

SPOTLIGHT TO SHINE ON 2011 ELECTION

By David Smith

ON OCTOBER 6, 2011, our next group of provincial leaders will be chosen during Ontario's 40th general election.

And, while the next 19 months will likely provide enough time for voters to decide on their candidate of choice, it's crunch time for those seeking to become candidates themselves.



PEO's interest in the upcoming election is heightened by our goal of electing 11 engineers to the legislature. It's a lofty goal, indeed, and one that originates from the notion that professional engineers should take a more active role in governing this province.

In a recent presentation on the subject, Diane Freeman, P.Eng., PEO's president-elect and a City of Waterloo councillor, said she believes her professional engineering skills are viewed by the public as bringing value to the local decision-making table. She also sees her life in public office as one that underscores the basic premise that professional engineers work in the public interest.

"I see serving as a city councillor as a calling," she said. "When I received my engineering iron ring from Camp 15, I accepted that engineers are called to serve others."

It is with this spirit in mind that PEO has actively encouraged and motivated licence holders, through our Government Liaison Program (GLP), to think beyond the traditional role of an engineer and to take a more hands-on approach to influencing the direction of public policy development.

Our latest initiative is a series of articles in *Engineering Dimensions* intended to teach engineers how they can use their expertise, expe-

riences and leadership skills and turn them into a life in public office. Beginning with the May/June issue, GLP Journal will spotlight speakers from our 2009 candidate college workshop, to provide guidance on how to become more engaged in the political process and to help fulfill PEO's goal of having 11 engineers in the 2011 legislature.

For those of you who missed it, the first annual candidate college event in October was co-hosted by PEO and Engineers Canada, the federation of the 12 provincial and territorial licensing bodies for engineering, of which PEO is a part. Politicians from all levels of government and representatives from the three main political parties joined 140 guests for a discussion on how engineers can take their expertise, experiences and leadership skills and use them to the public's advantage by holding elected office. An edited, three-part video of the workshop is available online at members.peo.on.ca/index.cfm/ci_id/14703/la_id/1.htm.

Engineering isn't simply the act of building products. It's the art of solving problems. And our political guests at the candidate college confirmed these skills are necessary and needed at Queen's Park. So, now is the perfect time for engineers to get involved and recognize how much public policy affects both them and the profession.

If you're planning on entering the race in 2011, we'd love to know. Contact us at GLP@peo.on.ca with all the details. And be sure to look for the first installment in our candidate college speaker spotlight series in the next issue. Σ