

## WSPE eNews

**A monthly publication from the Wisconsin Society of Professional Engineers**

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#### 1. **President's Message**

By Keith R. Nikolay, PE, WSPE President

Dear WSPE colleagues,

I am excited to announce the re-design of our website, WSPE.org! This has been in the works for quite some time and we have finalized the finishing touches. This is much improved from our old site and as many of you may have already noticed, the template is based off the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) website. This was done for several reasons:

- Maintain consistency. NSPE has been encouraging State Societies to base their websites similar to the National website. This will give the viewer a sense of security when browsing through the pages.
- Ease of navigation. Since many of us are already familiar with navigating around the NSPE website, we should be able to find the information we are looking for in a more timely manner.
- Fresh look. By creating a new look for the organization, we are hoping to create a site that everyone can easily use and enjoy.

I would like to thank everyone to helped out in this endeavor and the many hours that were put in to make this a reality. This is an exciting time for WSPE with many new and educational events coming up, so make sure to bookmark this website on your computer and check back often for updated information.

Keith R. Nikolay, PE  
WSPE President

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#### 2. **FREE Personal Development Hours (PDH's) from NSPE**

NSPE members have access to 15 professional development hours (PDH's) at no extra charge.

These free Continuing Education opportunities will come in handy for Wisconsin PE's looking to renew their license before 2014.

The FREE professional development opportunities offered by NSPE in 2012 include:

[Avoiding the Pitfalls of Green Building](#)

[Being Right or Being Effective Can Make or Break Your Engineering Career](#)

[BIM Legal 2010: Challenges and Opportunities in the Use of Building Information Modeling in Project Delivery](#)

[Business Development: How to Succeed in the New Economy](#)

[Engineering Ethics: What Do Millennials, GenXers and Boomers Think?](#)

[Engineers as Skilled Communicators](#)

[Ethics Forum: Staying True to Client Expectations](#)

[The Fundamentals of Finance and Accounting for Engineers](#)

[Health, Safety, and Welfare: The Social Responsibility of Construction Quality Assurance](#)

[Keeping Financing and Marketing on Course in a Downturn](#)

[Project Launch, Audit and Closure](#)

[Project Management: Do It Right](#)

[Project Scheduling and Schedule Compression](#)

[Promoting an Ethical Workplace in an Economic Storm](#)

[What Happens When Green Becomes Code: Do Buildings Get Better or Do Lawyers Get Richer](#)

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### **3. Estate Planning for Business Owners**

By Attorney Randall J. Andersen

When it comes to estate planning, it is all too easy to procrastinate. Estate planning does not have to be complicated or expensive. It is important to understand your options, and implement an estate plan which is appropriate in light of your financial and family situation.

#### Will vs. Living Trust?

Estate planning goals can be accomplished through either a basic will, or a living trust (also known as a revocable trust).

The advantage of using a will as your primary estate planning document is that it is generally less expensive to have a will prepared as compared to a living trust. A will is normally a shorter, simpler document than most living trusts.

There are multiple advantages to the living trust, particularly for business owners.

One of the biggest advantages is that a living trust can avoid the need for a probate proceeding upon your death. The use of a living trust (assuming it is funded before your death) allows your heirs to implement your wishes without the time and expense associated with probate. In Wisconsin, probate occurs in the circuit court of the county where the decedent lived. Probate files are open to the public (although steps can be taken to have the "inventory" of the estate not disclosed to the public). Administration of a living trust upon death can maintain a higher level of privacy for the family.

Probate avoidance is particularly attractive if real estate is owned in more than one state, which could require a separate probate proceeding in each state. This can be avoided with a living trust.

Another advantage of a living trust is that it allows you to appoint a trustee who will handle your business and financial affairs in the event you are incapacitated during your lifetime. A will, on the other hand, only takes effect on your death, and cannot be used for this purpose.

#### Powers of Attorney.

All competent adults in Wisconsin should have a health care power of attorney, designating someone to make their health care decisions in the event they are unable to do so for themselves.

A power of attorney for finances (not to be confused with the health care power of attorney) allows you to appoint someone to handle your financial affairs during your lifetime if you are unable to do so yourself.

#### Living Wills.

You may have heard of the "living will," which is very different from the "living trust" discussed above. A "living will," also known as the "Declaration to Physicians," allows adults in Wisconsin to state their preferences for life-sustaining procedures and feeding tubes in the event the person is in a terminal condition or persistent vegetative state.

#### Estate Taxes.

The issue of estate taxes has disappeared from the radar screen of many people. Wisconsin has not had a state inheritance tax or an estate tax for several years. The federal estate tax exclusion amount for persons dying during 2012 is \$5,120,000. However, the federal exclusion amount is scheduled to return to the previous level of \$1,000,000 for persons dying on or after January 1, 2013. There is speculation that Congress will act to retain either a \$3,500,000 or \$5,000,000 exclusion, but in our present fiscal and political climate, it is anybody's guess as to what will happen. Well drafted estate planning documents should plan for the possibility that the federal estate tax exclusion may return to the \$1,000,000 exclusion level.

#### Special Circumstances.

Many business owners have some special circumstances which must be accommodated in order to meet their needs and intentions in their estate plan. Examples include children who have special needs or who receive governmental assistance, second and third marriages and children from prior marriages. The family and financial situation of the client must be considered carefully before making decisions as to what type of estate plan is appropriate.

Estate planning for business owners does not need to be complicated or expensive. The important thing is to understand your options and adopt and implement a plan which is appropriate for your particular situation.



*Attorney Randall J. Andersen represents professional engineers, architects, contractors, materials suppliers and owners of construction projects, and is with the law firm of Kay & Andersen, LLC. Please feel free to contact him at (608) 833-0077 or visit [www.kayandandersen.com](http://www.kayandandersen.com).*

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## 4. WI Valley Chapter News

The WSPE WI Valley Chapter has scheduled a tour of the [Rib Mountain Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant](#) for **Wednesday, April 25 at 4:00 pm**. We will get together for a social after the tour at the [Great Dane in Wausau](#) to discuss reserving times/speakers for continuing education sessions which will start in August 2012. Please RSVP to Angela Hanz at [Angela.Hanz@wi.usda.gov](mailto:Angela.Hanz@wi.usda.gov) if you plan on attending the tour. All Chapters are welcome to attend.

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## 5. Discovery Conference 2012 Update

In the past week you should have received a direct mail regarding the WSPE Discovery Conference being held at the Crowne Plaza in Madison on April 13 & 14.

You can view a pdf version of the mailing here:

[http://wspe.org/PDF/2012\\_WSPE\\_Discovery\\_Brochure\\_Final.pdf](http://wspe.org/PDF/2012_WSPE_Discovery_Brochure_Final.pdf)

Please share this link with any engineers or others working in the engineering industry that might be interested in attending.

The **registration deadline** for the 2012 Discovery Conference is **Friday, April 6th**. Sign up TODAY!

Highlights of the Conference include:

Keynote Speaker: **NSPE President Chris Stone**

1. *General Sessions* on New Licensure Laws including **Continuing Education, Grandfather Clause, WSPE Update and President-Elect Goals & Objectives for 2012 –2013 term.**
2. *Breakout Sessions* on
  - **Compressed Natural Gas,**
  - **US41 Project,**
  - **Voided Concrete Slabs,**
  - **Minding the Generation Gap,**
  - **Reinforced Concrete Pipe Evaluation and Repair,**
  - **Additive Manufacturing,**
  - **Renovating Memorial Union,**
  - and other industry project highlights

We're still looking for sponsors! If you'd like to be a sponsor or vendor at this event, please contact Ed Rodden II at [ExecDir@wspe.org](mailto:ExecDir@wspe.org) ASAP!

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## 6. MATHCOUNTS - Update

MATHCOUNTS® is a national math enrichment, coaching and competition program that promotes middle school mathematics achievement in every U.S. state and territory.

Congratulations to our State winners:  
Individual:

1. [Christopher Xu](#)
2. [Stephen Wasielewski](#)
3. [Peter Yang](#)

Teams:

1. [Thomas Jefferson](#)
2. [Velma Hamilton](#)
3. [Roosevelt School of the Arts](#)

Good luck to those attending Nationals:

- John Lemke  
(Thomas Jefferson)
- Christopher Xu  
(Thomas Jefferson)
- Stephen Wasielewski  
(Roosevelt School of the Arts)
- Peter Yang  
(Thomas Jefferson)
- Bryan Jin  
(Velma Hamilton)

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## **FREE 6 - Month Trial Membership!**

Interested in WSPE but not sure if you want to join? Try a 6-month FREE trial membership, courtesy of WSPE. Contact Ed Rodden, WSPE Executive Director, at [ExecDir@wspe.org](mailto:ExecDir@wspe.org) for details.

## **We Need Your Email Address!**

If you are reading a paper copy of the WSPE eNews, you're missing out! Send your email address to Ed Rodden, WSPE Executive Director, at [ExecDir@wspe.org](mailto:ExecDir@wspe.org) or call him at (414) 531-1129 to receive electronic eNews.

## **Advertisers Wanted!**

If you are interested in advertising in the WSPE eNews, please contact Ed Rodden, WSPE Executive Director, at [ExecDir@wspe.org](mailto:ExecDir@wspe.org) or (414) 531-1129.

## **Update Your Information with WSPE**

Did you...

...get a new job?  
...get promoted?  
...get a new phone number or email address?  
...get your PE license?

**Tell us about it!** Send your new information to Ed Rodden, WSPE Executive Director, at [ExecDir@wspe.org](mailto:ExecDir@wspe.org) or call him at (414) 531-1129 and he'll make sure your information is updated in both the WSPE and NSPE databases. We'd also like to include an article in the next eNews summarizing your recent change or accomplishment to inform your fellow WSPE members.



Join the discussion at [WSPE's LinkedIn Group](#).

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