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ENGINEERING* on the Hill

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REPORTING ON ISSUES ON PARLIAMENT HILL OF INTEREST TO THE ENGINEERING PROFESSION

Engineers Canada co-hosts *Picnic on Parliament Hill*

Ottawa - On June 4, Engineers Canada and the Canadian Public Works Association co-hosted a highly successful picnic lunch for parliamentarians and their staff in the East Block courtyard on Parliament Hill.

Positioning Engineers Canada as a resource to the federal government means that engineers are at the table when decisions are made concerning current and future programs and initiatives.

The event was well attended by ministers, members of Parliament, senators and over 240 parliamentary staffers. Attendees enjoyed a casual BBQ lunch, where Engineers Canada Chief Executive Officer, Chantal Guay, P.Eng., ing., M.Env. had an opportunity to meet and greet the many honoured guests.

The picnic provided an opportunity to discuss priority issues for Engineers Canada; labour mobility, immigration, climate change, and infrastructure. Attendees were reminded of our fall Parliamentary reception.



Engineers Canada CEO, Chantal Guay, P.Eng., ing. M.Env and Senator Robert Peterson, P.Eng., (Sask.) attending the *Picnic on Parliament Hill*. Senator Peterson, is a civil engineer and a member of the Engineering Caucus.

Changes to Immigration Act

Ottawa – Changes to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* passed Parliament and became law on June 18, 2008.

The changes are in response to a growing backlog of immigration applications that has created waiting times of between three and six years even for those who meet all the requirements. Government statistics show that there are approximately 925,000 applicants currently waiting in line, or enough to meet all of Canada's immigration targets over the next four years, even if no new applications were received.

The amendments give the minister of Citizenship and Immigration, subject to Cabinet approval, new authority to order priority processing of certain categories of applications received after February 27, 2008.

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Ken Boshcoff, member of Parliament for Thunder Bay – Rainy River (right) meeting with Engineers Canada Manager of Strategic Development John Kizas, P.Eng.

Bridging Government and Engineers Program Update

Now in its third year of operation, the *Bridging Government and Engineers* program was formally approved as a permanent program of Engineers Canada at the May Board Meeting.

Bridging Government and Engineers is a grassroots, non-partisan initiative that asks volunteers to develop ongoing relationships with their local member of Parliament (M.P.).

Engineers Canada developed the program to ensure that federal M.P.s hear the voice of the engineering profession, as it relates to issues that fall under the responsibility of the federal government. By forging closer ties, engineers can educate members of Parliament about their contributions to public policy. The message is strongest when it comes from a constituent, especially when national issues are raised with a local angle.

After meeting with their M.P., volunteers submit post meeting reports where details of the discussions, topics and reactions from the elected officials are outlined.

Parliament is not scheduled to resume until September 15, which will provide an opportunity for many volunteers to meet their members of Parliament over the summer months. Many volunteers have been creative in their dealings with their M.P.s in their home ridings. For example, two Edmonton area volunteers arranged to meet with their respective members of Parliament simultaneously at a local restaurant. Rahim Jaffer, M.P., and James Rajotte, M.P., both indicated their interested in important issues to engineers such as climate change, foreign credentials and safe drinking water. The volunteers were able to cover many priority issues and accomplishments of Engineers Canada.

Two training sessions for volunteers enrolled in the *Bridging Government and Engineers* program have recently taken place in Fredericton and Ottawa. A web-based session is being planned for August.

For more information please visit our website <https://bge.engineerscanada.ca>

Immigration Act Changes – continued from page 1

This will allow the government to fast-track applications under the federal skilled worker (FSW) category of immigrants in order to help meet labour market needs and to help newcomers to Canada find employment in fields for which they have been trained.

Until the changes were passed, skilled workers were required to be processed in the order the applications were received, regardless of whether the applicants' skills or profession would enable them to find a job in Canada.

On August 15, Engineers Canada Chief Executive Officer Chantal Guay, P.Eng., ing., M.Env., will join Immigration Minister Finley and other immigration stakeholders in a roundtable discussion on the content of the new law.

Fall Parliamentary Reception

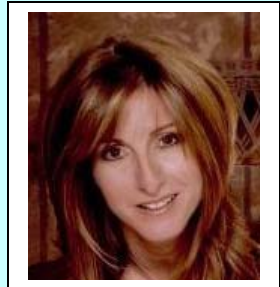
On Tuesday, October 7th, 2008, Engineers Canada will again host its fall parliamentary reception, to coincide with the Board of Directors meetings held in Ottawa that same week.

Engineers Canada parliamentary reception brings together MPs, senators, hill staff, key bureaucrats, and leaders from the engineering profession representing all regions of Canada.

This event offers an opportunity to share our positions and activities-to-date with federal decision-makers and to remind parliamentarians that Canadian engineers are contributing significantly to the development and growth of our country.

New Manager, Government Relations

We are pleased to welcome Laurèl Craib as the new manager, government relations at Engineers Canada in Ottawa. Laurèl is responsible for the Bridging Government and Engineers Program, and assists with the management and development of priority issues, and relationships with the federal government.



Before joining Engineers Canada, Laurèl was a senior consultant at a government relations firm in Ottawa, where she worked in a wide range of sectors. Laurèl had worked on Parliament Hill for 13 years as a political assistant, at both the official opposition and ministerial staff levels. She has also worked for academic and not-for-profit organizations.