

The Association Roadmap for the Future Takes Shape

The AOLS has now completed the task of developing a Strategic Plan for the Association that will provide direction and address our key priorities for the next five years. As reported in the Fall 2010 issue of the Ontario Professional Surveyor, the AOLS began the process of developing a strategy looking forward over the next five years in June. The issues that emerged were summarized and discussed at the first strategy workshop held in Peterborough in September.

The five key priorities that emerged in this meeting were:

- *quality service - implementing mandatory continuing education / enforce standards within the profession*
- *Improving entry into the profession – recruitment / revising entrance requirements:*
- *Expanding the profession – building a brand for the GIMs within the profession (including the possibility of opening up grandfathering)*
- *The feasibility of the Association spearheading the development of an accurate digital cadastre for Ontario*
- *Member support – understanding our customer needs / statistics*

Task forces then went to work for a period of approximately two months, concentrating on resolving some of the issues identified and developing options and detailed plans on how to move forward in each of these areas. These task forces generated considerable discussion across the profession in Ontario on these matters. In addition, given the importance of the development of an accurate digital cadastre, consultants were retained to initiate a feasibility study on this important initiative.

In November, a second strategic planning workshop was held, attended by members of Council and Regional Group Chairs that developed the key elements of our strategy that will now be communicated to our members and other key stakeholders, and which will be the focus of intensive implementation activities over the next 12 months. As part of this implementation process, a significant amount of time will be devoted to a presentation and discussion of the new strategy at the Annual General Meeting in February.

The Task Force findings and recommendations were presented at the outset of this second strategy workshop. The remainder of this workshop was then devoted to developing the key elements of the future strategy for our Association. These included a concrete vision of what we want our Association to look like in five years, a prioritized, focused mission for the next 1 -2 years, as well as specific plans for implementation. The strategy will then be

approved by Council and rolled out through a broad communication activity that includes specific actions that will be taken during the first quarter of 2011.

Key elements of our 2015 vision statement are as follows:

- *We have an engaged and growing membership providing innovative products and services in the fields of land surveying, hydrography, photogrammetry, geodesy, and geographic information management*
- *We maintain rigorous standards, including an effective, transparent peer review processes*
- *We understand the needs of our membership and provide relevant professional development, technical and business support and services*
- *We make a significant contribution to Ontario's maintenance and use of accurate cadastral information*
- *We collaborate with other associations, government, academia, and industry to create opportunities of mutual benefit*

We are aiming for a growth in membership of at least 25% by 2015, with an emphasis on reducing the average age of the membership. In addition we aim to have significant representation from all areas of the geomatics profession. We want to become a much more attractive profession for young college and university graduates.

Over the next 18 – 24 months, recognizing that we have limited resources, our strategic focus will be on the following six priorities:


- 1) *Simplifying our committee structure to improve responsiveness and accountability*
- 2) *Evaluating the business case for creating an accurate digital cadastre for Ontario*
- 3) *Improving quality service - implementing mandatory professional development / enforce standards / peer review process*
- 4) *Improving entry into the profession – recruitment / revising entrance and articling requirements*
- 5) *Improved member support – understanding our members' needs, improved communications, launch our new web site, support PSC*
- 6) *Expanding membership – new, younger members, and professionals from related geomatics disciplines*

Each of these priorities has strategies, resources and 100-day action plans associated with them, which are already being implemented. Just because an element is not stated explicitly in our mission, does not mean that it will be neglected. So, for example, while not specifically mentioned,

we will be looking to work with and build cooperation among the other provincial associations in Canada as well as supporting a successful launch of Professional Surveyors Canada.

We have a 100-day communication and roll-out plan for the strategy, culminating in our discussions at the Annual General Meeting.

We plan to have one-day strategy updates every 100 days throughout 2011, in which we will engage the strategic planning team in a discussion of our progress and outline what our key actions should be in the subsequent 100 days.

We already sense, and hear, a mood of optimism around the new Strategic Plan. Engagement in its implementation is growing steadily throughout our Association, and we hope to have at least 70% of our members engaged in some form of implementation activity by the end of 2011. 

Your views are welcome. If you wish to share your thoughts on our future strategy in confidence with **Peter** and **Erik**, please send an email to elockhart@business.queensu.ca or call **Erik** at **613-533-6681**, or **Peter** at **613-382-1819**.

If you would like a more detailed write-up of the strategy, please contact **Blain Martin** by email at blain@aols.org.