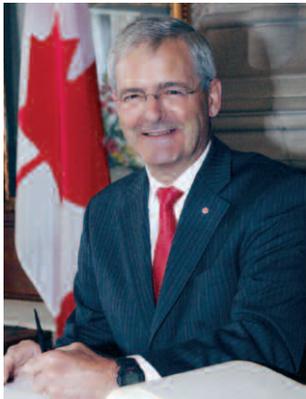


PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS ARE MAKING THEIR MARK

By Howard Brown



Mark Chamberlain, P.Eng.



Marc Garneau, P.Eng.

ENGINEERS ARE FINALLY BEING HEARD.

Hamilton's Mark Chamberlain, P.Eng., was invited to give the keynote address at the Ontario Liberal Party Policy Conference last November. The 2004 Ontario Professional Engineers Award winner was introduced by Premier Dalton McGuinty in glowing terms for both his professional and community work. I had the pleasure to attend Chamberlain's speech, delivered in his role as chair of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (HRPR).

The Martin Prosperity Institute recently released a paper entitled *Infrastructure and the Economy: The Future Directions for Ontario*. It was the first of 15 papers released by the institute and was written by a team of four civil engineers from the University of Toronto, led by Chris Kennedy, P.Eng.

Clearly, Ontario is starting to rely on engineers to ensure its economic prosperity, and a common theme has emerged: the need to ensure we become a province of creative thinkers with more people finishing post-secondary education. Fifty-eight per cent of Ontario's population has some college or university education, but 70 per cent of all jobs require post-secondary graduates.

At the chapter level, province-wide and individually, engineers are playing a bigger role in the public agenda.

Congratulations to PEO chapters such as York, which recently held a town hall meeting on future energy needs in York Region. The meeting was attended by local MPP Helena Jaczek, parliamentary assistant to the minister of health promotion, who congratulated the PEO chapter's initiative (see news p. 20).

At the same time, the Mississauga Chapter is looking to hold its own town hall

meeting, tentatively set for June 11, on emerging issues in the energy sector, which will have a major public focus in the coming months. Mississauga is the site of the coal-fired heating plant closed by the province. The chapter is taking the initiative to ensure engineers in Mississauga are ahead of the curve and share their knowledge on energy issues.

Algoma Chapter is hosting David Orazetti, MPP, parliamentary assistant to the minister of mines and northern development, at its annual meeting on March 27. I will join them to talk about the PEO Government Liaison Program and our goals for 2011.

What's great about all these initiatives is that engineers are getting serious about politics.

People like Mark Chamberlain, P.Eng., and new MP Marc Garneau, P.Eng., are engineers to watch. Garneau is Canada's first astronaut to fly in space and was elected in the October 2008 federal election as the member of parliament for Westmount-Ville Marie. He is now the critic for industry, science and technology. A former Ontario licence holder, he now holds his licence in Nova Scotia, and he is a proud P.Eng. I met him last October and he said he would be interested in speaking at a PEO event.

These gentlemen are making their mark in their own way. Chamberlain has done it from the sidelines, but in a very public way through his role first as president of Wescam and now Trivaris Ltd., and as chair of HRPR. He should run for public office. He has the ability to influence decision makers because people trust him. Garneau should have run a long time ago, but he is here now and will be making a difference. We need more Garneaus to step up to the plate.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY ENGINEER AND EVERY CHAPTER TO REALIZE THAT THE ONLY WAY WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR GOAL IS TO DO A GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN AND FIND PEOPLE LIKE CHAMBERLAIN AND GARNEAU TO SEEK SEATS IN THE LEGISLATURE.

As reported in previous issues of *Engineering Dimensions*, PEO has set an aggressive goal of 11 engineers in the 2011 legislature. It is the responsibility of every engineer and every chapter to realize that the only way we will achieve our goal is to do a grassroots campaign and find people like Chamberlain and Garneau to seek seats in the legislature.

PEO President-elect Catherine Karakatsanis, P.Eng., and I recently met with Dave Gene, deputy chief of staff to the premier, to discuss ways of encouraging the nomination and election of engineers. I also had similar conversations with Frank Klees, MPP, of the Progressive Conservative Party, and Penny Marno, director of organization for the Ontario New Democratic Party, on this issue. We have told the parties that we are ready to run engineers in all 107 ridings in this province. We have also had discussions over the last several months with municipal politicians. With elections coming up in 2010, PEO will hold a campaign college this fall to help municipal candidates run their campaigns for 2010. We're also holding monthly lunchtime seminars for members of our chapter GLP committees, so this is the time to get

involved. If you're interested in participating on a GLP committee, contact your chapter chair, or Matthew Ng, P.Eng. (mng@peo.on.ca), or David Smith (dsmith@peo.on.ca) at PEO. If you are interested in running, let us know and we will help you get plugged in.

Here are some websites that may be of help:

Provincial: www.ontarioliberal.com;
www.ontariondp.com;
www.ontariopc.com; www.gpo.com;
www.electionsontario.on.ca.
Federal: www.liberal.ca;
www.conservative.ca; www.ndp.ca;
www.greenparty.ca; www.elections.ca.

The bottom line is it's time more engineers got involved politically and help set the agenda. The clock is ticking. Σ

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