

On and beyond the campaign trail

By DAVID SMITH

With the provincial election come and gone, and a (sort of) new provincial government now in place, the time is right for spokespeople of PEO's Government Liaison Program (GLP) to refocus their energies, specifically, by either familiarizing themselves with newly elected MPPs (hopefully some of the legwork was already done during the election campaign) or by reacquainting



Mississauga South candidate (and eventual winner) Charles Sousa speaks at the Mississauga Chapter's all-candidates meeting on September 10, 2007.

themselves with their returning representatives. One of the easiest ways to do this is through a congratulatory letter. To assist our GLP participants with this task, a template letter was distributed to all chapter chairs and GLP subcommittee chairs that introduces PEO to the MPP, details the role of the program, explains how the association wants to help government shape public policy, and extends an open invitation to MPPs to attend local chapter

functions. By now, every one of the 107 MPPs in the province should have received a letter from PEO.

During the lead up to the October 10 provincial election, the association continued to encourage licence holders to become more politically active. Early in September, PEO sent an email blast to members encouraging them, as individual engineers, to get involved in the electoral process. To help, we posted details of upcoming political events, as provided by the candidates, on our Government Liaison Program website. We encouraged engineers to attend events and to contribute, either by volunteering for the candidate of their choice or by making a financial donation.

The response from our chapters was impressive. In fact, several chapters arranged meetings with their local candidates to learn each party's views on matters of concern to engineers and the engineering profession. For example, the Mississauga and Oakville chapters staged well-attended all-candidates meetings on September 10 and September 18, respectively, which saw would-be MPPs participate in an open Q&A discussion, as well as a meet-and-greet session. In addition, the Grand River Chapter's GLP subcommittee was successful in meeting with four of the five local candidates.

The Willowdale-Thornhill Chapter staged three separate events at PEO headquarters, located in the Willowdale riding, where chapter members, along with representatives from the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers and Consulting

Engineers of Ontario, had one-on-one time with the candidates. During his presentation on September 4, Liberal incumbent and eventual victor David Zimmer, LLB, praised the recent proactive efforts of the profession, saying that when he first took office, the Ministry of the Attorney General didn't have much of a file on the engineering profession. "Fast forward four years," Zimmer continued, "engineers are on the radar screen. [PEO has] engaged the profession in getting the government's attention."

Congratulations to all those involved in planning and staging these events in their own areas. Your effort to promote the profession has been valuable in raising awareness among our elected representatives of PEO and its role in protecting the public. So, keep up the good work. There's a lot to be done until we do this again in 2011.



On September 4, David Zimmer, LLB (re-elected as MPP Willowdale), addressed guests at one of three "Meet your Candidate" meetings hosted by the Willowdale-Thornhill Chapter.