

INVESTIGATING THE INVESTIGATORS



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Editor

WHEN YOU THINK of the term forensic engineering your mind likely goes automatically to *CSI* or *Law & Order*. But, often, forensic engineering deals far less with police investigations and more with just finding out what went wrong in the failure of a particular product, system or process. And, of course, unlike investigations that are solved in an hour-long TV show, depending on the type of failure and its consequences, the process of forensic engineering can be enormously complex and potentially take years of investigative work.

It's this general confusion about what forensic engineering is, and what qualifies someone to be a forensic engineer, that made us want to get to the bottom of what this fascinating field is all about.

Also, our timing couldn't be better. At the November 2010 council meeting, PEO's Professional Standards Committee was given the all-clear to begin

work on a guideline describing best practices to be used by engineers who are providing forensic engineering services, to make sure this type of work happens in the most consistent and ethical way possible (p. 46). The committee is calling on practitioners who work in the field of forensic engineering to provide input to the guideline, which is currently on track for release in July.

We begin our coverage of forensic engineering with "Forensic practice focus of upcoming guideline" (p. 43), an in-depth look at why PEO is putting the guideline together and the process behind it.

And, we continue with "Engineering detectives go to the heart of the matter" (p. 46), as we look to some real-life forensic engineers for their views on PEO's new guideline and some tricky ethical issues facing practitioners.

You may have noticed that the familiar insert, *The Journal of Policy Engagement*, which has been part of *Engineering Dimensions* since our March/April 2009 issue, is missing.

Not to worry, the content that you would have found in the journal has found a home in a new section called Policy Engagement, which debuts this issue (p. 23). A council decision in the fall of 2010 means that the Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy (OCEPP) is now a department of PEO and therefore information concerning or published by this group will be rolled into *Engineering Dimensions*. Just like any other PEO department, news about OCEPP will be included in our main news section, and announcement of the centre's events will be presented throughout *Engineering Dimensions* as they come up.

I hope you enjoy our first issue of 2011. We have the rest of our topics lined up for the year and they include, in order of appearance, sustainability, leadership, innovation, software engineering and Engineers Canada. As always, if you have any ideas for ways we can present these topics, or you would like to contribute a written piece or topics for our 2012 issues, please contact me at 416-840-1062 or jcoombes@peo.on.ca. Σ

A large advertisement for the 2011 OCEPP Public Policy Conference. The background is a photograph of a historic stone building with a prominent clock tower. The text is overlaid on the image in white and black boxes.

2011 OCEPP PUBLIC POLICY CONFERENCE

Friday, May 6, 2011

**Westin Ottawa Hotel
11 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario**

The Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy is holding its third annual public policy conference to bring together engineering professionals, business and association executives, university faculty and students, and some of the most respected and forward-thinking policy-makers in the country. The conference agenda, list of speakers and other information will be posted at www.ocepp.ca.