

BY JENNIFER COOMBES

At the September meeting, Council enthusiastically embraced the establishment of a formal Government Liaison Program (GLP), which will now be part of PEO's ongoing operations. Said George Comrie, P.Eng., PEO Past President, "This is trying to regularize the government liaison program to be part of PEO's regular operations. It has been a special project but it can't continue to be."

The program is designed to raise PEO's profile and, specifically, to achieve a better understanding and broader acceptance by government of the *Professional Engineers Act*, the role and jurisdiction of PEO, and PEO's policy direction. The program is based on three pillars: a strong local presence, a legislative framework, and policy and communications support. The program supports the strategic plan initiative to "establish and implement a regulatory government relations program, including ensuring that members of the government's Statutory Business Committee and Cabinet Office staff are informed of PEO's role."

The Regional Councillors Committee will integrate the role of government spokespeople into chapter operations and will generally oversee this portion of the program. There are some 70 volunteer spokespeople; however, the goal is to expand this number to 309 (one per riding per major party) by the end of 2006.

Council approved the Executive Committee to oversee the GLP by integrating it into their policy development responsibilities. The Professional Standards Committee (PSC) will take on the role of overseeing the work of all committees, task forces and working groups dealing with practice standards and related activities, and the Environment and Government Affairs committees will become working groups in support of the PSC's new role.

Although filling in the details of this new program is one of the 2006 Strategic Plan projects, Council directed that the resources to support the program in 2006 be included in the operating budget.

## Council approves ongoing government liaison program

430th MEETING, SEPTEMBER 22, 23, 2005

### Official messaging

At the May 3 Council meeting, the Executive Committee tasked the CEO/Registrar with preparing position statements on certain topics. The Executive Committee subsequently reviewed the draft position statements at its August 23 meeting. The statements were then presented to Council for approval in September.

Council approved the four position statements, which clarify PEO's position on the issues of provincial government intrusions into PEO's regulatory authority; independent external appeals; O.Regulation 153/04 (Brownfields) limited licence exclusion; and independent practice for limited licence holders. These position statements are now available from the homepage of PEO's website, [www.peo.on.ca](http://www.peo.on.ca), along with another on how the practice of engineering is regulated, a national position written by the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers and supported by the 12 provincial and territorial regulatory bodies.

These official statements are intended to ensure that all PEO spokespeople and staff communicate a consistent message.

### Internal control changes

Organizations use internal financial control systems to set limits of authority for various financial transactions, in particular since adoption of the *Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002* in the U.S. PEO recently studied its own internal control system, not only to review its adequacy and identify areas of improvement, but also to strengthen members' and Council's confidence that PEO operations are being conducted within set limits.

The report presented to Council, prepared by PEO's Administrative Services department, contains newly developed policies, including threshold amounts for various actions.

Council received the report, which comes recommended by the Audit and Finance committees, and approved the internal controls policies it contains, including the scope and intent of proposed changes to sections 41 and 45 of By-law No. 1 to support the new policies.

Council will approve the final wording of the by-law changes at its December meeting. A letter ballot will be included with the 2006 Council election ballots to make effective the necessary amendments to sections 41 and 45 of By-law No. 1.

### PEO to own building

At the June meeting, Council agreed PEO's future offices will be located in downtown Toronto. At Council's September meeting, the Accommodations Task Force (ATF) recommended PEO acquire its own building when the lease expires on PEO's current premises on December 31, 2009.

Council is generally in favour of ownership vs. leasing (55 per cent of Council members prefer ownership). Fifty-three per cent of Councillors prefer a low-rise building. In addition, adds new Councillor Henry Hill, "We want to ensure that any building we buy be fully accessible."

Council approved this recommendation, in principle, believing it will offer the opportunity for PEO to brand itself more clearly, among numerous other benefits. Council authorized a net investment in the property of approximately \$12.5 million, and a maximum down payment of \$5 million.

The President and Executive Committee were given authority by Council to negotiate and sign an agreement for new PEO offices should a suitable facility be located, subject to due diligence and Council's approval of the final agreement.

The cost of buying a facility is not expected to increase PEO's current operating costs, since PEO would finance the purchase from its operating reserve.

## EIT privileges to change

Currently, engineers-in-training (EITs) have all of the privileges of chapter membership, including serving on their chapter's executive, but are not allowed to hold the officer positions of chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer or past chair, and are not allowed to vote in chapter executive meetings or at chapter AGMs.

This may be about to change with Council approving the concept of a by-law change to extend to EITs rights to vote at chapter meetings and to hold office in chapters. The Regional Councillors Committee, which proposed the change, believes it will enable EITs to become more fully involved in chapters, and will enlarge the pool of volunteers. It would also allow EITs to obtain experience that would help in succession planning of PEO volunteers.

A letter ballot to make effective the necessary amendment to section 5 of By-Law No.1 will be included in the 2006 election packages. Council will be asked to approve the amended wording of section 5 of the

by-law at its December 2005 meeting.

Said Councillor Diane Freeman, P.Eng., "This is part of visioning for the future. But we need to be clear that voting rights are for EITs to vote only on chapter matters, not as PEO members [in elections, referenda, AGM, etc.]."

## CEAB update

The 12 provincial/territorial engineering licensing bodies, including PEO, delegate assessment of whether Canadian undergraduate engineering programs fulfil the academic requirements for licensure to the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE). The Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board (CEAB), a CCPE standing committee, was established for this purpose. However, PEO has maintained its involvement in the CEAB accreditation process in two ways: It gives prior consent in writing to each CEAB visit to an engineering program in Ontario, and appoints a suitable "General Visitor" to the CEAB visiting team. PEO's Registrar reports to

Council on the consents given and General Visitor appointments made at Council's next meeting, and also reports the accreditation decision when finalized.

At the September meeting, Council received a CEAB General Visitors Status Log Report on requested visits and outcomes. Council also approved the appointed General Visitors as PEO representatives on the CEAB, and reconfirmed the CEAB's authority to act as PEO's accreditation agent for undergraduate engineering programs for 2005-2006.

## New LGAs

At its September meeting, Council received two new Lieutenant Governor Appointees. Henry P. Hill, a customer sales and service centre representative at Grand and Toy, and James K.W. Lee, P.Eng., associate professor, department of geological sciences and geological engineering, Queen's University, have been appointed by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council to sit on PEO Council until August 8, 2008. 