

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



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FEC, President

ONE CONSTANT THROUGHOUT the years has been PEO's commitment to serving and protecting the public interest where regulation of engineering is concerned. A highlight in this area during the 2012-2013 council term was the long-awaited and much anticipated approval by the provincial government of a date for the repeal of the profession's so-called "industrial exception." As approved by the government on February 27, effective September 1, those responsible for professional engineering work in relation to production machinery or equipment must be licensed by PEO to perform such work. The repeal will improve workplace safety and efficiency and provide a higher standard of professional accountability.

Our effort to repeal the industrial exception highlights the importance of maintaining positive relations with the provincial government, and we made great strides in this relationship. During the year, I had discussions with the premier's office on my recommendation to create a provincial engineer position, similar to the province's chief medical officer of health. A provincial engineer could take overall authority for engineering works in the province, to provide specific direction in the event of situations such as the tragedy in Elliot Lake, and to ascertain whether such situations are indicative of systemic problems.

Determining the root cause of events like the partial collapse of the Algo Centre Mall roof and finding appropriate solutions can be challenging. PEO can act only where a problem involving a particular engineering work or practitioner has come to light. This means the public might be put at risk, potentially for years, in such situations. I believe an independent Ontario provincial engineer could provide the necessary review, analysis and integration of information to help ensure the most effective technical solutions to public policy concerns.

In July, the Ontario government established a public Commission of Inquiry into the Elliot Lake collapse, and PEO sought and received standing for Part 1 of the inquiry, dealing with events prior to the collapse. PEO has co-operated fully with the inquiry, and also opened its own investigation into what part, if any, our licence or certificate holders might have played in the tragedy. Our Professional Standards Committee also issued a professional practice bulletin in the November/December 2012 issue of *Engineering Dimensions* on structural engineering assessments of existing buildings.

When I began my presidency, one of my goals was to bring about a renewal of professional self-governance to increase the relevance of the profession to its practitioners. As part of its commitment to seek greater member participation in governance of the profession, in 2012 PEO successfully held electronic, all-candidate meetings via web-cast for voters to learn about their candidates and ask questions. This was the first time PEO voters were provided such access to the candidates. The success of the initiative resulted in a repeat performance for the 2013 council election.

PEO also launched new websites to enhance our interaction with volunteers and facilitate nominations for our awards. The new volunteer website lists volunteer positions available on PEO's committees, task forces and chapters, and enables interested candidates to submit applications online. The site also features profiles of

dedicated volunteers who devote time and energy to the association. The new awards website enables nominators to create, edit and submit nomination documentation online for PEO awards, and view the accomplishments of past award recipients. Together, the websites offer new tools for volunteers and a database of historical information on PEO volunteer achievements.

PEO's homepage is also undergoing a redesign, with a launch scheduled in the first half of 2013. The new, more navigable site will provide visitors an intuitive experience, while maintaining the existing wealth of information about PEO's role as the regulator of professional engineering in the province, including details on our licensing, complaints, discipline and enforcement processes, programs, activities, events and publications.

Other ongoing electronic initiatives include enabling councillors to vote and participate in council meetings remotely, and creating an improved and more cost-effective licensing process.

The past year also saw the departure of long-time CEO/Registrar Kim Allen, P.Eng., FEC, who became CEO of Engineers Canada. PEO's acting CEO/registrar is Michael Price, P.Eng., MBA, FEC, the current deputy registrar, licensing and finance. Michael has been in PEO senior management for nine years and his experience and leadership are extremely valuable to us.

As my term concludes, I want to thank our volunteers and staff for their ongoing commitment to enhancing our profession. It was truly an honour to serve as your president. Σ