

By MICHAEL MASTROMATTEO

The name really says it all: PEO's 14-person Policy and Communications (P&C) department supports Council, the association's policy-setting body, through its secretariat and policy-development functions and is responsible for PEO's internal and external communications programs and activities, including the chapter system.

Publication of record

PEO's internal communications vehicles include *Engineering Dimensions*, PEO's bimonthly publication of record, which covers issues related to PEO's licensing, discipline and enforcement, and standards and regulations mandates, professional practice and ethics, events, issues and public policy developments relevant to the practice of professional engineering, such as emerging areas of practice or legislative change, and PEO activities. The magazine also aims to promote public awareness of the *Professional Engineers Act*, the role of the association and the responsibilities of professional engineers, including how the public interest is served and protected through the practice of professional engineering, and serves as a vehicle for an exchange of views about the issues covered and about PEO.

Chapter newsletters

Other internal communications activities include publication of a quarterly staff newsletter, *Extra Dimension*, development of information brochures, production of chapter newsletters, and preparation of website content. The department also edits PEO's professional practice guidelines, as well as special reports and non-routine correspondence.

Externally focused communications activities include media relations, speaker's bureau and corporate display programs, special events (e.g. Ontario Professional Engineers Awards, Order of Honour, and Annual General Meeting),

Policy and Communications: charting the course and telling the story

corporate identity management, and corporate communications and advertising.

The graphic arts team plays a key role, not only in designing and producing printed materials—including the magazine, annual report, brochures and special publications—but also in creating displays, signs, posters and artwork for PEO branded items. In fact, everything that PEO produces, from business cards and stationery, to licence certificates, application forms, and newspaper advertisements, is designed and the artwork produced in graphics—some 200 plus jobs a year.

Policy and planning

Communications would be meaningless, however, without something to communicate, which is where the department's policy and planning role comes in.

In realigning its staff structure to the objects of the *Professional Engineers Act*

inform Council's decision making, which Council adopted in September 2004, and been instrumental in helping keep the creation of PEO's 2005-2009 strategic plan on track. A massive undertaking of eight months' duration and incorporating the input of hundreds of PEO members, the new strategic plan is a blueprint to translate corporate aims into accomplishments (see pp. 56-57).

Local presence

Playing roles in both communications and policy development are PEO's chapters. Policy and Communications is the home of the chapter manager, new chapter coordinator, and chapter secretary, who together support a network of 38 chapters across the province. Under their newly revised objectives, approved by Council in June 2004, PEO's chapters aim, among other objectives, to promote a local presence for the engineering pro-

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in 2003, the then Communications Department was expanded to include formal policy development and Council secretariat functions, in addition to its existing research function. On joining PEO in August 2003 as the new department's director, Scott Clark outlined his intention to institute a policy framework, "that aligns the organizational objectives with statutory objects."

Since then, a new policy unit within the department has developed a sophisticated policy development process to

profession and PEO, provide an informed source of volunteers, and facilitate two-way information between Council and Ontario professional engineers, as part of the policy development process.

P&C department activity accounted for about 20 per cent of PEO's 2004 expenditures, with the cost of *Engineering Dimensions* making up about 6 per cent of the total (largely offset by advertising revenue) and chapters and related administration accounting for 5 per cent.