



Year of the engineer

Although the Chinese New Year has rung in as the year of the rooster, in our pages I'd like to officially make it the year of the engineer instead. You may be thinking, well, sure, the whole magazine is devoted to engineers and engineering issues. What I mean is, along with reporting regulatory issues, more than ever, we want to highlight what engineers do, who they really are, and what accomplishments have been made by them both individually and collectively.

We'll be doing just that throughout the year with more "people" stories, in the form of profiles and reports on engineers' contributions both at home and around the world. Starting with this issue, we bring you the nine "engineering stars" that took home Ontario Professional Engineers

Awards in November (p. 16). All of these outstanding men and women have contributed enormously to the profession, as well as their communities, and epitomize what it is to be an engineer. Next issue, we'll report on how Canadian engineers are lending their support and expertise to counter the destruction following the devastating tsunami in southeast Asia.

Our main focus this issue is privacy legislation, which now applies to almost all Ontario businesses, including engineering firms and even sole practitioners. Although it's not a commercial organization and therefore not subject to PIPE-DA, PEO has developed a voluntary privacy policy based on PIPEDA's 10 underlying principles. Our first feature story (p. 54) will give members insight into how

we handle the sensitive information that we hold.

Privacy legislation, of course, will also impact almost all of our members' businesses, if it hasn't already. Although the legislation came into effect January 1, 2004, engineering firms seem to be at different stages on the path to a privacy policy. In our second feature (p. 58), we take a look at the basics of how personal information should be treated (and the implications if it's treated carelessly), potential conflict with the *Professional Engineers Act* if a policy is not implemented, and how companies large and small are dealing with the legislation.

Whether you know it as BRRAG, Bill 124 or the *Building Code Statute Law Amendment Act*, this issue was unquestionably the most contentious in 2004 for PEO and will likely dominate 2005 as well as the July 1 deadline nears. Attempts to derail this bill, including numerous letters from PEO to Attorney General Michael Bryant, and even a recent visit by PEO President George Comrie, P.Eng., to the AG (p. 14), have been in vain.

Since I'm not an engineer myself and I've only been a part of PEO for a few months, I can only imagine the insult and frustration that most P.Engs must feel in having to take exams to test their building code knowledge. Even more disturbing is the thought that this threat to self regulation is just the tip of the iceberg. However, there are always at least two sides to every story and we present one of them in this issue. David Brezer, acting director of the building and development branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and a P.Eng. himself, provides another perspective in a Q&A session with Michael Mastromatteo (p. 60).

Last, but certainly not least, this issue contains some very important Council election information (p. 23). Please exercise your right to vote!

Jennifer Coombes
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Managing Editor



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