



**T**he challenges facing PEO in the coming year will require members of the profession to put aside their differences to achieve common goals, insists President Richard Braddock, P.Eng. "We've got people licensed by PEO whose practice we regulate doing everything from designing sewers to designing high tech computer systems. With such diversity of practice, it's imperative for PEO to involve people from all the disciplines in every possible way," he says.

### **Enforcing the Act**

One common goal is to ensure that engineering-related public policy reflects the realities of today's professional engineering practice. As well, PEO must work with industry to ensure that P.Engs supervise and are responsible for professional engineering work—and enforce the licensure provisions of the Act where it can be established that a professional engineer is not in responsible charge of this work. Licensed professional engineers' exclusive right to practise professional engineering must be defined clearly and shown to be in the interest of the public, Braddock believes, which is why the topic is a goal in PEO's Strategic Plan.

# **Stepping forward:** **Richard Braddock, P.Eng.**

by Dwight Hamilton

“The Strategic Plan [see Reports page under Publications on PEO’s website at [www.peo.on.ca](http://www.peo.on.ca), or Regulatory business, concerns, issues under Registrar’s Corner] has got to be the thing that drives this organization,” Braddock says, “not because I’m a fan of plans, but because we have Councillors who come and go and an organization needs continuity. It’s too easy for a Councillor with a particular vision to sell an idea to Council, which consists of people with ideas and perceptions that, of necessity, are limited by their own experiences and backgrounds.”

All too often, he says, Council’s decisions are revised or revisited, at least partly because PEO doesn’t “know enough about the wide breadth of its membership’s involvement in the very many sectors of industry.” PEO Council can’t set policy to regulate the engineering profession or chart a course for its own future if it must rely only on the frames of reference of those around the table, nor can it respond effectively to government requests for necessary data for public policy formation.

### Information please

That’s why developing an accurate profile of PEO’s practitioners is another priority for the new President. To achieve this end, PEO has begun distributing a Professional Profile questionnaire with the P.Eng. licence renewal invoices. The form asks engineers to indicate their job function, industry (including specific areas of practice), and the activities that keep their technical expertise current. Not only will such a profile help Council make better informed decisions, but it will also aid in demonstrating to the public that practitioners are up-to-date in their chosen fields.

Some would say the biggest immediate challenge facing the profession in this province remains the redefinition of PEO as a purely regulatory body and the survival of the new Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, however. On this, Braddock is blunt: “The debate is over. We made the decision, right or wrong, and we’ve got to make it work. If the profession does not seize this opportunity, we’ve taken a step backward. If the society doesn’t succeed, we’ll be left with the

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individual engineer not having anyone look after what even PEO might have done in a limited way before.”

To move forward, more engineers must join the society as full members, he says. If the society fails, he adds, “I can’t say strongly enough that it would be the worst thing for us in Ontario. The sooner they’re on their feet, the better both organizations will be.”

### Grassroots input

How the chapter system fits into the new PEO mandate is also of concern. If PEO is to be a regulator that can respond quickly to changing circumstances, the chapters need to be engaged in its policy-generating process. “I think the original reason the chapters were formed still holds, says Braddock. “If there’s an issue out there, you’ve got to have a mechanism to bring it forward for consideration.” In addition,

Braddock believes the chapter system is invaluable in bringing people into the running of PEO by finding and developing Councillors for the future.

Assuring that the standards of qualification, practice and professional conduct of PEO licensees measure up to expectations is no easy task, but it is what the public is demanding. And in a world that relies increasingly on the application of science, all professional engineers—regardless of their disciplines or differences—can expect to be held more accountable for their work. “We have seen many changes over the last few years and they will continue to have an effect in the years ahead,” says Braddock. “If we can mobilize the engineering community, not under one banner, but to work together toward common objectives, then I think we will have accomplished a lot. We can’t do it in a year—it’s a long-term objective.”

## Biography at a glance

### Education

- ◆ BSc (Eng), University of London, 1952

### Professional career

- ◆ President, Mitchell, Pound and Braddock
- ◆ 40 years in municipal infrastructure planning

### PEO service

- ◆ Willowdale-Thornhill Chapter, six years (Chapter Chair 1971-'72)
- ◆ Regional Councillor, (1997-'01)
- ◆ Vice President (appointed) 1999, 2000
- ◆ President-elect, 2001-02
- ◆ Committees: Advisory Committee on Committees (Past Chair); Regional Councillors (Past Chair); Joint Advocacy Implementation; START II Subcommittee; Certificate of Authorization Review Task Force; Technologist Licensure Task Group.