

1921-1996

History of the New Jersey Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors

Written By V.P. Pushpavati Amin, P.E.

The year 1996 marks the 75th anniversary of the New Jersey State Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors, which incidentally coincides with the 25th anniversary of the Division of Consumer Affairs. The Board was created pursuant to the adoption of New Jersey Public Law of 1921, Chapter 224, on April 8, 1921.

The examining board was created to carry out the provisions of the act and to license Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. The five members of the Board, all either Professional Engineers and/or Land Surveyors, were appointed by Governor Edward I. Edwards. The Board's first meeting was held on March 29, 1922 at the Governor's Office in Jersey City. The meeting was attended by Governor Edwards, his Secretary, F. Harry Foley, and Board members Thomas J. Wasser, John C. Remington, Jr., George H. Noble, Harvey Snook and Hugh A. Kelly. During the meeting, Thomas J. Wasser was elected the first President of the Board. Also at the meeting, the Board decided that it would contact the National Societies of Engineers and Land Surveyors to obtain their New Jersey membership lists in order to establish a data base for licensure prospects.

The Board then met every other week, just as it does today. The April 10 and April 24, 1922 meetings were held in the Assembly Chamber, City Hall, Jersey City and in the Jersey City District Court Room. On May 8, 1922, the Board moved into its first permanent quarters at the Trust Company of New Jersey Building in Jersey City. During the first year, the Board wrote and adopted its By-Laws and Rules of Procedures which laid down the rules of operation of the Board, procedures for application, and criteria for approvals and licensure. At the July 10, 1922 meeting, the Board acted upon and approved the first group of applications. Twenty-three applicants were granted licenses on that date. Processing of applications was the major activity at the Board meetings. By the end of the first year, the Board roster listed 792 licensees. A partial list of engineers with their discipline specific licenses appeared in the roster as follows:

636 - Frederick S. Smith	- Civil Engineer and Land Surveyor
637 - Oscar Smith, Jr.	- Highway and Municipal Engineer and Land Surveyors
638 - Charles F. Schnepf	- Mechanical Engineer and Land Surveyor
639 - Charles W. Simpson	- Structural Engineer
640 - Spencer G. Harvey	- Railroad Engineer
534 - John P. De Pol	- Construction Engineer and Land Surveyor
535 - Harry H. Skinner	- Municipal Engineer and Land Surveyor
536 - George B. Peters	- Highway Engineer and Land Surveyor
537 - Otto Reiner	- Mechanical Engineer and Land Surveyor
538 - George A. Noska	- Structural Engineer
539 - Fred Moeller	- Mechanical and Electrical Engineer

- 540 - George R. Merrill - Municipal Engineer and Land Surveyor
- 541 - Raymond M. Guerry - Municipal Engineer and Land Surveyor
- 542 - Herbert S. Austin - Construction Engineer

The application fee for licensure in 1922 was \$25 for a Professional Engineer or Land Surveyor a \$35 for dual licensure as Professional Engineer and Land Surveyor. The license renewal fee was \$1 p year and a replacement certificate fee was \$10.

During those early years, while the State Board in New Jersey was busy establishing its rules, regulations and licensing procedures, some very important developments were taking place on the national front. Wyoming was the first state to exercise the constitutional power to regulate the engineering profession by creating the Wyoming Board of Engineering Examiners in 1907. Soon thereafter, recognizing the benefits of such regulations, other state Boards followed. Louisiana passed legislation in 1908, Illinois and Florida in 1915, Oregon, Nevada, Michigan, Iowa, Idaho and Colorado in 1919. Because each state developed its own engineering registration laws, the State Boards soon recognized the need for a central body to coordinate their individual efforts. The standards of registration varied from state to state making it difficult for engineers to obtain reciprocal licenses in adjoining states. The need for uniform examination and registration procedures was recognized. This allowed for organized and systematic methods of interstate licensure. As a result, in 1920, a year before the creation of the New Jersey Board, representatives from seven of the existing ten State Engineering Boards met in Chicago to form a national organization which would represent the common interests of licensing boards. At the first meeting, the Council of Engineering Examiners was formed, and later became National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEE).

The State Board of New Jersey was invited to attend the 1921 meeting, but, along with a few other states, declined to join the Council. As stated in the New Jersey Board's minutes of December 27, 1922 New Jersey laws for reciprocity differed from other State Board laws, and the Board, therefore, declined to join the Council. Moreover, New Jersey wanted to observe the operation of its newly instituted law before amending its articles to conform with other states. In 1931, 10 years after its formation, the New Jersey Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors joined the Council.

The year 1938 was significant in the history of the New Jersey State Board. Between 1928 and 1937 developments in the engineering profession led the Council of Engineering Examiners to develop a Model Law for the registration of engineers. It became evident that the profession needed a method to clearly distinguish between engineers and non-engineers and between those prepared to function as professionals and those who were not. After extensive debates among the various engineering societies, the state registration boards and the Council of Engineering Examiners, a Model Law was developed by the Council.

This Model Law, approved by the Council in 1937, set the minimum qualifications for an engineer to be licensed. These qualifications included a degree in engineering, work experience and an examination. Requirements for examination were non-existent prior to the Model Law. Thereafter, various states adopted this Model, changing their registration laws. In 1938, New Jersey repealed its existing registration law with the passage of P.L. 1938, Chapter 342, and by passing new laws that were modeled after the national model. Prior to 1938, engineers were registered in four specific disciplines: Civil, Electrical, Mechanical and Mining/Chemical.

The debate over a uniform exam continued at the national level over the next 20 years, while the states conducted exams to fulfill the requirements of the Model Law. The examinations were three days long and divided into Parts I, II and III. The New Jersey Board administered its own exams. In 1955 the National Council offered the first EIT exam to 277 engineering seniors in eight states in the Northeast Zone. This was the first step toward a uniform exam. However, it was not until 1965 that the EIT exam was offered as a national exam. This was followed in 1966 by the national PE exam which was given in four disciplines (Civil, Chemical, Electrical, Mechanical). New Jersey again decided to "wait" before joining the other states in offering the national exams. Finally, New Jersey acceded and offered the EIT exam in 1980 and the PE exam in 1983.

The Map Filing Law, Title 46, Chapter 23, became effective on January 1, 1954. This law provides that maps requiring approval by law or that are to be approved for filing with a county recording office, shall conform to a certain set of requirements.

The passing of the "Building Design Services Act", P.L. 1989, Chapter 277, was another significant milestone in the history of the New Jersey State Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. The engineering profession had a lengthy struggle with the profession of architecture for more than 25 years over the issue of permissible areas of practice by each profession. Several legal battles between architects and engineers led to discussions and negotiations between the Boards of Architects and Engineers. The members of both Boards put in long, hard hours of work and eventually resolved their differences. The outcome was the passage of the 1989 "Building Design Services Act". This act defined the areas of practice for each profession and established a Joint Committee of Architects and Engineers to resolve any differences.

The minimum education standard for land surveyor licensure was amended effective January 1, 1991 to require an undergraduate degree in land surveying. This new standard has enhanced the ability of licensees to safeguard the life, health and property of New Jersey consumers.

Today, the Board office is located at 124 Halsey Street, Newark along with other Boards that are part of the Division of Consumer Affairs, under the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety. Prior to its moving in 1990, the Division and all Boards were located at 1100 Raymond Boulevard in Newark.

The five-member Board of 1921 continued until 1971 when it was expanded to eight members, which included two public members and one government member. In 1985 two land surveyor members were added bringing the total to 10.

This brief history would not be complete without recognizing the dedication and hard work put forth by present and past Board members. During good times and difficult times, during financial crises and administration changes, the dedicated members of the Board worked hard to ensure the Board's proper operation and to carry out its mandates.

Over the past 75 years, a total of 60 members have served on the Board. The members have continually remained active in NCEES affairs and served in leadership roles.

John C. Remington, Jr., a 29 year member and President of the Board, served as President of NCEES during 1946-1947. Dr. Frank J. Cannizzaro, former Board member and President, served as Vice-President

of the Northeast Zone of NCEES and a member of its Board of Directors. Many others were recognized for their distinguished service by the Council. The following New Jersey Board members were recipients of "Distinguished Service Awards":

P.H. Daggett, New Brunswick	1938
John C. Remington, Jr., Camden	1943
Hugh A. Kelly, Jersey City	1944
T.E. Heathcote, Newark	1957
A.L. Jones, West Orange	1957
N.J. McGuinness, Newark	1958
Frank J. Cannizzaro, Cliffside Park	1977
Robert C. Kirkpatrick, Jr., Morristown	1990

Commencing with the 1996-1998 licensure period, New Jersey has a total 18,503 licensees of which 17,858 are Professional Engineers, 1,101 are Land Surveyors and 453 are Professional Engineers/Land Surveyors. Today, the Board faces new challenges such as continuing professional competency, electronic media documents, comity licensure across international borders, a new licensure model proposed by the national societies, etc. The challenges continue—!! Congratulations to all!

THE END