



Progress via delegation & trust

It's fair to say that Bob Goodings, P.Eng., likes to make use of all of the resources at his disposal in undertaking just about any project coming across his path. Whether it was as president and CEO of Gore & Storrie Ltd. (now CH2M Hill), or today as President of Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO), Goodings is quick to rely on the skills, ability and advice of the people around him to plan, implement and measure results.

Certainly, references to his trust of colleagues, staff members, volunteers and other advisers have cropped up frequently in his comments since Goodings succeeded George Comrie, P.Eng., as the chair of PEO Council.

But any time you get Bob Goodings talking, you can't help but pick up on a sense of humour, self-deprecation and modesty that will no doubt translate into assets in his efforts to build consensus on PEO's agenda at an especially critical time in its history.

That gentle wit was much in evidence during the recent PEO Annual General Meeting in London. At one point, Goodings was called on to present the winners of PEO's awards to newly licensed professional engineers who achieved their licences by writing PEO's technical exams. Upon reading the title of the winning thesis of the S.E. Wolfe Thesis Award—*Optimization in the Manufacture of Surface Mount Printed Circuit Board Assembly*—Goodings quipped, "I hope you got it right because I don't know what you're talking about."

Despite the lack of pretension, or what might be termed a "political" approach to his involvement with PEO, Goodings is all business when it comes to ensuring that the regulator makes progress toward its well-established priorities. To that end, he is zeroing in on the four key strategic goals (and seven strategic objectives) in PEO's new five-year strategic plan as one of the milestones by which he will measure his own success as President.

Closely allied with the strategic plan is Goodings' interest in PEO's new policy development process, which is essentially a structured system with which to recognize issues and formulate informed options for decision by Council. He envisions the policy development process as "a template" for directing PEO's response to pressing issues. A healthy reliance on policy development, Goodings believes, will allow the regulator to avoid purely reactive response to issues, enabling it instead to meet challenges head on.

By Michael Mastromatteo

Our new PEO President, Bob Goodings, faces a significant challenge in making good on the regulator's new strategic plan and policy development process. He also hopes to see progress with a more idealistic, but less tangible, goal of instilling greater respect for the P.Eng.

As President-elect, Goodings spent much of 2004 working with PEO staff to assemble the key components of both the strategic plan and the policy development process. And it's clear this experience helped him decide on one of his key personal priorities for his term as PEO President.

Course already set

"I see my term as being guided by a course that has already been set by way of the policy development process and the five-year strategic plan," Goodings says.

But while the course has already been set, it will doubtless take Goodings' good-natured cajoling to help keep everything on track.

After retiring from full-time consulting engineering in 1994, Goodings became a Lieutenant Governor appointee to PEO Council one year later. During the course of his service on Council from 1995 to 2000 and from 2004 to the present, he has served on the Executive and Complaints committees and on the Certificate of Authorization Review and Admissions, Complaints, Discipline and Environment task forces. He also chaired the Joint Advocacy Implementation Committee that created the Ontario

Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE) in 2000. Indeed, he was a PEO representative on the interim board of the fledgling organization and played an important role in getting the advocacy and member services association up and running. Later, he chaired its first elected board. Goodings' service to the engi-

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concentrated on infrastructure planning in water and wastewater systems throughout Canada. Goodings eventually became CEO and chairman of Gore & Storrie. He describes the first two decades of his time at Gore & Storrie as an exciting time for engineers, especially those involved in Ontario's infrastructure devel-

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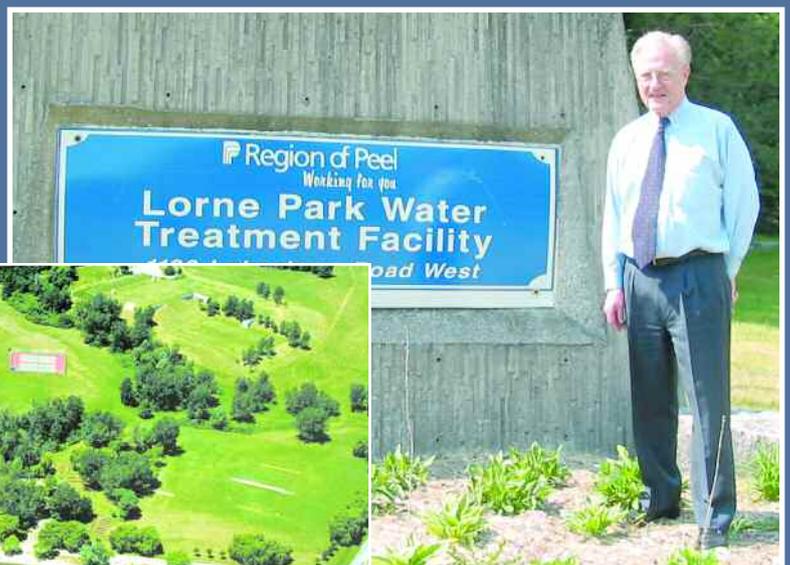
neering profession was marked with his investiture as an Officer in PEO's Order of Honour in 2004.

The Timmins native graduated with a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering degree from Queen's University in 1951. On graduation, he joined Gore & Storrie Ltd. (now CH2M Hill) where he

opment projects. As a young practitioner, Goodings experienced first-hand the important contributions engineers make in building vibrant, stable communities. Armed with experience with a large organization, Goodings noted that whatever administrative hierarchies might exist, success in meeting objectives

Goodings stands at the entrance to the Lorne Park Water Treatment Plant in the Region of Peel (right), one of the award-winning projects he presided over during his tenure as president and CEO of Gore & Storrie Ltd. The facility, which won the Canadian Consulting Engineering Award of Merit in 1979, was built and covered with three feet of soil in order to preserve parkland for area residents—a fact that Goodings is very proud of.

An aerial view of the Lorne Park Water Treatment Plant.



depended on having the confidence to rely on the skill, judgment and ability of team members.

Goodings is keen to put that same philosophy to work at PEO to achieve his top priorities by relying on talent that is already in place. "As President, I'm eager to see a combination of PEO staff people and Council acting as the drivers of the strategic plan implementation," he says. "In fact, the more I work with staff, the more I appreciate their professionalism, skill and sense of commitment to the jobs at hand. So, as the Council comes up with strategic initiatives, we have a skilled team of professionals on staff who can implement these ends."

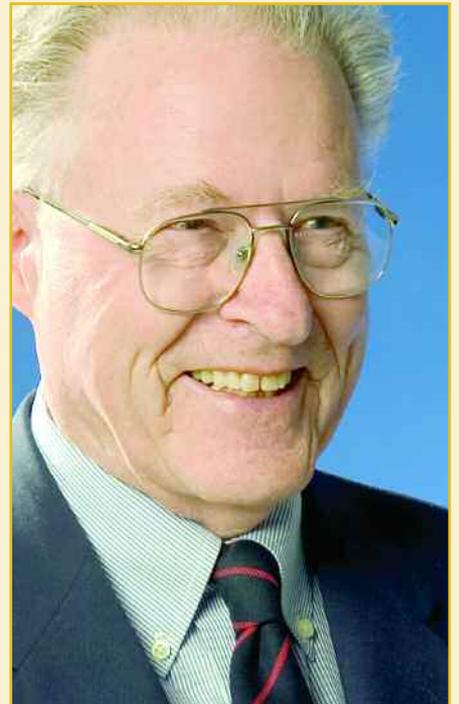
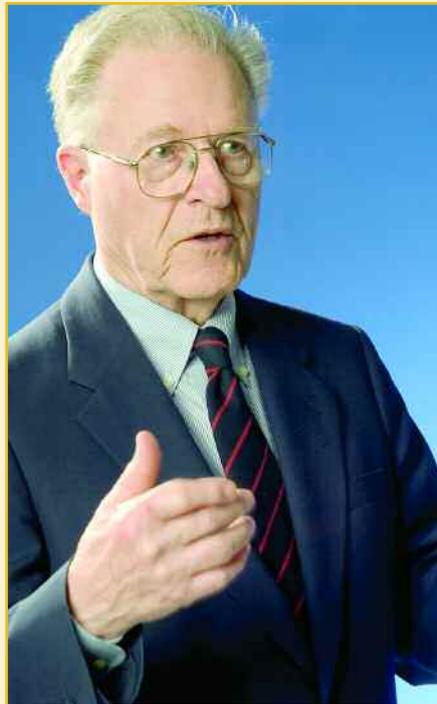
Showcase Council

At the same time, Goodings has great faith in the current Council as a channel by which regulatory success will be attained. He hopes to "showcase" individual members and notes on Council a healthy mix of talent, temperament and commitment to the profession. And while he is reluctant to play up the "leadership" element of his own role, he does recognize that it's a President's job to bring unity, consensus and a common vision to the tasks that are before Council.

"I take the view that this is an especially good Council," Goodings says. "It's made up of people from all walks of life, and with many viewpoints, who are com-

mitted to working together in a lot of different ways. I also get a sense that there is an awakening within Council as to the real needs of PEO and what we have to do to meet those needs. I also want to ensure that our progress for the coming year is a reflection of Council's work, and not Bob Goodings' work."

In addition to his main priorities of the strategic plan and policy development, Goodings has several, secondary items he would like to see addressed in 2005/2006. Among them is encouraging a greater number of licensees to become more active within PEO. He calls widespread non-participation by members a potential "Achilles' heel" for the regulator.



As someone accustomed to achieving results by drawing on the strengths of all of the key players, Goodings is intent on making PEO, and the engineering profession, stronger than the sum of its parts.

An essential element in his vision to attract input from non-participating members is an emphasis on Council responding to member concerns. “Ideally,” he says, “membership should trust Council and take the view that Councillors are moving in the same direction as members at large.” In turn, he believes, Council should remain committed to the regulator’s essential vision and mandate, and avoid straying into matters that are best left to OSPE’s advocacy and member services role.

Value of self-regulation

Additional insights into other priority areas for PEO’s new President come via comments made at the London meeting in April. At that time, Goodings reiterated his view that despite engineering’s reputation as a senior learned profession, government policymakers are beginning to lose sight of the real value of self-regulation and the P.Eng. licence. As such, Goodings echoed the call of his predecessor to have engineering concerns heard “at the highest levels” to advance the public interest.

“Realization of this vision will take time, resources and, above all, a clear statement of the nobility of the profession, in broad consultation with engineers across Ontario,” says Goodings.

One gets the sense that Goodings’ emphasis on “broad consultation” is more than the usual rhetoric one hears during elections or at annual general meetings. As someone accustomed to achieving results by drawing on the strengths of all of the key players, Goodings is intent on making PEO, and the engineering profession, stronger than the sum of its parts. Central to all of his plans is his interest in adding new lustre to the licence itself. His view is that the P.Eng. should serve not only as an indicator of overall competence, but also as a reminder to employers that committed professional engineers add value to any organization.

However, Goodings says, while not every licensed engineer will have a strong desire to get involved with governing the profession, there are clear benefits to those who do choose to become involved.

Bob Goodings at a glance

Education:

- BSc (civil engineering) Queen’s University, 1951, Licensed by PEO, 1953

Personal:

- Born, Timmins
- Married to Mary-Elisabeth
- Two daughters, Deborah Goodings, PhD, P.Eng., and Anne Lorriman, BA
- Four grandchildren

PEO Activities:

- Lieutenant Governor Appointee, PEO Council, 1995 to 2000
- Chair of Joint Advocacy Implementation Committee (JAIC) that created Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE)
- Nominated by PEO to serve on interim board of OSPE, 2000
- President-elect, 2004/2005
- President, 2005/2006

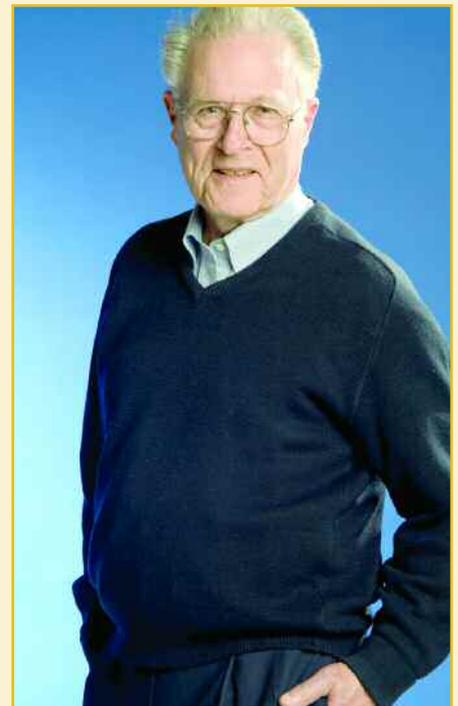
- At various times a member of: Executive, Complaints, and Human Resources and Compensation committees, Certificate of Authorization Review, Admissions, Complaints, Discipline and Enforcement, and Licensing Process task forces

Other Appointments/ Awards/ Honours:

- Ontario Water Works Association
- Canadian Executive Service Organization
- First elected Chair of OSPE Board, 2001
- Admission to PEO’s Order of Honour (officer level) 2004
- Honorary member of Engineering Institute of Canada, honorary member of American Water Works Association (one of 15 Canadians)

Little-known Fact:

- Has an identical twin brother, Bill Goodings, P.Eng.



“Don’t forget that I had nothing to do with engineering governance for the first 45 years of my career,” he says, “and I’m assuming that the majority of our members feel pretty much the same way. But there is true value for those who choose to get involved, and that is something I want to emphasize at PEO.”