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RESIDENT'S
MESSAGE**KENNETH C. McMARTIN, P.ENG.**
PRESIDENT

When I began my term as President, my foremost priorities were to increase the relevance of the profession to its stakeholders and hence the value of PEO to its licensed practitioners.

As part of this vision, one of the first objectives was to educate members on the measures PEO takes to enforce the licensure provisions of the *Professional Engineers Act*, thereby demonstrating the value impostors place on licensure. By protecting the public from unlicensed practitioners and publicizing these efforts, PEO is raising awareness of the importance of the professional engineer licence and enhancing its relevance to those who hold it.

In May, a milestone was marked when PEO signed a memorandum of understanding to cooperate with the other 11

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Canadian provincial and territorial regulators of engineering and the engineering profession on discipline and enforcement activities. Because many individuals and firms offering services to the public operate in more than one province, it is important that the public have access to information about individuals or firms involved in illegal practice, or who have been disciplined, regardless of the provincial jurisdiction involved.

Another component identified to increase the effectiveness of PEO is the implementation of an organizational structure that reflects PEO's role as regulator, trustee and leader of the engineering profession in Ontario. PEO's new organizational framework, being implemented at the same time as its governance review, is designed to facilitate smoother processes throughout the organization, improve customer service, and provide a clear focus on its regulatory mandate.

With this new structure in place, I believe PEO has positioned itself to lead more effectively

on issues currently facing the profession. As the licensing body for professional engineers in the province, PEO is mandated to protect the public by ensuring all licence applicants are qualified for professional engineer licensing, regardless of the origin of their training. In September, CEO/Registrar Kim Allen, P.Eng., was appointed a member of the newly-formed Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council with representatives of other regulatory bodies for the professions, to provide leadership to make the Greater Toronto Area a centre of excellence in integrating immigrants. Because approximately one-third of the licensed professional engineers in Ontario were educated outside Canada, the licensing of internationally trained professionals has become an increasingly important part of PEO's responsibilities.

Promoting the need for an engineering licence, especially at the student level, is

another issue critical to the future success of the profession. Students need to be shown the worth of being part of a self-regulating professional regime. Consequently, PEO has raised its presence in universities, vigorously promoting its Student Membership and Engineering Intern Training programs in an effort to encourage a seamless transition in the licensing process from student to P.Eng. Once licensed, however, professional engineers must prepare themselves for increasing demands from the public for accountability in their practice of the profession and a demonstration of their currency of qualification. I believe this can only be achieved through implementing a professional excellence program centred on voluntary participation in continuing education and professional development. This is an issue that requires immediate consideration in order to preserve PEO's tradition of maintaining the highest standards of professional ethics and competence, and to maintain the relevance of the P.Eng. title in

the face of growing numbers of voluntary certifications in the applied sciences.

Moving forward, a strong working relationship with the provincial government is imperative if PEO is truly to progress as a self-regulating body. Thus far, our initial dialogues with the office of Attorney General Michael Bryant have been very encouraging.

In November, David Zimmer, MPP Willowdale and parliamentary assistant to the attorney general, attended the Ontario Professional Engineers Awards and brought greetings on behalf of the AG and Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty. During his remarks, Zimmer stated, "*The new Liberal government wants to tell the engineers of Ontario that we want to engage with you in the reconstruction of the province. And this government recognizes that (65,000) engineers in the province of Ontario have a tremendous role to play in rebuilding all of those aspects of our province that need rebuilding.*" With this noticeable appreciation for the role professional engineers play in the province, I anticipate meaningful and productive dialogues with Premier McGuinty's government in the months ahead.

In this, my final column as President, I would like to thank my fellow Council members, committee and chapter volunteers, as well as PEO's staff for their commitment to promoting the role of the association and of the profession, as well as working towards its ongoing improvement. It has been an honour to serve as your President and I thank you for the enriching opportunity.

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of attending chapter events, annual meetings and licensing ceremonies across the province. I am extremely proud of the contributions of the thousands of dedicated volunteers (and their employers) to improving and promoting the engineering profession. While there are still many challenges ahead, having personally seen the resolve and passion of our members, I am convinced that the future of the profession is in good hands. ❖