasi-judicial board designed to arbitrate disputes between the Ohio Division of Natural Resources and operators of oil and gas wells. Senator Chavez also previously served as a trustee for the Ohio Oil and Gas Association. Chavez was on the board of Southeast Ohio Oil and Gas Association for nearly 10 years and served as its president. Additionally, he is the former Vice-Chair of the Ohio Oil Natural Energy Institute, where he was active in the communications and scholarship

committees. During the 135th General Assembly, Chavez championed legislation to help active-duty military members achieve the dream of owning a home in the Buckeye State that was signed into law by Governor DeWine and sponsored the bipartisan Senate legislation to support the fifth iteration of the State Capital Improvement Program, which funds critical infrastructure projects at the local level. Senator Chavez lives in Marietta, Ohio, with Christy, their two sons, and three beloved pets. He is active in his Marietta area community and is a consultant on a weekly Oil and Gas Industry radio show that can be heard on five radio stations.



State Representative Adam Holmes is serving his fourth term in the Ohio House of Representatives after being appointed in the 133rd General Assembly. He represents the 97th Ohio House District, which includes all of Muskingum County and western Guernsey County. Representative Holmes serves as the Chairman of the House Energy Committee. Additionally, he serves on the House Natural Resources, Technology and Innovation, and Veteran and Military Development committees. Representative Holmes is currently the CEO of Frueh

Enterprises, a mechanical and industrial contracting company that has operated in Zanesville for over 80 years. Prior to his business career, he spent over 27 active-duty years in the United States Marine Corps and retired as a Colonel in 2016. During his career as a Marine aviator, Holmes served in several senior leadership and command positions and flew over 3000 flight hours that included operations in Iraq and Somalia. Throughout his Statehouse tenure, Representative Holmes has focused on building trust and transparency in Ohio government, incentivizing government efficiency, supporting small businesses, and strengthening Ohio families. Representative Holmes is a member of New Hope Lutheran Church. He has a Bachelor of Science in Political Science (Engineering Core Curriculum) from the United States Naval Academy and a Master of Science in Global Leadership from the University of San Diego. He and his wife live in Nashport, Ohio.



Dr. Carol Smidts is a Professor in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at The Ohio State University and Director of the Reliability and Risk Laboratory (RRL). She is affiliated with Ohio State's Sustainability Institute, an IEEE Fellow, and an AAIS Fellow. She has made significant contributions to the reliability analysis of high-assurance systems. Her research focuses on safety-critical systems (including nuclear power plants, the electric grid, and aerospace systems) and develops theories, models, and

experimental testbeds in reliability, risk, safety, and security to improve system resilience, often emphasizing instrumentation & control and human factors.

MEETING INFORMATION

Virtual Format: Zoom

- Please include your preferred email address with your registration.
- **IMPORTANT:** Before the program, please **download and install** the latest version of Zoom to ensure full functionality, including the ability to answer the mandatory Attendance Verification Questions (electronic poll questions).
 - Start here: <https://support.zoom.com/hc/en>
 - From the link, click "Download Zoom" to go to the Download Center.
 - After downloading Zoom, install the application.
 - Zoom System Requirements: Use the "Get Started" button (also in the above link) to search for "system requirements."
- A camera and microphone are not required.
- Your confirmation email will include a Zoom event link & other important details.

CPD Attendance Verification Process

- Do not share your Zoom join data as it is connected to your attendance record.
- You must use your computer or other Internet-capable device for the CPD attendance verification process. We **cannot** verify attendance via an audio connection.
- Join early to avoid missing attendance time.
- To receive your CPD Certificate of Attendance, please **respond to the Attendance Verification Questions** (i.e., electronic poll questions) that will appear on your screen at random intervals throughout the program. Close other applications so you don't miss questions.
- If you have any problems, please notify "NSPE-OH STAFF" immediately via chat.

What's Included?

Seminars and a CPD Certificate of Attendance.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Hours

NSPE-Ohio programs are designed to meet the requirements for Ohio's continuing professional development (CPD) law and State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Surveyors (State Board of Registration) rules. NSPE-Ohio programs are also designed to comply with the law in KY, NC and WV. This program also meets CPD requirements in many additional states. Be sure to consult those states' licensing authorities. For Ohio licensees, the State of Ohio determines the acceptance of individual courses for CPD credit. The State Board of Registration does not preapprove any courses or course providers. Professionals should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the program. In compliance with the State Board of Registration's rules, we must track participant attendance for this virtual CPD program. Be sure to respond to the attendance verification questions so your attendance may be verified in case you are audited by the State. CPD Certificates of Attendance will be emailed after the program.

Cancellation Policy & Substitutions

Registrants may withdraw from the program with full refund less a \$25 processing fee provided NSPE-Ohio is notified in writing (ospe@ohioengineer.com) at least 72 hours prior to the start of the program. After that time, registrants are responsible for the full registration fee. Substitutions of attendees may be made by the registration deadline, although nonmember differential rates will apply if a nonmember replaces a member.

By registering for this program, you acknowledge that your photographic image may be taken for publication purposes.

Schedule and faculty are subject to change without notice.

NSPE-Ohio reserves the right to limit the number of registrations.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed!