

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS AND CO-OPERATION



Diane Freeman, P.Eng., FEC
President

THE FALL has proven to be quite an exciting and rewarding time at PEO.

I was thrilled with the success of our fifth annual Engineering for Ontario Day reception on September 22. The event provided the opportunity for us to share our successes as the regulator of engineering in Ontario with our elected officials at Queen's Park, who attended in record number. Nearly 50 MPPs, including many ministers, attended our reception to lend their support to the association and interact with PEO leadership and volunteers. Our representatives met several additional MPPs over the course of the day in the legislature, including Premier McGuinty.

I was very pleased with the co-operation we received from our government throughout our day at Queen's Park. We began early in the morning by meeting with the Hon. Chris Bentley, LLB, Ontario's attorney general, who encouraged PEO to work with the natural science organizations toward a solution on changes to the *Professional Engineers Act* that might be seen to affect the regulation of natural

scientists in Ontario. I'm pleased to report that council has since met to discuss this issue and has struck a task force that will work with natural science representatives to make future recommendations to council regarding a proposed solution to their concerns.

We also met that day with the Hon. Rick Bartolucci, minister of municipal affairs and housing, who made a commitment to work with PEO to resolve outstanding issues related to the Ontario Building Code.

Both ministers were very generous with their time and were supportive of our work.

The MPP reception also allowed us to update attendees on our "11 in '11" campaign, which we officially launched one year ago, that aims to have 11 engineers elected to the Ontario legislature in 2011.

I am proud to report that PEO is aware of nearly 60 professional engineers who have expressed an interest in running for public office, including an impressive 40 we know of who threw their hats in the ring as candidates during the 2010 municipal and school board elections. In support of their efforts, eblasts were sent to licence holders recognizing their P.Eng. candidate colleagues and reminding them to participate in the election. While this issue went to print prior to knowing the outcome of the October 25 election, I would like to commend all who entered the race. I know first-hand that it is a humbling experience to step into a polling booth and see your own name on a ballot. Everyone who willingly put forth the time, energy and effort to have their name on a ballot should be congratulated and their campaign should be considered to be a success.

As an update to my previous column, the Ontario government's *Open for Business Act, 2010* (Bill 68), which passed on October 21, will result in changes to our own act.

PEO recently solicited feedback from members on one aspect of the act changes—dealing with bylaw amendments. Thank you to those who participated. The results of the member survey are to be considered by council at its November meeting and will assist in establishing a go-forward position.

A major act change relates to the removal of the industrial exception. Council is concerned about the implementation of this change and ensuring that Ontario's businesses are really for it; therefore they have directed that a task force be created to engage business and make recommendations on the timing of implementing the change. Σ