



by Kenneth C. McMartin, P.Eng.
President

One of the primary ways PEO can increase its value for the public, and hence for professional engineers, is for PEO to embrace change that benefits the public's well being and increases the satisfaction of licence holders.

During the first part of my term, there have been positive, progressive developments, both within the public sphere and within PEO itself, that are beneficial to promoting the value of licensed engineering practice and of PEO.

Within the public arena, the Ontario Building Code Amendment Act was proclaimed on July 25. The Ontario government says the act will "streamline the building regulatory process, increase the safety and quality of construction in Ontario, enhance accountability, and create a more transparent regulatory environment for the construction industry". Under the new act, building professionals will qualify to take responsibility for building related work by passing government-set exams testing their building code knowledge. (An update on the new requirements appears in the News section of this issue.)

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) has agreed that PEO can administer exams to professional engineers wishing to qualify, and should maintain the registry of qualified P.Engs. The Ontario Association of Architects has been granted the same privilege in relation to architects seeking to qualify. We believe MMAH's willingness to cede to PEO the vital function of maintaining the registry of qualified P.Engs. is a positive development that maintains regulation of the pro-

Appreciating PEO

fession within the hands of members of the profession—where it rightfully belongs. We see it as affirmation by the government of both the principle of professional self-regulation, and PEO's expertise in administering a licensing and regulating regime.

Also, this year's implementation of changes to the *Professional Engineers Act* can only reinforce the public's perception of a profession working in the public interest through fair and responsive regulation. PEO discipline hearings, for example, are now presumed to be open to the public, and a schedule of upcoming hearings is available from the PEO website. Licence applicants, for their part, now have the right to appeal PEO admissions/licensing decisions.

Indeed, contrary to a spate of recent media stories about the inability of internationally educated/trained professionals to practise their professions once landed in Canada, PEO has demonstrated an extraordinary responsiveness when it comes to evaluating these newcomers' credentials.

By combining a traditional review of educational qualifications with an assessment of experientially gained knowledge, PEO has in recent years almost doubled the number of P.Eng. licences granted to internationally qualified applicants, more than 60 per cent of whom meet the academic requirements for licensing without having to write any technical exams.

With the introduction of provisional licensing, PEO now provides a more formal recognition of a licence applicant's engineering qualifications. This new category of recognition is for those applicants who have satisfied all the requirements for the full P.Eng. licence, except for 12 months of engineering work experience in a Canadian jurisdiction, supervised by a Canadian professional engineer. By affirming the qualifications of provisional licence holders to their potential employers, and thus easing their entry into Ontario's engineering job market, PEO's provisional licence will help to ensure that they are properly supervised while acquiring the necessary experience to become fully conversant with Ontario codes, standards and regulations.

We see this as a win for the public, a win for these P.Eng. licence applicants, and a win for their potential employers.

Internally, PEO began in August to operate under a new organizational structure reflecting its regulatory focus. PEO's new operating framework comprises three regulatory departments: Standards and Regulations, headed by Deputy Registrar Johnny F. Zuccon, P.Eng.; Licensing and Registration, headed by Deputy Registrar Michael R. Price, P.Eng.; and Regulatory Compliance, headed by Deputy Registrar Roger F. Barker, P.Eng. Additional departmental groups include a staff function for Policy and Communications, headed by Director Scott Clark, LLB; and shared service functions for Administrative Services, headed by Daria Babaie, P.Eng.; Information and Technology Services, headed by Director Ron Bailey, P.Eng.; and Human Resources, headed by Director Rose Pirone, CHRP. (For more, see story on page 10.)

Besides aligning PEO's organization with its legislated objectives, this operational restructuring is intended to facilitate smoother processes throughout PEO and to improve its service to the public and to licensees.

In the coming months, you will be hearing more about some new PEO initiatives. A plan has been referred to PEO Council, which will recognize in legislation different categories of professional engineer, engineering interns, and members of PEO's Student Membership Program. We plan to conduct consultations with the profession and PEO's other stakeholders about these legislative changes. As well, Rules of Procedure for the bringing of resolutions to PEO's Annual General Meeting have been developed and are being circulated through the Regional Councillors Committee to the Regional Congresses.

I believe the developments of recent months have added value to PEO, while making sure that it fulfills its responsibility to protect the Ontario public where engineering is concerned. ♦