

NEW BEGINNINGS



Annette Bergeron, P.Eng.
President

AS WE WELCOME in the new year, I'm also delighted to welcome our new registrar, Gerard McDonald, MBA, P.Eng., who joined us January 6 and brings to PEO a proven record of high-level regulation development and expertise.

When I ran for election in 2012, I didn't realize we'd have a registrar search during my tenure. It has pre-occupied the first half of my presidency and we are very pleased with the result. My thanks to PEO's Human Resources and Executive committees for their hard work.

Gerard has spent the greater part of his career in public service roles within the country's transportation sector, including holding several leadership positions within Transport Canada, most recently as assistant deputy minister, safety and security. He has also served in the Privy Council Office as director of operations for regulatory affairs for the entire government, and previously served as executive director of the Transportation Safety Board, where he oversaw the administration and operation of the federal body responsible for accident investigation in all modes of transport.

Gerard holds a bachelor of applied science in civil engineering from the University of Waterloo and a master of business administration from the University of Ottawa. He has been licensed to practise professional engineering in Ontario since 1984.

The insight Gerard has derived from his previous roles will be critical in focusing PEO on regulation and guiding our association through complex political, professional and regulatory environments.

As PEO moves forward with a new registrar, I would like to thank Michael Price, MBA, P.Eng., FEC, who has served as acting chief executive officer and registrar since October 2012. Michael continues in his role as deputy registrar, licensing and finance, and is an integral member of our corporate leadership team.

Gerard volunteered to participate in the Chapter Leaders Conference where he brought remarks, and attended his first Ontario Professional Engineers Awards gala in November. As PEO begins this exciting new chapter, please join PEO council in extending to Gerard a warm welcome and your full support. Together, I'm confident we can excel in fulfilling PEO's regulatory mandate.

As 2013 drew to a close so, too, did PEO's participation at the Elliot Lake Inquiry.

On November 18, 19 and 20 in Ottawa, the commission held three roundtables related to Part I of the inquiry, at which PEO had standing, which dealt with the events leading up to the partial collapse in June 2012 of the Algo Centre Mall roof. The framework for these

discussions with various invited experts was formed, in part, by the recommendations those with standing provided the commission, based on the evidence presented during more than 70 days of testimony at the inquiry.

In each of the sessions, the experts were led by commission counsel through a series of policy questions prepared by counsel. PEO was represented at the November 20 roundtable in which it participated by Councillor Chris Roney, P.Eng., BDS, FEC. I attended as an observer. Representatives of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, the Ontario Association of Architects, the Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists, J.L. Richards and Associates Ltd., and Carleton University also participated in the session.

Among the issues discussed were two key recommendations from PEO: the creation of a mandatory standard for structural adequacy reports and of a structural engineering specialty in Ontario. In PEO's proposal to mandate and standardize structural adequacy reports for existing buildings in particular situations, which would require approval from the Ontario government, triggering events might include an order from a building official or a requirement for periodic inspections of certain building categories. This would take discretion for when to inspect particular buildings out of the hands of their owners and make the resulting reports easier for everyone to understand.

Certifying structural engineering specialists would let the public know who is qualified to prepare the reports. In PEO's proposal, a certified structural specialist would be the only one authorized to prepare a structural adequacy report, and he or she would possess a level of expertise in structural engineering above that of licensing. Specialists would be required to file the reports with both building owners and chief building officials.

PEO believes these two steps would strengthen PEO's regulation of engineering practice and help to prevent tragedies similar to the Algo Centre Mall collapse.

Our recommendations to the commission and our answers to the commission's policy questions are available on the websites of both the commission (www.elliottlakeinquiry.ca) and PEO (www.peo.on.ca). Transcripts of the roundtable discussions are also available on the commission website.

The commissioner's report is expected to be ready in October of this year, when we'll know how our recommendations have been received.

My best wishes to everyone in the engineering community for a happy and healthy 2014. Σ