

Canadian Society for  
Civil Engineering



Société canadienne  
de génie civil



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**Welcome**

We have turned the corner to start another year. Have you made your “traditional” New Year resolutions? What will 2014 mean for CSCE? My resolution for CSCE is to begin to ramp up our implementation activities to advance our new vision! I am looking forward to a broader participation of our CSCE members and with this letter I would like to test this increasing involvement not only of our leaders within the organization but of the members at large.

**What happened? What is happening? What is going to happen?**

In my last letter I discussed the Board workshop in December and the development of an ‘action plan’ for implementing CSCE’s Vision. The plan development is underway. The goal is the enhancement of CSCE’s mobility (strengthening the operation of CSCE as an organization) and visibility (higher exposure of CSCE to all Canadians). I would like to discuss the development of one of the strategic components of the action plan and ask for some input from our members.

The strategic activity I wish to discuss starts with a relatively small change in the structure of the current Publications and Communications Committee adopted by the CSCE Board at our December meeting. The Committee was split into two with the Publications Committee now operating as one of the Program committees and the Communications Committee continuing to operate as one of the Administrative committees. While the change is small it is significant.

Publications are an important vehicle through which CSCE members are able to publish the results of research projects and technical advancements. This is an important member service. The Publications Committee will be able to focus on the issue of publications to strengthen and enhance the opportunities and mechanics of this service.

This now brings me to think about the importance of enhancing our communication processes with an important role in fulfilling CSCE's vision in the future. The new Communications Committee, similar to the Publications Committee, will be able to bring a more focused approach in its role of managing communication processes and in particular with the view of increasing CSCE's exposure through various media in getting important messaging of the Society to all Canadians.

This leads me to the question "...What messages do we want to convey?" This is where I would like to ask all CSCE members and any other engineers in Canada to think about subject matter on which CSCE could or should express an opinion, take a position and / or offer factual information for overall enlightenment of all Canadians and to add influence (dare I say 'advocate') to decision makers on important societal issues.

To start some thinking of this process, here are some examples of the types of issues on which CSCE could express themselves with more visibility to Canadians. An obvious area is sustainability and sustainable infrastructure. This is part of CSCE's vision and strategic direction. We will be asking our Infrastructure Renewal Committee and Sustainability Committee to work on this area in terms of a CSCE position paper perhaps, so heads up to the Committee Chairs. Do we understand "global" sustainability issues in the context of infrastructure development? We have already mentioned the Infrastructure Report Card activity which offers opportunity to make a public statement with each issue of the Report Card. You may have some specific aspects about infrastructure you feel should be addressed and I would like to hear about those.

I have commented in earlier e-letters on the Champlain Bridge replacement in Montreal and thought about a number of interesting areas on which civil engineers could weigh in (i.e. procurement processes, innovation, sustainability, etc.). The deterioration of the Gardner Expressway in Toronto is another major transportation structure that makes news from time to time offering similar opportunity to express

ourselves.

Over the past year or so I have noted that the press has picked up on the reduction of senior governmental support for scientific research closing a number of long-standing research centres across Canada – should we be worried about this?

We are currently seeing a significant national interest in the north. There are numerous subject areas here that could be important for civil engineers and for Canadians. Having worked for the Territorial Government for close to 4 years in my career I can attest to the engineering challenges that will face a developing north. In particular I was always challenged with the cost per person being spent to develop infrastructure in arctic communities. Until I realized this was more an issue of sovereignty I began to see why the spending made sense, because it sure did not make sense in terms of individual community development. Now polar sovereignty seems to be a federal priority. Climate change is more evident in the north – our research centre so to speak. Resource management will be significant and the engineering that will be needed tap into these resources will need significant environmental consideration – sustainability certainly comes to mind.

What about taking a position or making a statement when it comes to significant national events, whether they relate to infrastructure failures or natural disasters (climatic, environmental). Should CSCE be heard during these types of high profile events in Canadian life?

I am particularly interested in any thoughts you may have relating to our responsibilities as civil engineers in the context of environmental, financial and social sustainability issues, specific of course to our technical areas of involvement. Do we have a moral obligation to speak out on matters relevant to a “learned society” to help bring knowledge and opinion to decision-makers and to the public?

The floor is yours! Any and all responses will be reviewed with interest and I will attempt to collate the feed-back for discussion by CSCE’s leadership in developing our action plans. You can respond through our national office. I am looking forward to your participation and input in this process to help frame CSCE’s “action plan”.

### **Programs / Conferences**

Two very successful courses were presented in December and January: Hec-Ras Modeling Including Advanced Applications in Winnipeg and Edmonton and CAN/CSA-S6-06 Design of Aluminum Bridges and Footbridges in Toronto. A total of 79 engineers and students attended.

## **Did you know?**

Speaking of the arctic....

Canada's three arctic territories cover some 3.92 million km<sup>2</sup>, approximately 40% of Canada's 9.84 million km<sup>2</sup>.

The estimated population of these three territories is approximately 105,000, or 0.3% of Canada's population of 35 million.

These 2 statistics begin to paint the challenges of engineering in the north. The federal government's position regarding sovereignty is defined in the following government statement:

Canada's Arctic sovereignty is longstanding, well established and based on historic title, founded in part on the presence of Inuit and other Aboriginal peoples since time immemorial. However, in a dynamic and changing Arctic, exercising our sovereignty includes maintaining a strong presence in the North, enhancing our stewardship of the region, defining our domain and advancing our knowledge of the region.

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My personal list.

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