

## ***Panel Discussion: Government Relations Strategic Priorities***

A panel of experts from various industries, with connections to different levels of government. The purpose of the panel is to discuss new ideas and concepts for modification and changes to the Association to make it a more cohesive working business within the government relations area. The past year's efforts in government relations will be discussed, and input will be sought from the members into future strategic priorities. The review of this panel will be published through an e-news bulletin and on the website.

**Panel: James Blatz, P.Eng. FEC, Michael Gregoire, P.Eng. FEC, and Allan Silk, P.Eng. FEC. Moderated by C. Scott Sarna.**

**Dr. James Blatz, P.Eng. FEC**, obtained his BSc (1996) and PhD (2000) in Civil Engineering from the University of Manitoba and completed an NSERC Post-Doctoral award at the GeoEngineering Centre at Queen's-RMC. He joined the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Manitoba in 2001 and served as the Associate Head of the Department of Civil Engineering and also served as Associate Dean (Research and Graduate Programs) in the Faculty of Engineering prior to his current appointment as the Associate Vice-President (Partnerships) at the University of Manitoba. His research as a Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering focusses in the areas of risk management for civil engineering infrastructure and technical aspects of temporary and permanent flood protection works. James is also the founding President of TREK Geotechnical, a consulting engineering services firm located in Winnipeg with over 20 employees that provides geotechnical consulting services in Western Canada.

He serves on numerous boards and committee's for technical societies and other organizations; most notably, he served from 2009 to 2014 on the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC). He previously served on NSERC's Executive Council, was Chair of the NSERC National Committee on Grants and Scholarships and was a member of the NSERC Prairies Advisory Council. He was appointed by Engineers Canada from 2011 to 2014 to the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board that is responsible for accreditation of Engineering programs nationally

**Michael Gregoire, P.Eng. FEC**, works in the areas of Investigations, Discipline, Enforcement, Legislation, Standards, and the Continuing Competency as the Director of Professional Standards at Engineers Geoscientists

Manitoba. Prior to taking on this role in 2008, Michael worked in the world of consulting engineering, where he provided solutions to problem buildings.

**C. Scott Sarna** is an accomplished leader and experienced consultant, specializing in business and politics. He was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba and has lived in Canada, Australia, and the United States. His political background started as a co-campaign manager and brought him to his role today as a political lobbyist. In 2010 he ran as a candidate for Member of Parliament. He has been a business consultant and key business leader for his entire career. In addition to being the CEO of Royal Sire Ltd., he is the CFO of a multinational real estate company.

**Allan Silk, P. Eng. FEC**, graduated from the University of Manitoba in 1985 with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering. For most of his career, Allan has specialized in operational planning at Manitoba Hydro. During his career, Allan has participated in and led many inter-utility taskforces and committees investigating transmission capability. Allan also has worked on international projects for Manitoba Hydro International in Guatemala, Saudi Arabia, and Tajikistan.

Allan is a Professional Engineer in the Province of Manitoba. In November 2004 he commenced a one year term as President of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Manitoba. In 2008, Allan was awarded a Fellowship from Engineers Canada. Allan is a member of IEEE.