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## Welcome

Spring is in the air... or it should be! Winter is not going quietly but I believe we are getting close to spring actually showing up. This brings new life, new enthusiasm and new hopes. I am getting 'warmed up' to the season and the prospects of bigger and better things for CSCE. With this in mind I have come to realize my first year as President is soon history. We are announcing our AGM and all the appropriate planning for this event in Halifax are ramping up. The circumstances that have resulted in a two-year term gives me a different perspective of this event and I would simply like to say I am looking forward to the opportunity of continuing for one more year. A vision to achieve some significant progress, to be a more visible and more mobile as an organization drives my motivation and appreciation for yet one more year of service at this most honoured position of the CSCE.

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

On the heels of a relatively busy month in February I participated in three recent meetings this month that I want to mention relative to the impact they may have in evolving CSCE's future directions.

The first meeting was the EIC Board meeting in March. This was my first time at the EIC Board table. CSCE is one of 11 current engineering associations that operate under the umbrella of the Engineering Institute of Canada. Seeing this

group in action was interesting and raised a number of points worthy of note. I was approached by three specific association leaders that wanted to discuss future collaborative efforts with CSCE. I think this is an important issue since I do not think CSCE should be an island unto itself. Achieving some of our goals involves cooperative activities with other engineering and non-engineering associations. My key issue around this is not to compete with others having similar goals with the potential to waste our collective energy and reducing the effectiveness of our individual efforts.

The second meeting was with two of our young leaders – Nigel Parker (Chair, Young Professionals Committee) and Amie Therrien (Young Professionals and Student Coordinator for CSCE). I had requested the meeting to present a challenge to them, on behalf of all young civil engineers. The challenge related to CSCE's strategic direction on leadership in sustainable infrastructure. The lowest common denominator of infrastructure systems is "community". Therefore, when we think of sustainable infrastructure we must be thinking about sustainable communities. My challenge involved the definition of a sustainable community. What attributes would a sustainable community possess with respect to its infrastructure? This should include a consideration of economic, social and environmental parameters. Who better than our youth, untainted by institutionalised thinking (barriers), to help us describe a future community that is sustainable? Dream a little!

I do not know what CSCE's youth will do with this challenge, but I would also like to put the same challenge out to all civil engineers. How do we define a sustainable community of the future? What will it look like? What kind of infrastructure features might it possess? One clue...we need to think beyond engineering. Do you have friends who are social scientists, environmental scientists, community planners, economists, others? I would like to begin national conversations on this issue. I would love to hear from any and all on ideas, large and small, on what you can "dream" in terms of characteristics of a sustainable community.

The third meeting I attended included an opportunity to present CSCE's vision of sustainability and the benefits of a sustainability rating system for infrastructure. The audience in this case was the Engineering and Research Committee of the Council of Deputy Ministers of Transportation and Highway Safety. The premise that "what gets measured gets managed" set the stage for a discussion around the importance of developing a sustainability rating system rather than simply adding as many green features to an infrastructure project without really knowing the impacts they have on the larger issues of global sustainability. The Committee was very gracious in giving CSCE an hour of their time with some important discussion that followed. Again, this added to the concept of initiating and engaging in a national conversation on sustainable infrastructure. We hope for follow up conversation with this group and others like it in the future to elevate this conversation. I would like to offer thanks to CSCE's Board member, Glenn Hewus for opening up this very important door.

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I cannot help but acknowledge a link between the nature of the discussions at the above meetings and our upcoming conference theme of “Sustainable Communities”. I am looking forward to this annual event being hosted by our members and friends in Halifax. I hope to see many of you there to continue this national conversation. I believe CSCE has a mission and an obligation to bring this context into the national infrastructure management picture. Infrastructure continues to stay at the top of Canada’s political agenda. This is good. CSCE’s role is to provide the sustainable infrastructure lens on the discussion.

### **Did You Know?**

In my own quest to understand our future communities in the context of sustainability I came across an article that spoke of one potential model for the world’s future urban developments. A concept was offered to expand cities vertically in more dramatic ways than simply building higher skyscrapers. The article noted that most of the world’s urban centres feature financial hubs, gradually extending into residential suburban sprawl and creating the need for large transport infrastructure to connect long distances between office and residential areas. In addition, high-rise buildings tend to lose the awareness of human scale, forcing citizens to live and work in increasingly alienating, polluted and disconnected environments.

The proposal was to create a model that flipped the horizontal expansion of a city vertically. The concept combines residential, commercial, educational and cultural functions, arranged at a human scale that keeps the buildings within walking distance of one another. Empty sites are occupied with infrastructural installations and urban equipment, creating many public meeting places and green areas. The article did note while architects and urban planners argue that vertical living is more cost efficient and sustainable, it does involve greater energy and material costs. (Source: [sourceable.net/rethinking-urbanism-vertical-cities](http://sourceable.net/rethinking-urbanism-vertical-cities))

Food for thought! Have fun with it.

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