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BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS, LAND SURVEYORS, AND GEOLOGISTS

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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Message from the President



The Board is pleased to announce the July 1, 2011, appointment of Ric Moore, a professional land surveyor, as the Executive Officer of the Board. Mr. Moore, who was the Senior Registrar Land Surveyor for the Board, replaces Assistant Executive Officer, Joanne Arnold who, at the Board's request, was serving as the Interim Executive Officer since December 14, 2010. We are fortunate that due to the experience and hard work of both Ms. Arnold and Mr. Moore, the Board's business was handled competently and with extreme dedication. The transition was seamless.

Last March the Board went through its "Sunset Review" at the State Legislature (a review that takes place approximately every four years). The purpose of this review is to provide the Legislature with a synopsis of the Board's history, its current functions, and to identify any pending issues. The Legislature extended the Board for an additional four years and gave the Board the authority to require its applicants for certification or licensure to be fingerprinted (most boards of Consumer Affairs already have this authority). Also in March, the Board members and staff met to update the Board's Strategic Plan. The issues addressed were adopted and the Board now closely follows and places a higher emphasis on its updated plan.

Last September, the Board sent out over 1,320 "Certificates of

Recognition" to its licensees who have held a license for at least 50 years. Board staff received correspondence from many individuals who were touched by the Board's "compassion and recognition."

In October, the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveyors (NCEES) took over the administration of all of the national engineering and surveying examinations offered by the Board. The Board is still preparing and administering the California specific engineering and surveying examinations. The only difference that the candidates should notice is that the days that the exams are administered may be different, and there is assigned seating. Also, in October, the Board will begin to administer some of its examinations by computer at various computer testing sites throughout California. As you can see, the Board has had a busy year. I would like to thank the staff for all of their continued dedication to their jobs and assisting with the various changes, as well as again thank Ms. Arnold and Mr. Moore for their fine work both as Interim Executive Officer and Executive Officer.

Don't forget to mark your calendars when renewals are due. It is also important to notify the board when you change your address. This helps keep your fees down when you miss your renewal notice and minimizes board and staff time having to reinstate licenses.

Message from the Executive Officer



I feel very fortunate to be able to write this message from this position with the Board, for many reasons. For most of my 30-plus year career in land surveying it never occurred to me that I would be working for a public agency, let alone the

Board that regulates those professions that I have come to know as second nature. I, like many other licensed professionals, tend to gravitate towards opportunities to give back to the profession. Working within the land surveying, engineering, and geological professions, one is usually presented with many opportunities to interact together, and with, the general public on a daily basis. Many of the obligations and responsibilities that society has bestowed upon these professionals are generated by or for the purposes of benefiting the public need.

It is a tremendous opportunity to be able to expand those professional relationships and continue to serve the public in a positive manner. The group of people that I will be able to work with is the proverbial "icing on the cake". Many individuals are responsible for ensuring that we are successful in achieving our mission and whether we are referring to the long list of members appointed to the Board, our industry expert consultants, or the great staff members that continually rise to overcome the ever-changing licensing requirements, we have a long history of active, thoughtful, and forward-thinking team members.

In the coming months and years, both the Board and our customers alike will

encounter a paradigm shift in how we conduct our operations, which may appear at the onset confusing and different from our more traditional services and functions. Staff involved with applications and licensing will continue to adjust their procedures as we integrate new technology intended to "nationalize" our application and licensing processes. Examinations staff has begun the transition towards converting our licensing exam delivery model from paper-based-testing (PBT) to computer-based-testing (CBT) for all of our state specific exams with the goal towards better utilization of our ever-decreasing resources while ensuring a more consistent examination environment for applicants. Enforcement staff continues to recognize the impact that technology and the downturn in the nation's economy has had on the professions that we regulate and are evaluating the best manner in which to proactively extend outreach to both the regulated licensees and the general public.

While we look forward to the challenges inherent with these changes and feel confident that that the Board will ultimately be successful in the future, we do recognize that there will be some missteps along the way. Our goal is to minimize these to a manageable level that can be reasonably and fairly addressed. If at any time you encounter a situation while interacting with the Board that needs attention, please feel free to contact me at ric.moore@dca.ca.gov or through the Board's phone system. Even though we would all like to, we can't guarantee 100% error-free services. But we can guarantee that our goal is to address all issues fairly, within a reasonable timeframe, and in a courteous manner.



NCEES Honors California Surveyor Patrick Tami for Service

Patrick Tami, P.L.S., has been awarded the NCEES Distinguished Service Award for his dedicated service to the engineering and surveying professions. NCEES recognized the 2011 award winners at its annual meeting, held August 24–27 in Providence, Rhode Island.

Mr. Tami has been a member of the California Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists since 2006 and served as its President in 2009. Also during his tenure on the California board, he has played an active role in outreach, giving presentations on licensure, and the surveying profession.



NCEES President Joe Timms (left), Patrick J. Tami (right)

Mr. Tami has also been an active member of NCEES, serving on its board of directors as Western Zone vice president from 2008 to 2010. His contributions to the work of NCEES committees and task forces include chairing the Committee on Uniform Procedures and Legislative Guidelines. He has also assisted with the development of the NCEES Fundamentals of Surveying and Principles and Practice of Surveying exams, serving on the exam development and standard setting committees for surveying.

His other contributions to the engineering and surveying professions include serving as president of the California Land Surveyors Association.

Enforcement Unit Now Recruiting Expert Consultants

The Board Enforcement Unit is recruiting professional engineers, land surveyors, and geologists with specific areas of expertise to serve as experts.

Duties

Experts review enforcement complaint investigation cases for compliance with BPELSG standards and regulations. Upon completion of a review, a written report of the findings must be submitted to the Boards. Experts may also be asked to testify.

Qualifications

Expertise in the area of the complaint is essential. Most cases involve residential and small business projects. Applicants must be free of Board Disciplinary actions, licensed in California, a California resident, and have been license for at least five years.

Reimbursement

Experts are paid an hourly rate for case review, report preparation, and actual time spent testifying at administrative hearings. Travel costs associated with testifying are reimbursed.

How to Apply

Interested parties should print out and complete the appropriate form:

Areas of Expertise form for Land Surveyors and Civil Engineers (including Structural and /Geotechnical):

http://www.pels.ca.gov/pubs/forms/experts_aoe_ce_ls.pdf

Areas of Expertise form for Electrical and Mechanical Engineers:

http://www.pels.ca.gov/pubs/forms/experts_aoe_me_ee.pdf

Areas of Expertise form for Geologists and Geophysicists:

http://www.geology.ca.gov/forms-pubs/technical_review_application.pdf

Please submit the form with your most current resume/curriculum vitae to the following address:

Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists
Attention: Enforcement Unit
2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95833

Conversion to Computer Based Testing

By Ric Moore, P.L.S.
BPELSG Executive Officer



The Board is in the process of converting its state licensing examinations to computer-based testing (CBT) using a phased implementation schedule. The following lists the anticipated schedule for each examination to first be administered using CBT:

- Land Surveyor and Geologist - Spring 2012
- Civil Engineer, Traffic Engineer, CEG, CHG, PgP - Fall 2012

The implementation of CBT will more clearly distinguish expectations set forth for California state exams and ultimately allow for a greater number of test locations and dates. This conversion to a more effective and secure method to administer California state exams allows the Board to concentrate more on testing content rather than the logistics of organizing administration sites and personnel.

The California Geotechnical Engineer exam was the first to be delivered in CBT format this past October with the remainder of the state engineering, land surveying, and geology-based exams slated for delivery during spring and fall 2012. Initially, the California state exams will be offered at Prometric CBT Centers located throughout California, Oregon and Nevada and will adhere to the traditional annual or biannual schedules similar to previous years. As the testing content of each exam matures, the Board anticipates that more CBT Centers across the country will be added to facilitate the large number of out-of-state licensing applicants that California experiences.

For applicants wondering how this new experience will integrate with or affect the current application submittal process, the following chart provides a generalized description of the application review and approval process as it applies to state exams:



New Fees Coming...

By Jeff Alameida
BPELSG Budget Analyst

The Board is proposing to amend Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 407, Engineering and Land Surveying fees. The specific purpose of this proposal is to:

- Decrease the Board's application fee to reflect the cost of application evaluation and staff time.
- Introduce a state examination fee to regulate the costs of developing and administering state specific exams.
- Reduce the fee for biennial license renewals.

The goal of these proposed regulations is to re-align regulatory fees to reflect changes that will take place in FY 2012-13 at which time licensee applicants will pay their national exam fees directly to the Board's national association. This goal is consistent with the Board's Strategic Plan objectives to encourage professional licensure at a cost comparable to other states by providing mobility of licensure into California through the continued use of nationally recognized exams. If you would like additional information regarding the proposed fees please follow this link: http://www.pels.ca.gov/about_us/rulemaking.shtml



New Board Member

Dr. Hong Beom Rhee was appointed to the Board by the Speaker of the Assembly on March 17, 2011. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, and completed graduate work in Civilization and Asian studies at Harvard University. He has studied international relations and received an M.A. in history from the University of Pennsylvania and also majored in political science at Tokyo University.

Dr. Rhee has written many articles and given lectures on history, politics, government, and international relations at universities in the U.S. and Asia. In 2005, he received special recognition from the U.S. Congress for his activities in promotion of freedom and peace.

Enforcement Actions on the Web

Board staff is in the process of updating the information on its website regarding enforcement actions that have been taken against licensed and unlicensed individuals. Unfortunately, due to workload issues, Board staff has not been able to update the information as timely we would have liked. We are now making a concerted effort to post all disciplinary decisions on the Board's website as they become final and effective. The decisions are linked at http://www.pels.ca.gov/consumers/acc-disc_list.shtml/ as well through the License Lookup feature. Within the next year, we plan to begin posting all final administrative citations as well as all final actions (decisions and citations) that occurred during the period in which we were unable to update the website.

The Responsibilities of Serving as a Reference

During your career, you may be asked to be a reference for an applicant pursuing his or her professional license. Consider the following issues before you put your name, reputation, and license on the line.

Serving as a reference for a professional engineer, land surveyor, geologist, or geophysicist applicant means being responsible to the Board; the engineering, land surveying, geology, and geophysics professions; consumers; and the applicant. A reference's appraisal of an applicant and endorsement for professional licensure is looked at closely and is a critical component in the Board's decision-making process.

It is important to note that references are technical (not character) appraisals, so review of the applicant's plans, calculations, maps, and/or reports is

necessary for a truly valid assessment. Therefore, the person providing the reference must possess the technical knowledge and abilities necessary to assess those duties that the applicant is claiming to have performed while employed. Appraisals are confidential and should not be shared with the applicant.

Civil engineer applicants can only use licensed civil engineers as references, electrical engineer applicants must use licensed electrical engineers, and mechanical engineer applicants must use licensed mechanical engineers. It may be acceptable for civil engineers to serve as references for mechanical and electrical engineer applicants if the civil engineer possesses the technical competency to appraise the work of the electrical and/or mechanical engineer applicant. For the other professional engineer disciplines (not including geotechnical or structural

engineering), the reference need not be a professional engineer; however, the reference still must be technically competent to appraise the applicant's abilities. Land surveyor applicants can only use licensed land surveyors or civil engineers legally authorized to practice land surveying as references, and geology and geophysics applicants can only use licensed geologists and geophysicists, respectively.

For questions regarding the completion of the Engagement Record and Reference form or the Independent Evaluation of Scope, Character, and Duration of Applicant's Qualifying Geologic Work Experience form, contact the appropriate Board staff as listed at http://www.pels.ca.gov/about_us/contact.shtml

Expert Consultants for Exams

The Board's Examination Development Unit is recruiting licensed geologists and geophysicists who reside and practice in California to assist with various aspects of examination development. These tasks include item writing and review, field testing, grading, and standard setting. Newly licensed (within the past three years) professionals are especially needed. Licensed experts (formerly subject matter experts) are needed in the following disciplines to assist with the appropriate California state-specific examinations:



- Professional Geologists to assist with the California Supplemental Component (CSC)
- Professional Geophysicists to assist with the California Professional Geophysicists (PGp) examination
- Certified Engineering Geologists to assist with the California Certified Engineering Geologist (CEG) examination
- Certified Hydrogeologists to assist with the California Certified Hydrogeologist (CHG) examination.

Experts have the opportunity to meet and work with other licensed professionals from around the state and are paid an honorarium for time spent at meetings and meeting preparation. Travel costs associated with attending meetings are reimbursed at the current state contracted rates.

If you would like more information about being an Expert Consultant for exams, please visit the website at: <http://www.geology.ca.gov/licensees/smeswanted.shtml> or contact the Examination Development Unit at (916) 572-GEO1 [4361].

Reporting Unlicensed Activity

By Larry Kereszt, Enforcement Analyst

It is a violation of state law for an unlicensed individual to offer and/or practice civil, electrical, or mechanical engineering, land surveying, geology, and geophysics unless they are appropriately licensed by the Board. Besides being illegal, unlicensed individuals lack accountability for their work and provide unfair competition for licensed professionals whose licensure verifies that they have the appropriate education and experience to perform engineering, land surveying, geological, or geophysical work for the consumers of California. Unlicensed individuals often do poor work or do not finish their work because they do not have the education or experience required of a licensee to perform the task. The Board has limited disciplinary authority over unlicensed individuals and cannot require them to finish a project or return a client's money. A licensed professional, however, is held accountable for his or her work, and the Board has the authority to investigate and discipline a licensee for substandard work.

Our Board takes this unlicensed offering and/or practice of professional services seriously. Since the Enforcement Unit is limited in its resources and cannot proactively search for unlicensed activities, we rely on others to inform staff when unlicensed work is being offered and/or performed. Unlicensed offering and/or practice can come from a variety of sources, with websites, word of mouth, and telephone directories being the most common.

The Board is asking that any listing of these services by an individual not licensed to perform those services be sent to our office for review. Licenses can be verified on our websites, www.pels.ca.gov and www.geology.ca.gov, or by calling the Board office. If you become aware of unlicensed offering and/or practice activities, please provide us with documentary evidence of the alleged unlicensed activity. This may include copies of the advertisement, the written contract, a business card, or other documents that may support the allegation. You may choose to submit the complaint anonymously, if you wish. Enforcement staff will review the evidence received and contact the parties involved. The goal of the Board is to ensure understanding of and compliance with the laws through education to prevent future violations and enforcement actions, when necessary.

Any questions or concerns you may have regarding possible unlicensed practice should be directed to Enforcement Analyst Larry Kereszt by email at Larry.Kereszt@dca.ca.gov or by telephone at (916) 263-2240.



NEW ONLINE ADDRESS CHANGES

Applicants and licensees may now submit their address change notifications to the Board via our new online system. Please visit, https://www.dca.ca.gov/webapps/pels/address_change.php

Remember, it is the responsibility of the applicant or licensee to notify the Board of any change to their address of record within 30 days of the change. The Board is not responsible for the applicant's or licensee's failure to receive official mailings from the Board due to the applicant's or licensee's failure to timely notify the Board of a change of address.

2012 BOARD MEETINGS

May 15
June 28-29
August 23-24
October 18-19
December 13-14



This schedule is tentative and may change. Please check the Board's website for updates

Contact the Board

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Toll Free: (866) 780-5370
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Email: BPELS.Office@dca.ca.gov
Website: <http://www.pels.ca.gov>

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