

Canadian Society for
Civil Engineering



Société canadienne
de génie civil



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Welcome

This will be my final e-letter as President of CSCE. Next month at this time we will be in Regina attending our annual conference. I am looking forward to face time with many of you. In particular I expect to see many of our volunteer members who are actively involved in so many aspects of the work of our Society.

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

Last month I commented on the fact there was so much to do. I have packaged this comment into two trains of thought. One relates to the business of strengthening CSCE's internal operational structure and processes. The second relates to enhancing CSCE's impact and influence on the outside world. This encompasses the phrase you have heard me say numerous times "... be seen, be heard, be relevant". These two ideas are intrinsically linked. We must make sure we get CSCE's internal operations working efficiently in order to have the influence we seek externally. Hence, our planned activities must incorporate both aspects of our Society's strategic plans.

When I think about the strengthening of our internal operations for consideration by various committees, Divisions, etc. the following is my own list of potential areas of improvement.

- Better use of communication mechanisms such as social media, press releases and other means for communicating internal information to

- members, reporting key information from specialty conferences and workshops through public statements and advocacy positions, etc.
- More accountability for the identification and implementation of activities that support our strategic positions
 - Addressing the issue of membership of mid-career engineers – an issue of CSCE’s relevance
 - Coordination of conference schedules to avoid competing with ourselves for attendees, particularly the impact on our Annual Conference
 - Strengthening the communication link between our technical Divisions / Committees and our Region / Section activities
 - Completing the review of our By-laws relative to current management and operations of CSCE

Issues of CSCE’s relevance to a broader audience of engineers and to the public relates to our strategic position on sustainable infrastructure. The public and political profile infrastructure and sustainability has achieved makes this a natural for CSCE since both of these are within the realm of civil engineering. From my perspective strengthening CSCE’s relevance and visibility to the external world could, among many other issues, focus on the following areas of improvement.

- Strengthening the link between academic / research activities and practitioner / business aspects of civil engineering
- Issuing more statements by CSCE related to advocacy positions on sustainable infrastructure, climate change, current infrastructure events, etc.
- Continued leadership of the Canada Infrastructure Report Card initiative
- Leadership in implementing the use of a sustainability rating system for infrastructure in Canada
- Building strategic alliances with other national organizations on issues of public, environmental, social interests that includes a civil engineering perspective
- Maintaining communications with government agencies in supporting programs that relate to the research, planning and implementation of sustainable infrastructure

In an effort to put some content on some of these issues, I would like to share a sampling of some newspaper headlines for articles I have saved in my “CSCE ISSUES” file. They have been motivating and challenging me over the past few years. I would suggest they are challenging CSCE and all civil engineers in Canada to become involved! You can tell the Globe and Mail is my primary newspaper of choice for daily reading. Here are some of the article headlines in my file:

- *U.S. Sounds Alarm over Melting Arctic (Globe and Mail – December 2013)*
 - *Super Beam will Reinforce Aging Montreal Bridge (Globe and Mail – November 2013)*
 - *Northern Gateway: The Battle in Only Beginning (Globe and Mail – May 2014)*
 - *Science Shouldn’t Be all business (Globe and Mail – December 2014)*
 - *The Trouble with Pipelines (Globe and Mail – December 2014)*
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- *Long Before Vancouver Arrived, a Native Village Thrived (Globe and Mail – January 2015)*
- *New AFN Head Promises to be Catalyst for Change: First Nations peoples will oppose any development which deprives our children of the legacy of our ancestors. (Globe and Mail – December 2014)*
- *Fix the Link where Science and Policy Meet: The federal Conservatives have tried to bury knowledge and destroy government's capacity to generate it (Globe and Mail – June 2014)*
- *Researchers Head North to Build Plant Catalogue (Globe and Mail – June 2014)*
- *Global infrastructure, Capital Spending to hit \$9 Trillion by 2025 (Globe and Mail – June 2014)*
- *Why Do Infrastructure Projects Always Go Over Budget (Globe and Mail – June 2014)*
- *Canada's North: A Test of Nation-Building for Us All (Globe and Mail – January 2014)*
- *Nationalism, Northern Style (Globe and Mail – January 2014)*
- *Northern Gateway: A Project for Canada (Globe and Mail – June 2014)*
- *First Nations Hold Key to Gateway (Globe and Mail – June 2014)*
- *The North: Rethinking Canada's Last Frontier (Globe and Mail – January 2014)*

These articles and many more have driven me to push CSCE as a learned society with relevance and presence. I believe we are making progress, but as I have also said, there is so much to do.

A Few Final Comments

As my time as President fast comes to a close I am truly thankful for having been given the privilege of carrying this responsibility for the past two years. A year ago I suggested if I had to give up the role I would have been left unsatisfied given what I felt we had accomplished to that time. Today I have to say I am satisfied with the accomplishments and with the momentum we have built to achieve our goals. I am completely confident in our next President and my friend, Tony Bégin. Tony's hard work, his vision, his insights and his commitment to CSCE have been an inspiration to me. He is a most worthy individual to be our President. It will be an honour to serve under him and most importantly, to call him a friend!

I cannot sign off without thanking another "friend" – Doug Salloum. Doug and all of the staff at Head Office (Lois, Mahmoud, and Patricia) have been a backbone of strength, a continuous presence that glues our diverse family in CSCE together and individuals dedicated to continuous improvement of CSCE. We have grown together and learned together. Doug has made my time as President a most enjoyable experience based on hard work, taking me to task when appropriate, keeping track of the most trivial details and always in a most professional and respectful manner. It has been my privilege to work at your side.

To all the hard working volunteers on Committees, Divisions, Regions and Sections who are the strength of CSCE – thank you!

To all those who offered words of encouragement along the way, commenting on something I may have written or said and letting me know they appreciated the efforts – thank you!

To all the students and young professionals, I meant it when I have said this is an exciting time to be a young civil engineer. You have so much to accomplish and I know you will. For your respect, your fun-loving enthusiasm and for your idealism that gives me hope for the future – thank you!

To all members of CSCE – thank you!

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