

By JENNIFER COOMBS

At the June meeting, Council authorized for the first time the use of a combination of mail and electronic ballots for the 2008 election, with the anticipation that voter response may be greater, particularly from members outside Ontario. The use of an electronic voting method as an alternative to or in combination with a mail ballot was made possible by amendments to Regulation 941/90 that became effective on May 1, 2007 (see *Gazette*). Detailed voting procedures for the combination mail and electronic system will be presented to Council for approval at the September meeting and will be published in the November/December issue of *Engineering Dimensions*.

Other election matters

Appointments are made annually to the Central and Regional Election and Search committees. At the June meeting, Council appointed Penultimate Past President Robert Goodings, P.Eng., as chair of the Central Election and Search Committee for the 2008 elections, and George Comrie, P.Eng., and David Robinson, P.Eng., as the two additional members of the committee that Council may choose. The other members of the committee, as prescribed in section 12 of Regulation 941, are Past President Pat Quinn, P.Eng., and President Walter Bilanski, PhD, P.Eng.

Council also appointed the Western Regional, West Central Regional, East Central Regional, Eastern Regional and Northern Regional Election and Search committees, which it must also do annually. The Junior Regional Councillor from each region chairs the Regional Election and Search Committee for the region, which members are the chapter chairs in the region.

Council appointed Mark Baruzzi, LLB, PEO's director, governance and general counsel, chief elections officer to oversee the conduct of the 2008 nomination and election process.

Amid feedback from members that previously allowed election candidate email blasts are, at best, seen in a negative light and, at worst, considered spam, Council

Council approves combination of mail and electronic ballots for 2008 election

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decided that PEO will no longer mail candidate publicity materials for candidates, in either hard copy or electronically, beyond the material printed in *Engineering Dimensions* and distributed with the ballots. See p. 44 for the approved 2008 election publicity procedures.

Chapter boundary changes

Council approved in principle a plan to replace chapter and regional boundaries based on electoral districts with boundaries based on postal forward sortation designations, municipal boundaries and fixed geographic features, a recommendation made by the Chapter Boundary Task Force, co-chaired by Councillor Seimer Tsang, P.Eng., and Jeff Mark, P.Eng., and made up of members Colin McLellan, P.Eng., Councillor Richard Weldon, P.Eng., Allen Lucas, P.Eng., John Glover, P.Eng., and David Spacek, P.Eng.

The issue is that when chapters were formed in 1961, many of the boundaries were established using the political riding boundaries that existed at that time. When the current Act and regulation were passed in 1984, the boundary definitions were updated slightly to be based on *The Representation Act, 1966*. Since then, many of the electoral boundaries have changed or have disappeared altogether. The goal with this plan is to provide clear, identifiable, and stable boundaries for the chapters and regions. The regions form the electoral districts for electing Regional Councillors. PEO staff will now prepare the necessary draft regulation changes to implement the new regional boundaries for submission to the Ministry of the Attorney General and drafting of the legislative language. Council is scheduled to approve the Order-

in-Council containing the amendments at its September meeting.

Two of the first chapters to be affected are Toronto Dufferin and North Toronto. Council approved amalgamating the two to form a new chapter, West Toronto.

West Central and East Central Regional Councillors will help executives of the former chapters develop a by-law for the new West Toronto Chapter for approval by the Regional Councillors Committee (RCC) by November 1, 2007. They will also help set a date for the first West Toronto Chapter AGM, at which a board of chapter executives will be elected and the new chapter by-law confirmed. The existing Toronto Dufferin and North Toronto chapter by-laws will be repealed once the new West Toronto Chapter board takes office.

The RCC has been tasked by Council with creating a plan for implementing the approved changes to the chapter boundaries and consulting with the affected chapters to enable a smooth transition.

Secondary liability insurance

In a close vote, Council approved a motion endorsing the concept of making Engineers Canada's Secondary Liability Insurance Program mandatory for PEO members, and instructed the CEO/Registrar to draft the necessary by-law changes. The program, already in place for those licensed by all other Canadian engineering regulators, provides protection for:

- claims from actions of an engineer in a firm that does not provide stand-alone engineering services;
- former employees of consulting firms that no longer carry insurance;
- retired engineers for past professional acts;

- gratuitous or incidental advice given to others outside of normal employment; and
- small consulting jobs undertaken outside of normal employment.

Under the program, a premium of less than \$10 a member a year nets each engineer \$100,000 worth of professional liability insurance protection.

Members will have to confirm any resulting by-law changes before they can take effect.

Equity and diversity paper released

Council approved the recommendations of the Equity and Diversity Committee's revised Position Paper, which will be used to build a formal PEO policy on equity and diversity and an implementation plan for the future. The position paper sets out an overall framework for an equity and diversity policy, overarching principles and

rationale for PEO's position on equity and diversity, PEO's stated position on equity and diversity, and recommendations to be implemented to ensure policies and processes are consistent with PEO's position.

The goal is for PEO to be seen by members, staff and other stakeholders as a progressive organization that embraces respect and dignity for all people. To meet it, PEO will have to remove any systemic barriers and biases for applicants, members and volunteers, through such measures as sensitivity training, plain language communications, religious accommodation, and designation of a point person responsible for dealing with allegations of discrimination.

Councillors had a number of questions and comments on the committee's original position paper when it was presented to Council in January. Since then, Councillors have had an opportunity to meet with the committee and to provide further input to the paper, which was incorporated where appropriate.

Councillor Márta Ecsedi, P.Eng., chair of the committee, told Council the next step is to put together an implementation plan based on the paper's recommendations, to be presented to Council by the end of the year.

The position paper is available on PEO's website, www.peo.on.ca.

Amendments to Consulting Engineer Designation regs

At the June meeting, Council approved amendments to Regulation 941 that would implement previously approved recommendations of the Consulting Engineer Designation Committee (CEDC). The recommendations are intended to enhance the designation. The first amendment will clarify section 56(1)(c) of the regulation to specify that the required five years' experience for designation is to be acquired after licensure, and so is in addition to the four years required to obtain the licence. The second amendment will revise the experi-



Professional Engineers Benevolent Fund

The Professional Engineers Benevolent Fund helps PEO members who are experiencing extreme financial hardship. The fund is administered through the Ontario Professional Engineers Foundation for Education, a member-supported organization sponsored by PEO and OSPE.

PEO members who have been licensed for at least one year can apply. To qualify for benevolent assistance, applicants must have a demonstrable need and substantiate a claim of indigence. **Conditions include but are not limited to:**

- rehabilitation following mental or physical disability;
- retraining (e.g. engineers whose jobs have disappeared because of redundancy or obsolescence);
- compassionate circumstances requiring urgent assistance;
- unemployed members enduring an unusually prolonged job search; and
- enterprising individuals suffering financial hardship arising from unfortunate business or economic circumstances.

The fund is not intended to provide an income supplement on an ongoing basis. Applicants who have substantial income or assets are generally considered ineligible for assistance.

For more information, visit
www.penged.on.ca/benevolent.html
 or call 416-223-9961, ext. 222.

All communications are treated in confidence.

ence in independent practice requirements of sections 56(1)(b) and 57(2)(b) from experience obtainable in Ontario to experience obtainable anywhere in Canada.

Immediately after Council approved the draft Order-in-Council containing the amendments, it was signed by the President and CEO/Registrar and forwarded to the attorney general's office for final approval by Cabinet and the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council.

Key performance indicators

At its November 2006 meeting, Council received the report of the KPI Design Project, one of the original 2005-2009 Strategic Plan projects. The KPI Design Project was intended to increase the public's confidence in PEO as a regulator by identifying key performance indicators, and potential measures of regulatory performance and effectiveness. However, Council tabled the motion at that meeting to approve the recommended key performance indicators, along with their associated short-term measures. Instead, Council directed that a task group be formed, chaired by Councillor John Vieth, P.Eng., to reconsider the project and report back to Council in the new year with a plan to move forward, if possible.

Also comprising Councillors Henry Hill, Rick Hilton, P.Eng., and Cliff Knox, P.Eng., the task group recommended at the June meeting that Council proceed with a new KPI Design Project proposal to present to Council for consideration at a cost not to exceed \$2,000. Council approved the recommendation.

The task group said it believed that one of the primary reasons Council failed to endorse the original KPI proposal was that the critical success factors the KPIs would measure were not well understood and agreed on by all Councillors. The new project will focus on establishing a set of agreed-upon critical success factors, which are the factors essential to an organization's success or failure. After Council agrees on the critical success factors, it should be relatively straightforward to arrive at the associated KPIs.

Member reinstatement

The CEO/Registrar recently reviewed the process whereby lapsed members become reinstated as members of PEO, and made recommendations to Council at the June meeting. Traditionally, PEO has been generous to members who do not pay their licence renewals on time (waiving reinstatement fees for members with good payment records, for example), which is not strictly in keeping with the provisions of Regulation 941. Accordingly, the CEO/Registrar recommended, and Council agreed, to amend the regulation to put in place a graduated process to deal with members who default on their fees.

Specifically, the amendments, which Council will approve at a subsequent meeting, will put in place a new licence reinstatement provision as follows:

- A 15-day grace period will be allowed after a member's renewal date, with no additional fees owed;
- Between 16 and 90 days after the renewal date, members will be charged a \$50 late payment administrative fee;
- Between 90 and 365 days after the renewal date, members can be reinstated with payment for the current year (\$200) and a reinstatement application fee (\$230);
- Between one and two years past the renewal date, members must pay the cumulative membership fees (\$200 x 2), a reinstatement application fee (\$230) and provide character references; and
- Two years past the renewal date, members are required to apply as if a new applicant and must meet current standards.

Until the amended reinstatement procedures are in place, Council directed that PEO reinstate former members according to the letter of the existing regulation.

Seamless transition

Council approved the addition of 500 staff hours to the seamless transition initiative, to carry the project through to completion in 2008.

Part of the original 2005-2009 Strategic Plan, the project involves providing resources to support future professional engineers through the stages from engineering student, through internship, to licensed P.Eng. Project activities include increasing awareness among students of PEO's student membership program (SMP), holding seminars for engineering interns, informing applicants of the licensing process and requirements for licensure, and preparing engineering interns to write the Professional Practice Exam.

To date, the Seamless Transition Task Force has developed several analysis tools, which it has used to identify gaps in the current support programs, and a Student Decision Map, a tool that examines factors that influence the decision-making process of engineering undergraduates. The Seamless Transition Task Force has also completed research on industry's requirements for students and interns, and the student and intern programs of other self-regulated professions. The task force's future work involves developing an engineer-in-training (EIT) program model, an SMP model, and a model that combines the two.

Public confidence survey

Councillors were provided the results of PEO's Public Confidence Survey, which was conducted early in 2007 to develop mechanisms to measure public confidence in PEO as a regulator and in the licences it grants, and provide a benchmark for future surveys. A summary of the findings appears in this issue on page 23.

New LGAs

Two new Lieutenant Governor-in-Council appointees (LGAs) attended their first Council meeting. James Witmer, CET, a recommendation of the Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists, will serve from May 2, 2007 to May 2, 2010. Santosh K. Gupta, P.Eng., who served on Council from April 2003 to April 2005, has returned to serve a three-year term starting May 16. ❖