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This issue of *Engineering Dimensions* is about the relevance of the licensed practice of engineering and the organizations dedicated to ensuring that practice meets the needs of society and of its practitioners. In it, you'll read about initiatives under PEO's Strategic Plan, as well as the results of research by the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE), which form the backdrop to a Strategic Plan to guide its development and growth.

The growth of OSPE should be a topic of vital concern to all of us because the Ontario engineering profession needs both PEO, the licensing body, to safeguard the public's interest and maintain the profession's integrity, and OSPE, our now not-so-new advocacy body, to serve the professional needs of individual engineers.

Formed almost two years ago, OSPE has, in fact, made significant progress, although gains may seem slow to some of you. It has established an office, hired administrative staff, and recruited a CEO, which as any of you who have ever started your own operations will know is no small undertaking. It has conducted two rounds of research and two General Assemblies to set direction, signed a transition funding agreement with PEO, and taken over several of PEO's non-regulatory activities, including the Employment Advisory Service (now OSPE Career Centre), National Engineering Week, Engineers are Everyday Heroes, and Membership Salary Survey. The former PEO investment fund plan administered by ScotiaMcLeod is now offered through OSPE. It has also been agreed that PEO's former program of professional awards to recognize engineering excellence and community achievement will for the imme-

## OSPE's future ours to write

diated future be presented jointly by PEO and OSPE, starting in November (see the Call for Nominations in this issue).

In addition, OSPE has held its first general elections and installed its first elected board of directors. Throughout this organizational phase, moreover, OSPE has made representations to government on the role of professional engineers in safe drinking water (Walkerton Inquiry standing, submission and public meeting presentations); amendments to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* on Pre-start Health and Safety Reviews; proposed changes to the *Limitations Act*; hiring of non-engineers to oversee departments delivering engineering services in the amalgamated Ottawa; and use of the P.Eng. on business cards in the amalgamated Toronto. It's also monitored reciprocity discussions with Michigan.

As I mentioned earlier, OSPE's most recent accomplishment has been to create its first Strategic Plan to focus its future activities on areas that members believe and research has shown will yield the greatest gains for our profession and its members. OSPE represents all P.Engs, whether in business, upper management, private practice, or on staff. OSPE supports the professionalism we all strive for by ensuring that professional engineers are given full recognition of their expert knowledge and service to clients, industry and, most of all, to the public. The professional cooperation of PEO and OSPE represents what almost all other professions have had for years: a voice for the profession and a strong regulatory body to uphold standards. And this at one-quarter to one-tenth the cost to members of other professions.

Many of you reading this message were instrumental in creating OSPE through your votes in the advocacy referendum held in 2000. Yet it seems that almost as many of you have chosen, now that OSPE is a reality, to adopt a wait-and-see approach to your active support by not becoming full members, despite the real progress OSPE has made.

It is essential to all of us to have an advocacy body to advance the self-inter-

est of all professional engineers. Serious issues face us as a profession, having to do with access to markets (our own and elsewhere) for engineered products and engineering services, business, economics, working conditions, career opportunities, fees for service, and the image and stature of the profession. I have no doubt that progress toward the initiatives in PEO's own Strategic Plan, aimed at re-igniting the relevance of the professional engineer licence by ensuring its association with high standards of qualification, practice, ethics and protecting and furthering the public interest, will benefit the profession in many of these issues of concern. However, I am equally convinced that PEO's actions, alone, are not enough, that a strong, viable, vibrant OSPE is essential to boost the profile of the profession with the public, government and business in a way that PEO cannot.

With your support, OSPE can make a difference. But it's up to all of us to ensure that it does by paying the current \$50 full membership fee (for the three-year transition period, PEO is paying \$30 of OSPE's \$80 membership fee on behalf of PEO members), and by participating with your time and talent when OSPE calls. It's time to stop waiting to see what OSPE's future holds before committing to buying in, for OSPE's future is truly ours to write—for our own sakes and the sake of our profession. What are you waiting for? ♦

### PEO Council Elections Cast Your Vote!

Please participate in governing your profession by voting in PEO's 2002 Council elections and By-law referenda. Look for your election package to arrive by mail in early February. Read the candidate statements in this issue of *Engineering Dimensions*.