

## 10 YEARS OF PERSEVERANCE LEADS TO GLP SUCCESS

By Howard Brown

IN JANUARY, CBC radio ran one of its interviews from 1970 featuring former broadcasting icon Gordon Sinclair. It reminded me of an interview I had with him a few years later, while a young journalism student. In the 1970 program, Sinclair mentioned he seldom gave interviews, and I remember asking him why he'd agreed to my request. He said it was my perseverance.

Perseverance is an important part of politics. Former prime minister John Diefenbaker ran for office five times before winning in 1940. Premier Kathleen Wynne lost her first shot at public office. So did Toronto Mayor John Tory. So did hundreds of other candidates over the years.

Engineers have that same perseverance. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the remarkable success and perseverance of PEO's Government Liaison Program (GLP). PEO, through its 36 chapters, has never wavered in its message to government and the public—that PEO has a mandate to govern the practice of engineering in the public interest.

The GLP, initially established in 2005 as a six-month pilot program, has become a major success for the profession, facilitating increased communication and engagement between PEO and the provincial government. "Over the past 10 years, there have been many notable developments worth reviewing," says Jeannette Chau, P.Eng., PEO's manager of student and government liaison programs. "To me, the most significant has been the way PEO chapters have made it [GLP] a part of their annual activities to such a tremendous extent."

Following is a timeline of major milestones in the program's 10-year history:

**2005**—formalized GLP into a long-term platform aimed at shaping public policy and facilitating dialogue between members of provincial parliament (MPPs) and professional engineers;

**2005**—held the first of many Queen's Park receptions to which members from all parties are invited;

**2006**—held inaugural Candidate College to promote and train professional engineers running for public office;

**2006**—initiated a judicial review of changes by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to the Ontario Building Code that infringed on PEO jurisdiction under the *Professional Engineers Act* (PEA);

**2007**—received news in May that the court ruled in favour of PEO (the province chose not to appeal the court's decision, which many felt avoided possible backlash from some 70,000 P.Engs just months prior to a provincial election);

**2007**—launched the online publication *GLP Weekly* to share success stories among PEO chapters, with distribution later extended to MPPs;

**2007**—hosted first all candidates' debate for the provincial election in September (Mississauga Chapter), which saw the active participation of all parties and many ridings;

**2008**—transitioned annual GLP conference into a policy conference under the newly launched Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy, which also published technical papers and a policy journal;

**2009**—hosted a series of candidate colleges in Toronto, Windsor and Ottawa to encourage engineers to run for elected office and get involved with public policy development in their respective fields;

**2010**—facilitated the provincial government's passage of the *Open for Business Act* containing 66 amendments for the PEA—the most fundamental changes since 1984;

**2011**—invited Greg Sorbara, former finance minister, to speak in Hamilton at the first GLP Academy and Congress in lead-up to the provincial election. The launch of these events was an attempt to build into the GLP opportunities to dialogue with other chapters and MPPs;

**2012**—expanded the academies and congresses across the province to eastern and central regions;

**2012**—launched MPP Awards at PEO's annual Queen's Park reception;

**2013**—launched Take Your MPP to Work Day with Niagara Chapter, which was attended by Welland MPP Cindy Forster;

**2013**—hosted first Northern Region academy, by Lakehead Chapter in Thunder Bay; and

**2014**—expanded Take Your MPP to Work Day province-wide and began holding joint MPP meetings with the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers.

All in all, it's been an amazing decade. It looks like perseverance is paying off. Σ

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