

COUNCIL CONFIRMS PEO'S INTENTION TO GO ELECTRONIC

By Nicole Axworthy and Connie Mucklestone

PEO WILL provide *Engineering Dimensions*, council election material, membership cards and other correspondence electronically to licence holders, Certificate of Authorization holders, applicants and engineering interns (EITs).

This decision was initiated at the 2012 council retreat, where council discussed the use of electronic means to become more efficient and effective. The consensus favoured going electronic wherever possible and to require recipients to opt in to receive hard copies. Printed versions of publications, such as brochures, guidelines and *Engineering Dimensions*, will continue to be available for external promotions to showcase the association.

Currently, about 15 per cent of PEO members and EITs have chosen to receive the optional digital edition of *Engineering Dimensions*, saving over a million pages per year. The cost of printing and postage for the remaining 85 per cent of members and EITs is about \$440,000 a year. Starting with the March/April 2013 issue, all members with valid email addresses will receive their copy of the magazine electronically, unless they opt-in to the printed edition (see page 28 for more information).

Starting with the 2013 council elections, PEO will enable voting only by electronic means (telephone and Internet) and will no longer distribute printed copies of candidate election materials as a separate mailer. Statements will continue to be published in *Engineering Dimensions* and on the PEO website. Council was told this has the potential to save PEO \$188,000 each year. A scan of other associations using electronic voting methods shows an increase in participation when only electronic voting is available—the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan, for example, recently doubled its participation by enabling only electronic voting.

PEO will also require the use of electronic fund transfers for expense reimbursements and payments for goods and services—enabling faster secure pay-

ment and saving PEO about \$1.42 a transaction. Starting in January 2013, PEO will discontinue producing a plastic permanent membership card. Members requiring membership cards will be able to download them from PEO's website, as is currently done with EIT cards and tax receipts.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM 2012 JUDICIAL REVIEW

Council has established a two-person working group of councillors Michael Wesa, P.Eng. (chair), and Richard Hilton, P.Eng. (vice chair), to identify opportunities for PEO to make improvements to its council procedures, training, documentation, etc., arising from the Adams vs. PEO judicial review. President Denis Dixon, P.Eng., FEC, and President-elect Annette Bergeron, P.Eng., will be ex-officio members of the working group. All councillors are now encouraged to identify issues for consideration by the working group, which will review the issues and report to council with recommendations at its November 2012 meeting. Possible issues that might be examined include the use of the available methods of voting at council in accordance with council's rules of order, training of councillors and the chair, PEO's councillor resignation policy, and documentation in the PEO Council Manual.

EXPANSION AND OVERSIGHT OF EIR PROGRAM

At its July meeting, council unanimously approved support of an application for funding to expand the Engineer-in-Residence (EIR) program, submitted to the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

PEO's Education Committee worked with its EIR consultant, The Impact Group, to prepare and submit the application for a grant totalling \$552,500 over two years. The EIR program sends volunteer P.Engs or engineering interns into schools, delivering free, hands-on programming that engages students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

According to the application for funding, the money would be used to help expand the program's volunteer base, number of schools and support programs over the next two years to reach more students in communities outside the Greater Toronto Area, such as Windsor, Niagara, London, Waterloo, Kingston and Ottawa, by increasing the number of participating schools in these areas and by allowing the program to support its volunteer P.Engs and teachers more effectively in these areas. The funding would also allow the program to develop the resources offered through its website and social media, and to expand on its abil-

ity to survey students at EIR schools across southern Ontario to collect data on the impact of EIR on students and teachers.

Council also approved seeking proposals from organizations interested in assuming responsibility for the EIR program, and directed the Education Committee to identify and make recommendations to council at its November 2012 meeting on the effective oversight and delivery of the program. At its recent retreat, council concluded that the EIR program, while having considerable value, is not aligned with PEO's mandate to regulate the practice of professional engineering and govern its licence and Certificate of Authorization holders.

PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINE FOR CONDOMINIUMS

At its July meeting, council authorized the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) to proceed with developing a proposed professional guideline for performance audits and reserve fund studies for condominiums.

The *Condominium Act* requires a condo corporation to retain professional engineers, or others as described in O.Reg. 48/01, to carry out certain prescribed reviews of the property or portions of the property. Performance audits must be carried out by a professional engineer or architect. Reserve fund studies may be carried out by a professional engineer; however, the statute is not clear on what these audits and studies should investigate or how they should be carried out and the types of opinions the auditors should provide. There are also no standards for how this information is to be presented to a condo board or how the auditors should deal with property owners.

The PSC concluded a guideline is warranted to assist professional engineers in providing these services in a consistent and professional manner, a conclusion council supported. During development of the guideline, PEO staff and PSC subcommittee members will consult with practitioners and other parties, including members of the public affected by professional engineers carrying out this work. When the draft documents are completed, they will be published to the PEO website to enable general consultation with members.

JRC APPOINTMENTS

At its July meeting, council declared the PEO-OSPE Joint Relations Committee (JRC) a regular committee, as opposed to a board committee, with appointments to the committee to be made at the first council meeting following PEO's annual general meeting.

In March 2012, council approved amendments to the JRC's terms of reference changing PEO's representation from the president, president-elect and past president to the president and three senior PEO volunteers. At that time, two of the three senior volunteers serving on the JRC were the president-elect and past president. Following its decision on the type of committee JRC is, council voted by secret ballot and appointed President-elect Annette Bergeron, P.Eng., and PEO Engineers Canada directors David Euler, P.Eng., FEC, and Diane Freeman, P.Eng., FEC, as PEO's representatives to serve with the president on the JRC until the next AGM or until their successors are appointed.

FILLING A COUNCIL VACANCY

PEO's Human Resources Committee (HRC) will review and incorporate comments from a consultation conducted with current and past councillors from the last five years; candidates in the last two PEO elections; the Central Election and Search Committee from the past two elections; the Legislation Committee; chapter chairs; and the staff Corporate Leadership Team and finalize a procedure for council to use to fill council vacancies. Council will consider the HRC's recommended procedure at its September 2012 meeting. Until then, it will not fill the vacancy created by the resignation of former councillor Michael Hogan, P.Eng., which was the subject of a judicial review (see "Court releases decision in J. David Adams, P.Eng., vs. Professional Engineers Ontario," *Engineering Dimensions*, July/August 2012, p. 11). Council defeated motions that would have seen HRC solicit applications from any member to fill the vacancy and present the three most qualified applicants to council for approval in September.

In explaining why he couldn't support the HRC motions for immediately filling the vacancy, Councillor Roydon Fraser, P.Eng., FEC, said he was concerned from a policy perspective, noting that making policy is council's role. He noted that there were several submissions in response to the consultation that council had no knowledge of, and questioned what criteria HRC would use to determine who is qualified in bringing a short list of potential councillors for approval. "We need to work on a process, bring it to council for approval in September, and then work the process," he said. President-elect Bergeron, as a member of HRC, also expressed discomfort at setting qualification criteria without council direction. Councillors Rob Willson, P.Eng., Danny Chui, P.Eng., and Santosh Gupta, P.Eng., FEC, also spoke about the need to deal with a process before moving forward with an appointment, with Gupta noting the need for the process to be "transparent, fair and democratic."

Vice President George Comrie, P.Eng., FEC, summed up council's feeling by noting: "I think we have the cart before the horse." Σ