

Touring, tallying and training (oh my!)

By DAVID SMITH

With the new year upon us, it's time to recap a few of the many activities that filled the final months of the 2006 Government Liaison Program (GLP) calendar.

In the fall, PEO launched an aggressive campaign intended to inform the public of government policy decisions that interfere with the association's statutory role to serve and protect the public interest where engineering is concerned. As part of our promotional efforts, PEO executives travelled to several cities to meet with local mayors, MPPs, MPs, media outlets and professional engineers.

On September 29, Past President Robert A. Goodings, P.Eng., along with Windsor Chapter Chair Sean McCann, P.Eng., and Robert Merrick of Brown & Cohen, met with Windsor Mayor Eddie Francis, and David Hall, business editor of the *Windsor Star*. The tour then continued in Ottawa on October 4 where Howard Brown of Brown & Cohen accompanied Ottawa Chapter Chair Jo-Anne Moore, P.Eng., and Vice Chair Sucha Mann, P.Eng., for meetings with Mayor Bob Chiarelli, Jake Rupert, city hall bureau chief of the *Ottawa Citizen*, MP Paul Szabo, and members of the Ottawa Chapter. Stay tuned to this column and the PEO website for news of the 2007 travel plans.

Seats at the table

Besides meetings and events, PEO's GLP includes encouraging engineers to get involved in the political arena as canvassers, supporters, and even as candidates, to complement the association's more proactive approach to serving and protecting society where engineering is concerned. In November, PEO reached out to members to urge them to get involved in the upcoming municipal elections by supporting their professional colleagues seeking public office. Once the results were tallied, at least five professional engineers were elected. Congratulations to the engineers, known to

date, who sought and won positions to contribute to policy development and priority setting at their local level: Andrew Claire, P.Eng. (councillor, Township of Tiny); George Cornell, P.Eng. (councillor, Township of Tiny); Diane Freeman, P.Eng. (councillor, City of Waterloo); Brian Jackson, P.Eng. (mayor, Town of Innisfil); Gary Kocialek, P.Eng. (councillor, Town of Orangeville); and Greg Washuta, P.Eng. (councillor, City of St. Catharines). These individuals now have a unique opportunity to offer their perspectives as engineers on a variety of issues that might not have been adequately addressed without the engineering viewpoint.

Congratulations should also go to the engineers who ran unsuccessfully this time, for their willingness to stand up for their convictions and attempting to make a difference in their communities, including: Brian Burton, P.Eng. (regional chair, Halton); Frank Lasowski, P.Eng. (trustee, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, Wards 9, 10, and 11); Ron Starr, P.Eng. (councillor, City of Mississauga); John Thompson, P.Eng. (mayor, Clearview Township); James Wallace, P.Eng. (councillor, City of Barrie); and Greg Wowchuk, P.Eng. (councillor, City of Toronto).



Past President Robert A. Goodings, P.Eng. (right), and Windsor Chapter Chair Sean McCann, P.Eng. (left), met with *Windsor Star* business editor David Hall to discuss the association's mandate on the first of several tour stops planned for the province.

If you are aware of any other professional engineers who threw their hats into the ring, please let us know, so they, too, can be properly recognized.

Training continues

Also in November, chapter leaders and new GLP spokespeople were given the opportunity to learn more about the program at the Chapter Forum. Howard Brown and Robert Merrick hosted a lively training session, entitled "Transitioning to Political Activism," which was designed to teach attendees how to become more politically savvy, how to deliver PEO's main messages, and how to become more politically active.

The training session opened with the premiere screening of PEO's Campaign College DVD—a summary of the September 7 event held to provide professional engineers with the tools and required knowledge to get more involved in the political process. Copies of the DVD were given to each chapter to use in their own meetings. Feedback from the session has been positive, with one participant writing: "This evening I registered with the provincial party of my preference and I offered to volunteer. ... Prior to today, I wasn't sure where to start. After the training today, I knew."

The video summary of Campaign College can be viewed by visiting the Government Liaison Program page of PEO's website (www.peo.on.ca). The PowerPoint presentation delivered at the Chapter Forum training session is also available from the website.

As always, we welcome your comments on the Government Liaison Program and on future topics and content for this column. If you have feedback or suggestions, or would like to get involved, please contact me at dsmith@peo.on.ca, or 416-840-1068. By increasing the number of professional engineers active in their communities and in government, we can increase the chances of PEO being heard and the P.Eng. licence being respected.