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RESIDENT'S
MESSAGE

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PRESIDENT

A new year is always a time of new beginnings, but I believe this one, in particular, brings with it a tremendous opportunity for PEO.

The recent organizational restructuring, combined with the conclusion of financial support to the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, the profession's advocacy body, should enable us to renew our focus on, and commitment to, doing the job delegated to us under the authority of the *Professional Engineers Act*.

To seize this opportunity, the lines of communication between PEO members, Council, chapters and staff must be open, direct, and founded in a mutual trust that all of us are acting in the best interests of the profession and of the public. It is only by proceeding in this way that we can ensure that our profession is, and is seen as, responsible, accountable and professional. It is only by always conducting our affairs in this manner that we can continue to merit the respect that enables us to fulfil our part of the profession's contract with society.

But, much as good fences make good neighbours, trust among members, Council, chapters and staff depends on all of us being clear about the role each plays in strengthening the association.

Earlier in my term, I noted that for PEO, responsible governance means that every human, organizational, technical and financial resource increasingly supports and contributes to achieving the objects of the Act. And I see PEO's primary human resource as its members, who are also the source of its financial strength.

Your annual fees enable PEO to license and, if necessary, discipline engineers and companies providing engineering services and, through enforcement, prevent unqualified people from practising or misleading others to believe they are qualified to practise. This upholds the integrity of the profession, as do PEO activities that establish, maintain and develop standards

of knowledge, skill, practice and ethics for the profession and, that promote public awareness of our role—all aspects of our legislated mandate.

As a licensed engineer, your responsibilities are numerous. In your practice, you are obliged to protect the public's safety and promote its interest where engineering is concerned. In addition, because engineering is a self-regulated profession, you are also obliged to provide the necessary input and source of Council and committee volunteers to enable PEO to regulate the profession. You also have a role in furthering awareness of the profession by providing an engineering perspective to government boards, committees and agencies and by participating in and supporting such PEO activities as education outreach, our awards program, and National Engineering Week.

Your participation enables PEO to provide trusteeship and leadership of the engineering profession through licensing and developing competent and ethical professional engineers for today's and tomorrow's needs.

As PEO's governing body and board of directors, Council administers the affairs of the association to fulfil the requirements of the *Professional Engineers Act*. It does this, as Peter Ridout, P.Eng., a past president of PEO, once wrote: by "making informed decisions on behalf of the profession." And it is primarily through the input and participation of the members of the profession that such decisions are informed, so that Council may set the policies to govern and guide practitioners and regulate practise.

In leading the profession on behalf of its members and the public, Council is also expected to bring forward proposals to the Ontario government, so that public policy will protect the public's and the profession's interests as the practice of engineering changes.

Consequently, PEO must always enjoy an open dialogue with the attorney general, under whose responsibilities our Act falls. Already, I have been very encouraged by my

initial discussions with his office. In fact, PEO was fortunate to have his parliamentary assistant, recently elected Willowdale MPP David Zimmer, participate in the Ontario Professional Engineers Awards gala last November 14.

I was proud also to have participated in our recent awards gala, an event that publicly showcases the profession's commitment to excellence and service, just as I was pleased to attend the chapter leaders' conference the next day. As a self-governed organization, PEO creates its own future by actively involving its members in enhancing and promoting the profession's value and relevance to society, which enhances, in turn, the value and relevance of our licence. PEO's chapters enable us to harness such member involvement toward this common goal.

Established over 40 years ago, PEO's chapter system is a unique and dynamic model of a volunteer organization, providing an informed and organized pool from which to draw candidates for PEO office, as well as a vehicle for facilitating two-way communications between PEO Council and practitioners, promoting local public awareness of the engineering profession and the association, and fostering continuing professional competence.

Of course, all of our volunteers' hard work might be to little effect without a professional and dedicated staff to translate their vision, distilled into strategy and clear direction by Council through the chapters, into action. Comprising engineers and non-engineers alike, PEO staff is the fuel that enables us to drive toward the destination we've set together.

As I've said, this new year, in particular, provides us an opportunity to rediscover the value of trust, as each of us—members, Council, chapters and staff—focus on, and commit to, our roles in enabling PEO to meet its legislated objectives. For trust, as American psychologist and management educator Warren Bennis once noted: "is the lubrication that makes it possible for organizations to work." ❖