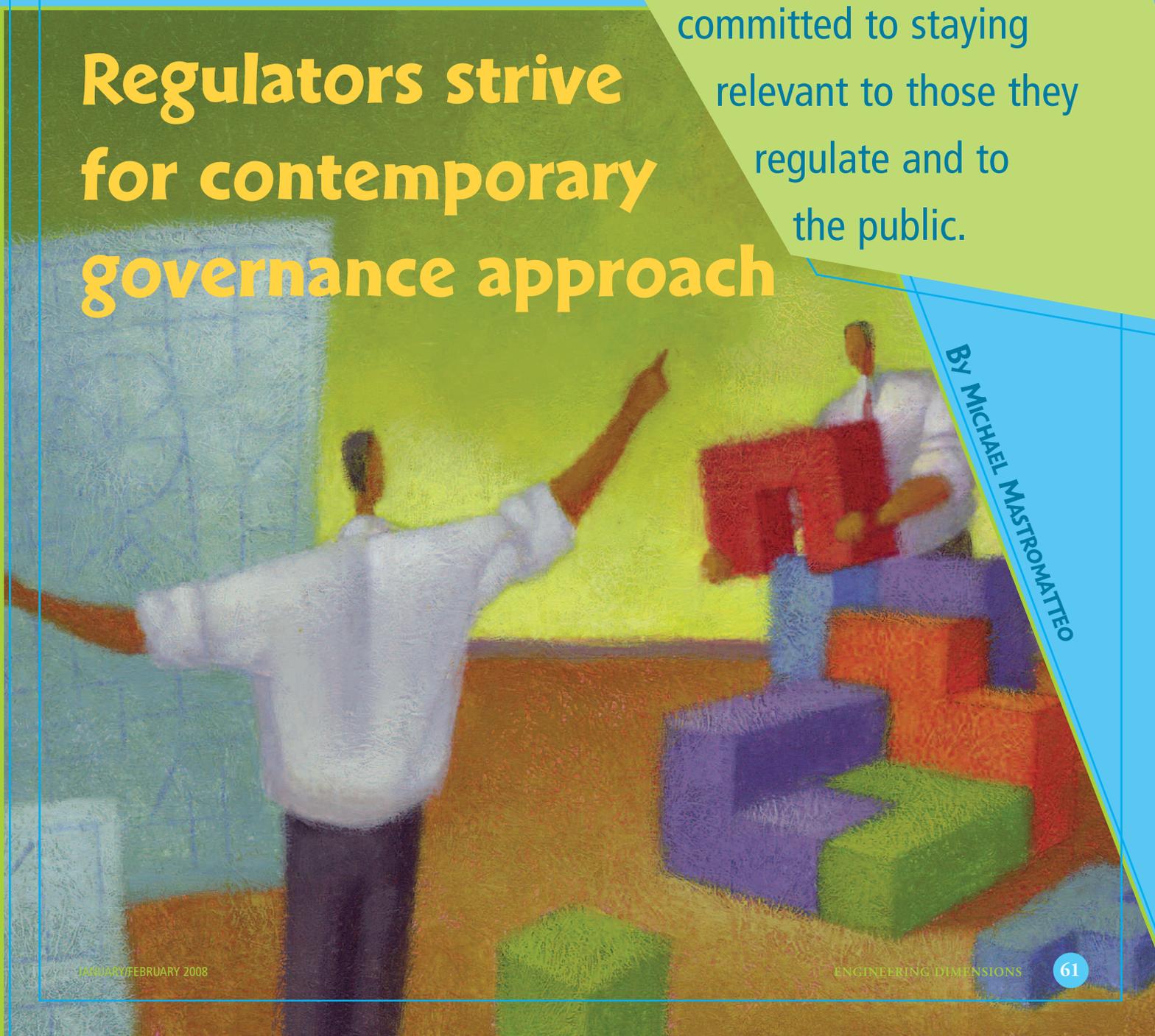
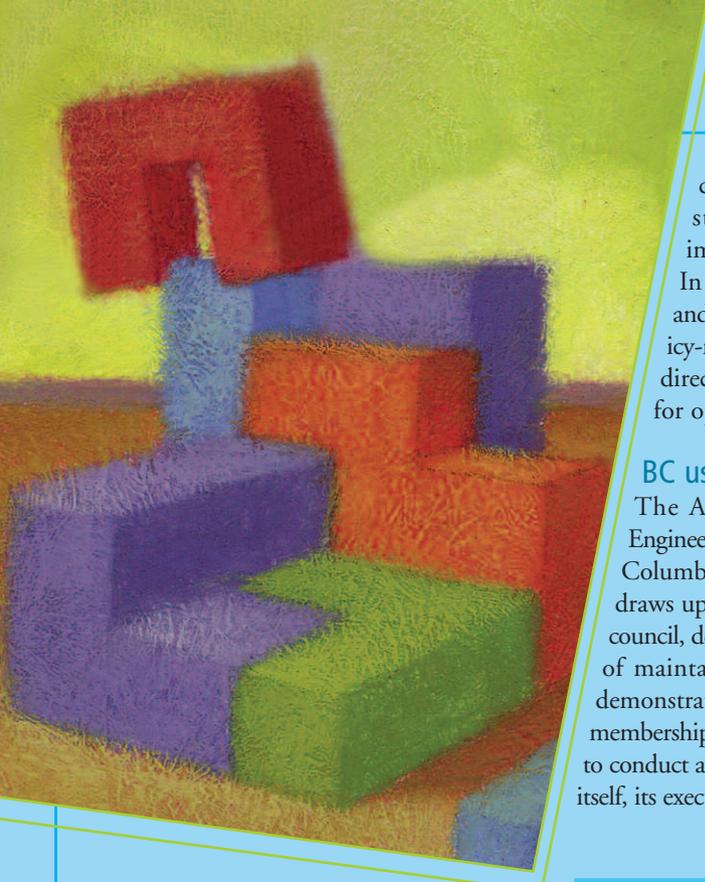


Engineering regulators across the country have avoided a static approach to their governance. Armed with updated policy making and administrative models, regulators appear committed to staying relevant to those they regulate and to the public.

Regulators strive for contemporary governance approach

By MICHAEL MASTROMATEO





committees (advisory and statutory), and a staff to implement policy initiatives. In general, council committees and task forces help develop policy-related matters, and executive director/registrars take direction for operational issues.

BC uses council work plan

The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia (APEGBC), for example, draws up an annual work plan for its council, dedicated to the dual objectives of maintaining the public trust and demonstrating the regulator's value to membership. The BC council is expected to conduct annual performance reviews of itself, its executive director/registrars and all

drumming up more interest in elections, and identifying and attracting the best possible council candidates

Alberta subscribes to Carver model

The situation in Alberta is similar to BC and elsewhere in terms of seeking to make its governance apparatus more in tune with changing times and expectations.

In 1997, for example, the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta (APEGGA) adopted the Carver Model for effective governance by a board of directors. The model is named for management authority John Carver, who in the early 1990s developed a model of governance designed to allow boards of directors to be more accountable to the organizations they govern.

Promoting more effective governance of the engineering profession appears to be a common concern for most regulators coast to coast. A survey of selected regulators conducted by *Engineering Dimensions* indicates that some of the larger associations also face ongoing difficulties in recruiting new volunteers to take on committee or governance work, and in overcoming the perception that a small group of veteran insiders dominates the regulator's administrative and policy making affairs.

Most regulators are also concerned with communicating more effectively with membership, government and the public to promote a greater understanding of self-regulation in the public interest. As well, most regulators have recently reviewed their governance and council operations with a view to better defining strategic priorities and objectives.

While responding to the needs of the increasing number of international applicants remains a priority for Canadian regulators, more effective governance and making their work better understood among membership are issues never far from the surface.

Engineering regulators generally follow governance models similar to PEO's, with an elected council operating under a provincial engineering act, and supported by executive and volunteer

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committees as a measure of their effectiveness in meeting stated objectives.

To meet the second objective, APEGBC communicates key messages on its role and responsibilities to members, and works to increase the reach of its professional development programs and to implement possible changes to its electoral procedures to take advantage of electronic voting.

Voter turnout in the province appears relatively strong compared to other provincial associations. APEGBC reported a 23 per cent participation rate for its 2007 elections and for its recent fee bylaw ballot (PEO averages about 18 per cent voter turnout for elections). The association also works to increase "member engagement" and volunteer recruitment, and is at present reviewing its nominating committee procedures with a view to

Sometimes known as the Policy Governance Model, the aim is for the governing body to focus on an organization's end results, leaving the organization's executive group to concentrate on the best means to achieve such ends. PEO's Governance Task Force reviewed the Carver Model in its work in 2003 and 2004.

In adopting the Carver Model, APEGGA council modified it where appropriate to meet the specific needs of the association. APEGGA's comprehensive review of its governance model in 2005 resulted in the production of a council governance manual, a governance tool also used by PEO. Among other things, the Alberta manual emphasizes the need to maintain effective relations with both licensed members and the government.

Another significant result of APEGGA's governance review was a new understand-

ing of the roles of council, the executive director/registrar, committees, volunteers and staff in implementing policy decisions.

As was noted by APEGGA in explaining its governance approach, "Council has under its direction and control, through the executive director, a vast resource of competent committee volunteers and staff. These people are equipped to carry out the day-to-day tasks required

ture as a modified Carver Model. In outlining the general flow of governance work at APEGS, McDonald says the Saskatchewan regulator operates with a volunteer complement of approximately 250 to 300 members and, for certain committees, non-members with specific insights into relevant projects. He said the association has a volunteer database in place and seeks volunteers through

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to meet the goals and objectives that Council sets for the association. The revised APEGGA governance model focuses Council on strategic leadership and enables it to get to its real role: ensuring that APEGGA remains relevant through delivery of real value for the public, the members and other stakeholders in a manner that is consistent with APEGGA's mission, vision and values."

Similar to BC and others, APEGGA charges its council with self-assessment activities to identify ways to improve and to provide assurance of the regulator's continuing effectiveness.

Volunteer connection important

The case in Saskatchewan is probably typical of a small to mid-sized provincial engineering regulator. The governing council of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan (APEGS) comprises 19 members resident in the province and elected by the association membership. APEGS council usually meets five to six times each year.

Bob McDonald, P.Eng., LLB, director of membership and legal services for APEGS, describes the governance struc-

including a request form with the association's annual fee invoice.

APEGS often asks committees in need of volunteers to work with its Connection and Involvement Committee to fill vacancies, or have their members recommend people to fill vacancies. Committee members are generally appointed on the recommendation of the committee.

"Typically, we invite a potential committee member to a meeting or two to 'try out' the committee and make a decision as to whether this is something that they wish to volunteer for," McDonald said.

In the Manitoba case, the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of the Province of Manitoba (APEGM) is governed by a council of 10 elected professional engineers, three professional geoscientists, and three public representatives appointed by the provincial government.

APEGM also operates on the Carver Model, and like other regulators across Canada, its council is charged with an annual review of its own performance to determine its success rate in meeting objectives and enhancing overall regulation of engineering in the province.

Engineering Dimensions was unable to get significant feedback on the governance models of engineering regulators in Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in time for this article.

However, the Association of Professional Engineers of Prince Edward Island (APEPEI) outlined the governance operation of the smallest Maritime regulator. According to Deborah Mutch, administrative assistant to Executive Director Frank Parslow, P.Eng., affairs of the association are managed by an elected council comprising a president, vice president, past president and at least four councillors. The president and vice president are elected annually by a vote of the total membership. Two councillors are also elected annually by a vote of the total membership for two-year terms.

APEPEI's governance also relies on support from a number of volunteer members who are said to play an important role in the functioning of the association and in providing services to members.

Policy governance the norm

At the far eastern end of the survey, Newfoundland's professional engineers are governed by a 14-member elected council whose objectives "address the competent and ethical practice of engineering and geoscience, and public confidence in these professions."

Echoing the governance models adopted by other regulators, the Professional Engineers and Geoscientists Newfoundland and Labrador (PEGNL) is governed by a set of policies in accordance with the policy governance structure. According to PEGNL officials, "the ends direct the organization's activities of licensure, regulation of the professions, and non-regulatory functions in support of the profession. PEGNL used the Carver Model as a guide when it revamped its governance process several years ago. Generally, the model places greater emphasis on staff overseeing administration, thereby freeing up governing boards or councils to concentrate on long-term planning."

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