

PEO defends jurisdiction in face of conflicting regulations

By Michael Mastromatteo



PEO HAS RESPONDED to proposed changes to an environment ministry regulation on Brownfields remediation work and a new proposed standard on accessible communications and information that appear to be at odds with PEO's exclusive jurisdiction over the professional conduct and qualifications of licence holders under the *Professional Engineers Act*.

In EBR posting 010-4642, the Ontario environment ministry (MOE) outlines proposed conflict of interest provisions for qualified persons involved in filing records of site condition (RSC) for land remediation work.

Section 6.1 of the proposed revision to Ontario Regulation 153/04 prohibits engineers or qualified persons who identify a conflict of interest, or their employers, from supervising or conducting environmental site assessments, preparing risk assessments or completing RSCs. The proposal also requires practitioners to determine if their employers have a direct or indirect interest in properties undergoing remediation.

In a January 26 letter to the environment ministry, PEO CEO/Registrar Kim Allen, P.Eng., points out that section 72(2)(i) of Regulation 941/90 provides for engineers to declare a conflict of interest, while enabling them to complete whatever work was the subject of the conflict, whereas the MOE proposal would prevent them from undertaking the required task.

"This is both a duplication and a conflict with our act, and we do not believe that MOE has the authority to provide for conflict of interest provisions for engineers," Allen writes. He also notes that PEO does not believe

MOE has the authority to require engineers to determine their employers' interest in a property.

PEO has been engaged with the environment ministry since 2004 to ensure the inclusion of limited licence holders in the list of qualified persons in Regulation 153/04, which change to the regulation was made effective April 1, 2008.

Meanwhile, in a February 6 submission on a proposed Standard for Accessible Information and Communications, intended to become a regulation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, Allen expressed concern with the proposed standard's section 6.3, entitled "Professional, Regulatory and Licensing Bodies," which would require PEO and similar organizations to ensure their licensing or regulatory requirements for entry into practice or mandatory professional development include training in:

- "(a) determining information and communication barriers and requirements of persons with disabilities;
- (b) accessible information and communication resources and tools; and
- (c) adaptation of information and communications to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities."

While PEO supports the spirit of the legislation, Allen notes, PEO is the only body authorized to determine licensure requirements for its practitioners, as confirmed by the recent court action, *Association of Professional Engineers v. Ontario (Municipal Affairs and Housing)*, 2007.

He also points out that since Ontario is the first Canadian jurisdiction to develop such proposed standards, modifying PEO's licensing requirements to accommodate them might create a barrier to licence mobility and that they would constitute double regulation of licensed practitioners, since the organizations for which they work will be subject to the standards.

Allen also questions whether the proposed additional requirements for licensed professionals conform to the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act*, which requires that all licensing requirements be relevant to the practice of a regulated profession, and whether they would be unfairly putting in place a barrier to licensing for internationally trained professionals before they can even begin their practice in Ontario.

"Please be assured that while PEO is strongly supportive of removing barriers to accessible communication and information, we cannot support a regulatory requirement that overlaps with our jurisdiction over the requirements for the licensed practice of professional engineering," he concludes.

PEO names 11 to the ORDER OF HONOUR

By Nicole Axworthy



Bob Goodings, P.Eng.

On May 8, the following individuals will be inducted into PEO's Order of Honour at a special ceremony to be held in conjunction with PEO's Annual General Meeting at the Renaissance Toronto Airport Hotel and Conference Centre. The order recognizes professional engineers and others who have rendered conspicuous service to the engineering profession, normally through the association.

COMPANION

This year, Robert A. Goodings, P.Eng., will be elevated to the rank of Companion, the Order of Honour's highest distinction. He was inducted as an Officer in the order in 2004.

As PEO president in 2005, Goodings led an update of PEO's strategic plan and, based on his work, significant progress has since been realized in resolving long-standing issues, ranging from the Certificate of Authorization and consulting engineer designations, to establishing a seamless transition for engineering students to attain licensure. He was also involved in PEO's successful challenge of amendments to the Ontario Building Code that infringed on its jurisdiction under the *Professional Engineers Act*, and helped cultivate discussions with government decision makers through PEO's Government Liaison Program.

OFFICERS

Colin S. Cantlie, P.Eng., for devoting an extraordinary number of volunteer hours to PEO, through his tireless work to improve the chapter system and business of council, service as eastern region councillor and vice president, and participation on PEO committees and task forces. He is currently a member of the Discipline Committee, Professional Standards Committee and Emerging Disciplines Task Force. He has also represented the association nationally as a member of three teams assessing engineering school programs for accreditation.

William R. Walker, P.Eng., for having served the profession for over 30 years. He has served on PEO's Algoma Chapter executive, chairing it

in 1978 before moving on to PEO council and numerous committees. His outstanding contributions to the profession has also extended to the national level, where he has participated actively on teams reviewing university engineering programs for accreditation, and chaired the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board for three years.

MEMBERS

R. Craig Doran, P.Eng., for volunteering at both the chapter and provincial levels and strong commitment to engineering education and promoting the profession to young people. He was a member of PEO's Education Committee and also instrumental in establishing York Chapter's Education Committee and its many education outreach programs. Over the years, he has helped arrange many chapter events and programs, such as the Invention Convention, a design challenge for grades 7 and 8 students, as well as an Engineer-in-the-Classroom program at local schools.

Linda D. Drisdelle, P.Eng., for her hard work and dedication to PEO's chapter system, while balancing commitments to her employer, family and continuing education. An active volunteer in Etobicoke Chapter, including two years as chair, she has exemplified leadership in her participation in the chapter's National Engineering Week activities and, more recently, as a key member of the chapter's successful Engineering Idol competition.

Allan P. Giacomelli, P.Eng., for his key role in making Mississauga Chapter one of the most active PEO chapters. Under his leadership, the chapter launched the association's first chapter-based mentoring program for internationally trained engineers and engineers-in-training. He has also organized numerous technical seminars, tours, engineering presentations, professional development lectures and social events, and arranged several volunteer nights to recruit new volunteers to the chapter executive.

Vilayil I. John, P.Eng., for more than 16 years as a volunteer for Kingston Chapter, during which he single-handedly coordinated licence presentations for 13 years, brought engineering students together for an annual students' paper night, and organized an annual social event for the chapter. In addition to his work with PEO, John has been a long-serving member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and been recognized for his almost half a century of dedicated service.

Alan J. Korell, P.Eng., for tirelessly promoting the profession in the North Bay community as an active member of the North Bay Chapter executive for over 13 years, including service as chair in 2005. He has actively contributed to chapter events, including the annual Engineer's Day, golf tournament, North Bay Science Fair, and Student Night. Korell has also participated in many province-wide groups, such as the Municipal Engineers Association and the Ontario Good Roads Association.

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Amity Man-Chun Lam, P.Eng., for volunteering her time and organization skills to Brampton Chapter for more than 20 years. A grassroots volunteer, she has served on the chapter executive, co-chaired the events subcommittee and organized numerous chapter events. Most notably, her fellow chapter members cannot recall a single chapter licence presentation over this period where she was not involved in one capacity or another.

R. Maxwell Morrow, P.Eng., for devoting countless hours to serving the profession at the chapter level, including continuous membership on the Brampton Chapter executive for close to 20 years. He has organized numerous chapter events, including licence certificate presentations and the annual general meeting. For the last decade, he has assumed the role of co-chair of the chapter's events subcommittee, which involves liaising with other PEO chapters, PEO committees and external organizations.

Edward Kai-Jee Poon, P.Eng., for enthusiastically participating on the York Chapter executive for the last decade, serving as member, chair and, currently, past chair. Some of his initiatives include improving industry sponsorship of chapter activities, establishing networking and mentorship programs for engineers-in-training, and fostering closer collaboration between PEO chapters and the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. He is also a member of the chapter's Government Liaison Program subcommittee and a member of PEO's Enforcement Committee.

Regulators keep tabs on labour mobility initiatives

By Michael Mastromatteo

PEO continues to monitor a federal government initiative aimed at permitting full labour mobility of professionals and skilled tradespeople from province to province.

In January, provincial premiers approved amendments to the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), which is designed to allow all Canadians to work in their chosen occupations anywhere in the country.

The federal government first proposed the AIT in 1994 and has been working on the details with provincial premiers ever since. The federal government is committed to the principle that all Canadians enjoy full labour mobility by April 1, 2009.

The trade agreement calls for workers certified for an occupation by a regulatory authority of one province or territory to be certified for that occupation by all others. The agreement also mandates that professionals have full freedom to transfer from one province to another, and to have their credentials recognized in a new jurisdiction.

It's expected that exceptions to full labour market mobility will have to be clearly identified and justified as necessary to meet a legitimate objective, such as the protection of public health or safety.

PEO and other Ontario regulators of professions have been asked by the attorney general's

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office to show progress in meeting the objectives of the AIT.

In fact, engineering has been on the vanguard of full labour mobility in Canada. In 1999, Engineers Canada facilitated an Inter-Association Mobility Agreement (IAMA), which paved the way for engineers to move freely from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, with little delay in their becoming licensed in the new jurisdiction.

In addition to facilitating ease of movement, the IAMA aims to bring consistency to the regulatory and licensing practices of the provincial/territorial associations/ordre. It was renewed by Engineers Canada's constituent members in 2004. The agreement allows engineers licensed

in one jurisdiction in Canada to obtain a full licence in another province, provided they meet good character and other basic criteria. Final admission remains at the discretion of the constituent members through a "notwithstanding" clause.

Engineers Canada reports that in the nearly 10 years the IAMA has been in place, more than 17,000 engineers applied for licensure in a new jurisdiction, and the notwithstanding clause has been invoked in less than 2 per cent of cases.

Marie Carter, P.Eng., director of professional and international affairs for Engineers Canada, says the IAMA has enabled a high level of provincial and territorial mobility of engineers over the last 10 years. "At this time, more than 99 per cent of transfer applicants are processed very quickly without further requirements," Carter says. "The [provincial premiers'] announcement reinforces the work that the regulators are carrying out toward seamless transfers."

To further improve the IAMA process, PEO has been working with Engineers Canada to produce the International Institution Degree Database and a common member database, both of which will facilitate credential recognition and ease of movement for engineers throughout Canada.

REVIEW PUTS ENGINEERS AT CORE OF PROPANE SAFETY

By Michael Mastromatteo

ONTARIO'S ENGINEERING REGULATOR supports a key recommendation by the Ontario Propane Safety Panel that safety plans for the province's large-size propane facilities be certified by professional engineers.

Recommendation seven of the 40 contained in the report calls for risk and safety management plans at facilities of more than 30,000 United States water gallons in total capacity to be certified by a professional engineer.

The report was released in December by the two-member team of professional engineers who were asked by the province to review propane safety following last August's explosion and fire at the Sunrise Propane storage facility in Toronto.

The incident led to two deaths, extensive property damage and the evacuation of 11,000 people from homes in the immediate area. About 200 houses were left uninhabitable because of the explosion.

"Engineers are professionals who can identify, anticipate, quantify and manage risk," says Kim Allen, P.Eng., PEO CEO/registrar. "They are obligated under the *Professional Engineers Act* and by their Code of Ethics to use their judgment to see beyond the technical to safeguard the public interest. The complex issues related to propane safety and storage require both this expertise, which is a natural part of an engineer's training, and the public accountability their licence brings."

Professor Michael Birk, PhD, P.Eng., a member of the propane safety review panel, says engineers are central to the safety and risk management plans.

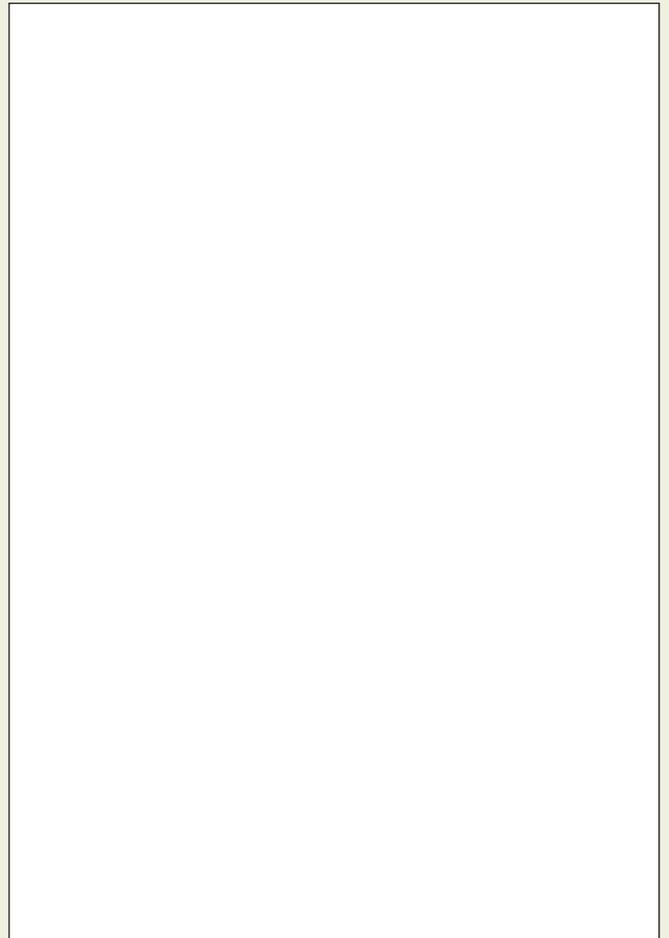
"We wanted an engineer involved with larger facilities to make sure someone appropriate is looking at the details," Birk said in a January 14 interview. "We assume the responsible engineer will do the right thing and follow best practices as dictated by the best codes, standards and guidelines in the world."

Birk, head of chemical and materials engineering at Queen's University, was joined on the safety review panel by Susanna Katz, PhD, P.Eng., former chief inspector for gas safety with the government of British Columbia.

Birk says the panel evaluated Ontario's existing propane safety regime against the world's best codes, standards and guidelines.



"As far as I know, the Ontario government will be implementing all of the 40 recommendations we made," Birk says. "It will be in the details of how that is handled that determines how effective [the safety recommendations] will be."



STUDENT CONTEST ONE OF CENTRE'S INAUGURAL ACTIVITIES

By Michael Mastromatteo



ONTARIO CENTRE
FOR ENGINEERING
AND PUBLIC POLICY

THE NEW Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy (OCEPP) has launched a student essay contest as one of its first activities to highlight the engineering-public policy link.

As outlined on PEO's homepage (www.peo.on.ca) and advertised at Ontario universities, the contest is open to undergraduate and graduate engineering students enrolled in PEO's Student Membership or Engineering Intern Training programs, and essays on any subject broadly related to engineering and public policy are welcomed. Deadline for entries is March 31, 2009. The prize for the winning entry is \$1,000.

OCEPP Executive Director Donald Wallace, PhD, says the essay contest is an ideal way to alert students to the centre

and to involve them in the May 8 Engineering and Public Policy Conference in Toronto.

"While the cash award isn't chicken feed, the real prize in my mind is the opportunity to present at the conference and to network with prominent members of the profession," Wallace says. "I also wanted to push one of my central themes, namely that engineers have to be able to communicate effectively in order to have an impact in policy discussions."

Although the essay contest is one of the more visible OCEPP activities since the centre's inception in October, Wallace has also met with elected officials, public servants, educators and engineering students to promote the centre and to establish its initial framework.

He has also been active differentiating the centre and its objectives from the work of PEO's longer-standing Government Liaison Program (GLP), which was developed to forge stronger links between PEO members and Ontario legislators.

"The missions of the GLP and the centre are distinct but complementary," Wallace said in a recent report to PEO council. "While the GLP is focused on presenting the views of the profession to government and other forms of direct action, the centre is in the business of starting conversations between engineers, politicians and public servants."

In addition to the student essay contest, the centre recently partnered with PEO's York Chapter in preparing a discussion paper on finding solutions to the electricity needs of northern York Region. Although work on the York paper predated the centre, it has been promoted by the centre as an ideal example of policy-makers and engineers working together to frame public discussion of a key public policy issue.

DEVELOPING a ROADMAP for the future at NATIONAL ENGINEERING SUMMIT

By Jennifer Coombes

IF YOU WANT a hand in shaping the future of Canada's health, environment, safety, competitiveness or quality of life, there is no better place to be than the National Engineering Summit happening in Montreal this May. Themed "Leading a Canadian Future: The New Engineer in Society," the summit will introduce delegates to the current and potential future conditions of various key sectors of Canada's economy and the national and global issues facing each of them.

Led by speakers at the cutting edge of their fields of expertise, engineers, policy-makers and other movers and shakers in the worlds of healthcare, industry, safety, infrastructure, environment and energy, will delve into the issues of each sector and ultimately develop a national declaration that will act as a roadmap to achieve a more wholesome and competitive Canada, healthier citizens, and a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable environment.

As Pat Quinn, PhD, P.Eng., chair, National Engineering Summit, writes on www.engineeringsummit.ca, "We seek a vision for the future that will inspire a vibrant Canadian engineering community to make a dedicated contribution toward a superior quality of life and societal development."

Hosted by Engineers Canada, the National Council of Deans of Engineering and Applied Science, the Association of Canadian Engineering Companies, the Engineering Institute of Canada, the Canadian Academy of Engineering, and the Canadian Federation of Engineering Students, the National Engineering Summit will be held at the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth hotel in Montreal from May 19 to 21.

Visit www.engineeringsummit.ca for full program information and registration details.



COLUMNIST ELICITS P.ENG. IRE

By Michael Mastromatteo

The engineering community reacted swiftly in January to set the record straight when the rhetorical ruminations of a controversial newspaper columnist threatened its ongoing efforts to promote greater public understanding of the profession.

In a January 3 *Toronto Star* column, titled “A few proposals for ’09 (modest or not),” architecture and urban affairs writer Christopher Hume points the finger at professional engineers in his criticism of the Toronto Transit Commission’s (TTC) ticket selling practices.

Under the subheading “End the tyranny of engineers,” Hume calls engineers a “necessary evil” in TTC operations. “Engineers may be necessary, but must they be a necessary evil?” Hume writes. “Organizations such as the TTC, run by engineers, are notorious for ignoring the most important part of their operation—the paying customer. That’s why Toronto is one of the last cities in the developed world where passengers line up daily to buy tickets. As long as the turning radii are adequate, who cares about passenger convenience? The city should mandate that every engineering project also include designers from other disciplines, and maybe even one or two real human beings.”

Although the references to engineers constituted only a small portion of Hume’s column, his words sparked rebuttals from engineers across the province. To date, however, only one letter responding to the Hume column has been published by the newspaper. That letter (January 8), from Consulting Engineers of Ontario (CEO) President John Gamble, P.Eng., takes issue with Hume’s suggestion that engineers exacerbate problems associated with infrastructure and urban planning. “Mr. Hume’s suggestion that many of the problems are caused by a supposed tyranny of engineers is simplistic and incorrect,” Gamble writes. “If any-

thing, the input of engineers into strategic infrastructure planning and decisions has declined in recent years.”

Ontario Society of Professional Engineers President Michael Monette, P.Eng., also wrote a letter to the editor, which was not published. “It is simply wrong for Mr. Hume to paint the engineering profession as a tyrannical group only interested in ‘adequate turning radii’ and not customer service and satisfaction. Engineers are constantly looking for ways to satisfy their organization’s customers’ needs,” Monette writes.

The letter of former PEO president Pat Quinn, P.Eng., was also not published. In the letter, Quinn calls Hume’s statements an insult to a profession responsible for a number of improvements in health, public safety and living conditions.

“[The column] shows the depth of Mr. Hume’s ignorance of the 20th century, let alone contemporary projects that he thinks it necessary to mandate collaboration, a literal requirement of anything today,” Quinn writes. “His comment about real people as a derogation of engineers is particularly offensive. He might consider asking the designers of any of the projects he touts on a regular basis to what degree their completion has been made possible by the creative, cutting-edge contributions of their engineer collaborators.”

Quinn later told *Engineering Dimensions* the Hume column reflects a tendency to use professional engineers as scapegoats for political or administrative decisions that go awry.

In responding to the column, PEO President David Adams, P.Eng., chose to write directly to *Toronto Star* President and CEO J. Robert Prichard, seeking an explanation for the “unprecedented maligning” of the province’s 70,000 PEO members.

Adams’ letter cites PEO’s obligation to maintain public confidence in the engineering profession, and asks for clarification of the columnist’s motives and his choice of words.

“These very serious allegations against a specific group of people and against a major profession cannot be left unchallenged by us on behalf of our profession,” Adams writes. “You, your editorial staff and Mr. Hume have an obligation to support these allegations by examples, or to retract them.”

In late-February, PEO was advised that Prichard had referred the letter to the *Toronto Star*’s public editor, who advised PEO to write a letter to the editor.

Integration project succeeding on all fronts

By Michael Mastromatteo

ENGINEERS CANADA'S three-phase From Consideration to Integration (FC2I) project appears to be meeting its objectives of integrating internationally educated engineering professionals into the Canadian labour force, said its program manager shortly before moving on to new challenges.

The project was initiated in 2003 to ease the licensing and employment of international graduates without compromising public safety or lowering the profession's admission standards.

Before leaving Engineers Canada at the end of February to become managing director of the National Committee on Accreditation at the Federation of Law Societies of Canada, then Program Manager Deborah Wolfe, P.Eng., said a five-year retrospective of the project is now being prepared to measure its overall success in meeting its 17 original recommendations to establish priorities for the final phase of the effort.

A key milestone of FC2I was completion of an engineering labour market study (see *Engineering Dimensions*, January/February 2009, p. 12), which outlined trends in the employment of engineers and technologists across Canada. Reports continue to be added to the labour market study website at etlms.engineerscanada.ca/e/.

A second significant accomplishment in 2008 was the September completion of the engineering Qualification Recognition model (eQRm), an initiative centred on qualification recognition and employability of engineering graduates who lack Canadian engineering experience and were assigned academic qualifying exams by provincial regulators.

The eQRm effort concentrated largely on creating models to assist international applicants to meet all

licensing and registration requirements across all provincial/territorial engineering jurisdictions.

Wolfe said organizations monitoring the registration and licensing practices of self-regulating professions have taken notice of FC2I as an example of the engineering profession's commitment to integrating the skills and experience of internationally trained professionals. The project was recently cited in the Corporate Knights Diversity Leadership Index, an initiative promoting diversity and transparency in corporate hiring, licensing and regulatory activities.

In addition to the five-year retrospective, next steps for FC2I include a website review, completion of a language tool assessment project, and standardization of communications materials about integration for use by constituent members.

For more information, visit www.engineerscanada.ca/fc2i/.



ENGINEERS IN RESIDENCE GO PUBLIC

Angela Macdonald, P.Eng., engineer-in-residence (EIR) at Laurelwood Public School in Waterloo, discusses the viscosity of different fluids with a rapt audience at a November 29 EIR event at the Waterloo Region Children's Museum. Many other EIR volunteers on hand that day treated about 100 children from the Kitchener-Waterloo area to other exciting activities, including building a spectrometer out of fast-food takeout containers, masking tape and a diffraction grating; and chocolate chip cookie mining, in which "mining equipment" (a toothpick) was used to extract as many "diamonds" (chocolate chips) as possible without destroying the "environment" (cookie).



ENGINEER INPUT sought for infrastructure study

By Michael Mastromatteo

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) is inviting professional engineers to help develop an information-sharing network dedicated to the care and preservation of municipal infrastructure.

The Municipal Infrastructure Solutions Program (MISP) is a nationwide effort to promote the use of proven approaches and methods in planning, designing, building, operating and

maintaining municipal infrastructure, much of which is aging or in need of protection from the effects of severe weather and climate change.

The program's initial phase is scheduled for two years, although it may be extended.

"Engineers are involved in every phase of built infrastructure from planning, construction, operation, maintenance and so on," says Michael Mortimer,

P.Eng., program manager, built environment standards for the CSA. "Many of the products developed from the study will be helpful to engineers along with other professions and trades that are involved with infrastructure."

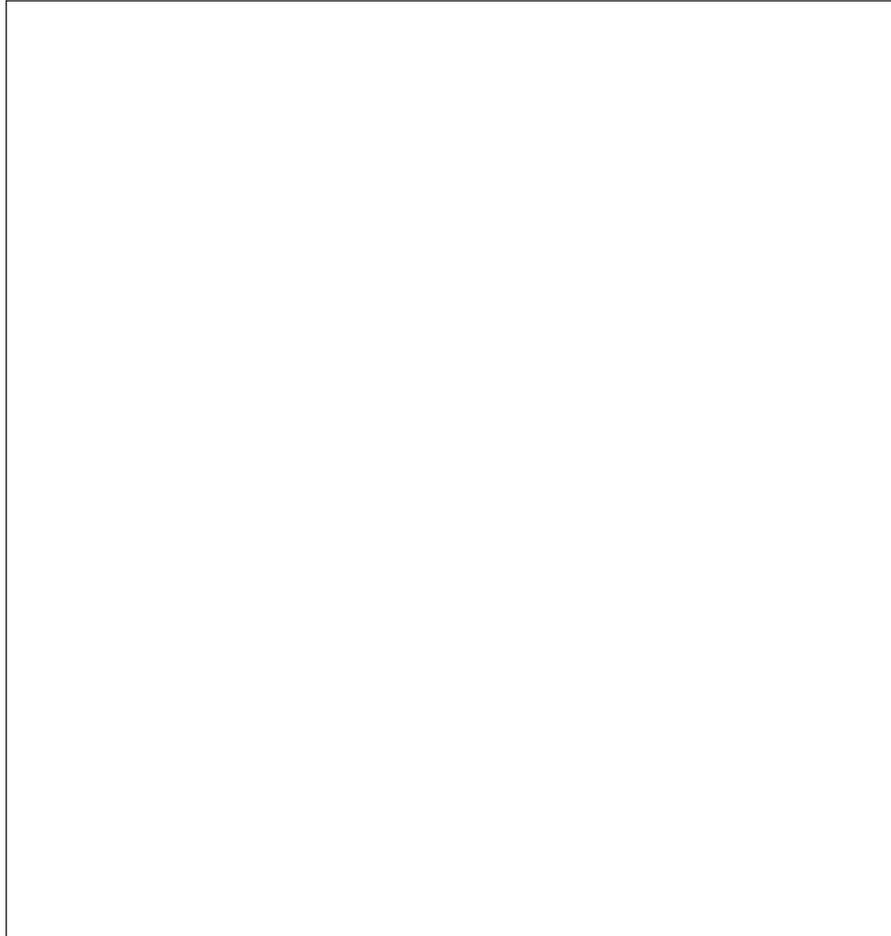
Among the goals of MISP is development of such training products as seminars, online training and webinars aimed at sharing best practice approaches to infrastructure issues. The goal is to help ensure that the professions and trades that design, operate and maintain municipal infrastructure will have access to the most up-to-date knowledge and know-how available, with the hope this will lead to more resilient, sustainable built civil infrastructure.

The program will draw from the CSA's recent survey of engineers' understanding of climate change and its impact on professional practice.

"The goal of the infrastructure solutions program is to provide products that will make Canada's infrastructure more sustainable," Mortimer told *Engineering Dimensions*. "This would have to include considering the climate change knowledge gaps identified in the [previous] CSA survey."

Mortimer says an additional goal of MISP is to bring together experts to identify and disseminate proven approaches to be adopted by frontline practitioners. He says the program will complement similar information-sharing initiatives completed or ongoing.

More information about MISP is available at www.csa.ca/infrastructure.





Members of the Ryerson University ergonomics research study team include Professor Saeed Zolfaghari, PhD, P.Eng. (centre), team leader Patrick Neumann, PhD (left), and research associate Tizneem Nagdee.

Engineering-human factors study GOES TO ROUND TWO

By Michael Mastromatteo

Researchers from Ryerson University have moved to the final round of a study examining the link between professional engineers and human factors specialists in the design of safer workplaces.

The study is aimed at finding areas of commonality between the two disciplines, especially in the methods used to develop safer, more efficient workplaces.

Originally featured in the May/June 2007 issue of *Engineering Dimensions* (p. 25), the study has been recognized by PEO for its emphasis on “improved processes and approaches to sustainable production systems from a human perspective.”

Ryerson University is working with the University of Waterloo and Chalmers University of Technology in Göteborg, Sweden, to complete the research study.

Saeed Zolfaghari, PhD, P.Eng., associate professor of industrial engineering, Ryerson University, says the second phase of the two-year project concentrates on the experience of engineers who have been actively involved in work system design operations.

The first phase of the study involved questionnaires and interviews with professional ergonomists. This information is now being analyzed and will be compared with

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data collected during the current round of interviews and questionnaires with engineering practitioners.

“The industrial engineering market is quite diversified, so we’re concentrating on those practitioners who are more actively involved in the design of work systems,” Zolfaghari says.

He says an ideal sample for the survey would include 25 to 30 engineers, and engineers with relevant experience are still sought to take part in the study.

Team leader Patrick Neumann, PhD, Eur. Erg., human factors professor, Ryerson, says emphasis is now on sharing information already gathered from human factors specialists.

“In our interviews with ergonomists, they are saying a lot of interesting things about engineers and their relationship with engineers and that might make an interesting thing to follow up on,” Neumann says.

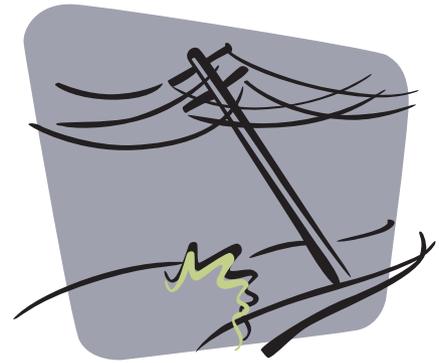
In a paper presented by industrial engineering graduate student Megan Mekitiak in October at the annual meeting of the Association of Canadian Ergonomists, the researchers sought to “demystify” elements of engineering practice for ergonomists. The paper outlined an ongoing separation between industrial engineers and ergonomists in the design, implementation and overall safety of workplaces.

“This paper suggests engineers could be willing and helpful partners for ergonomists—under the right conditions. For example, given the heavy workload of engineers, it is important that human factors is not perceived as something that will add to [engineers’] list of constraints or increase their workload,” the paper says. “It is important to note that while the engineer in question may be responsible for the design of a system component, they may ultimately have little mandate or control over the work environment in the long-term and be unable to enforce [human factors-related] policies even if they support them.”

Neumann adds that problems with lines of responsibility for engineers are related to the separation of health and safety management from work system design. “If these are managed as two separate processes, those who are held accountable for health and safety, that is ergonomists and OHS [occupational health and safety] specialists, are not part of the design process in which key decisions around risk are actually made,” he says.

Sometimes, ergonomics problems become obvious only after operations have been running for months, as employees begin to develop injuries. By this time, the design teams are usually dealing with the next design problem for future systems and operations management must try to correct any problems. “In this situation, the design team, which is not involved in retrofitting efforts, rarely learn from these problems in ways that can be incorporated in the future systems,” Neumann says.

For more information, visit www.ryerson.ca/hfe.



Electricity review key to chapter’s GLP activity

By Michael Mastromatteo

PEO’S YORK CHAPTER is taking its government liaison to the next level by preparing a discussion paper on possible solutions to electricity supply problems in the northern reaches of York Region.

The discussion paper and a January 22 public meeting came about at the request of Oak Ridges-Markham MPP Helena Jaczek, PhD, who looked to the chapter’s 6400 professional engineers as a source of valuable input on technology-related questions.

“I am very pleased that the engineers in York Region have completed this review and prepared this discussion paper,” Jaczek said in December. “I know that it will help all concerned residents better understand the issues.”

Electricity supply in northern York Region has become a concern over the last 10 years due to rising population and industrial activity, and an outdated distribution network.

The Ontario Power Authority recently announced plans to build a 350 MW gas-fired generating station in King Township, but some local residents and community organizations have questioned if it will satisfy the region’s long-range energy supply needs.

Gerry Meade, P.Eng., director of York Chapter’s government liaison program, says the discussion paper and public meeting allowed engineers to provide an impartial, comprehensive and factual review of the region’s electricity supply needs.

“The local MPP, Dr. Jaczek, thought that engineers as a professional group could do something to help people have a better understanding of the issues involved,” Meade told *Engineering Dimensions* January 14. “So we at the York Chapter decided we would take a look at what we could do and we

decided that putting together some form of information piece, without taking a position, would be the most appropriate thing for us to get involved in.”

Meade says a team of about 12 York Chapter members collaborated to prepare the discussion paper. The effort is supported by the new Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy, which is keen to promote increased collaboration between engineers, government officials and policy-makers in developing innovative and technologically sound public policy.

The York Chapter discussion paper addresses five basic questions: What is PEO and why have its members become involved? Why does northern York Region need additional electricity supply? How can the region’s electricity supply needs be met? What approaches were proposed for meeting the load growth in the area? and What other information is needed to choose the best approach?

A background report on the York Region electricity supply issue is available at members/peo.on.ca/index.cfm?ci_id=28034.

The entire discussion paper can be accessed at members/peo.on.ca/index.cfm?ci_id=28051.

Self-regulation ends for English legal profession *By Jennifer Coombes*

The legal profession in England has lost its right to self-regulate. On September 1, the government-appointed Legal Services Board took over as the single independent oversight regulator for all bodies involved in the regulation of legal services in England and Wales. It will have the power to decide which bodies may become licensing authorities and it can, in certain circumstances, become one itself.

It is hoped the board, part of a comprehensive reform of the regulation of the legal profession in England (*Legal Services Act 2007*), will fix the current regulatory framework that the English government describes as “complex and fragmented, with regulatory anomalies and gaps, which make it confusing for consumers.” The new system is expected to put an end to the confusion and establish a clear, flexible and transparent system that is responsive to consumer needs.

While some of the board’s appointees are barristers or solicitors, most have been chosen for their experience in consumer issues, regulatory systems, the legal sector and public service. The board will have three years to establish its infrastructure and fully assume its regulatory role.

For more, visit www.justice.gov.uk/docs/legal-services-reform-update.pdf.