

History of the Board 1980 through 2010

The transition between Act 73 of 1950 and Act 568 of 1980 was easily accomplished. Prior to 1980, corporations and other firms which were practicing or offering to practice professional engineering in Louisiana were listed by the Board as having satisfactory qualifications. Upon passage of Act 568, these corporations and firms were immediately notified of the new requirement that, to continue practicing in Louisiana, they must be registered with the State Board. The change from the 1950 registration law to the 1980 registration law affecting qualifications for certification for Engineers-in Training was particularly significant. Under the 1980 law, only college graduates or senior engineering students would be allowed to take the first or Fundamentals examination.

Mr. Paul L. Landry, P.E., was appointed Executive Secretary of the Board on July 1, 1981, replacing Dr. Daniel Vliet who had retired in order to devote full time to his new position as Head of the Electrical Engineering School at Tulane. Mr. Landry became the Board's first full-time Executive Secretary. His office staff consisted of an administrative assistant and six other full-time civil service employees.

Pursuant to Act 568 of 1980, the Board's new registration law for professional engineers and land surveyors, the Board developed and passed its first rules of professional conduct for its registrants. These rules were passed pursuant to the Board's mandate to safeguard life, health and property, to promote the public welfare, and to establish and maintain a high standard of integrity in practice. It was the Board's primary objective to enact rules which dealt primarily with the relationship between registrants and the public, not rules which would substitute as a code of ethics for the various professional and technical societies. These rules dealt primarily with the engineer and land surveyor's responsibility to hold paramount the safety, health and welfare of the public in the performance of their professional duties. In addition, these rules also dealt with the registrant's performance of services within their area of competence, as well as the responsibility of the registrant to act in professional matters for their employers or clients as faithful agents or trustees.

During the 1980's, the State of Louisiana was experiencing an economic oil and gas boom. Increased demands upon the Board necessitated increasing the size of the Board staff. Accordingly, Act 461 of 1982 raised the maximum registration and certification fees from \$35.00 to \$100.00. In addition the Act raised the renewal fee to an amount no greater than \$25.00 per year. To assist in the administrative functions of the Board office, a word processor and computer terminals were installed in 1983.

In late 1983, an investigator was employed to assist Mr. Landry in the enforcement responsibilities of the Board. Within the next two years enforcement had become very proactive and the workload was increasing substantially. Act 508 of 1985 allowed the Board to levy up to a \$5,000 fine in disciplinary actions and required that all funds derived from any punitive fines be deposited in the state general fund. A Laws and Rules Questionnaire was developed in 1986 to test an applicant's knowledge of registration law and rules of the Board prior to licensure.

1985 witnessed the appointment of the first petroleum engineer to the Board. Also that year, Attorney General's Opinion, #85-53, interpreted the statutory definition of practice of land surveying. This opinion recognized that many aspects of surveying could be performed by various professionals but limited boundary surveying to Professional Land Surveyors.

The trend during the 1980's was toward requiring that all persons desiring to be registered as professional engineers and professional land surveyors have college degrees. January 1, 1985 saw an end to the provisions allowing registration of Professional Engineers by long established practice. Act 385 of 1987 mandated that after December 31, 1990, all land surveyors in training must have a baccalaureate degree with at least thirty (30) semester credit hours in land surveying, mapping, and real property courses. It also mandated that after December 31, 1994, all professional land surveyors must have a baccalaureate degree with at least thirty (30) semester credit hours in land surveying, mapping and real property courses. This act also required that the professional land surveyor applicants have four (4) or more years of combined office and field experience, two (2) of which must be in responsible charge of surveying projects.

Act 694 of 1987 proclaimed the Board to be financially self-sufficient and prohibited it from either receiving or spending any state funds. This act also modified the industrial exemption to require persons practicing civil engineering or land surveying to comply with all engineering and surveying provisions of the registration law.

As enforcement activities continued to increase, the Board began to realize that certain modifications and amendments had to be made to its existing law. Act 149 of 1989 provided, among other things, that decisions by the Board in disciplinary matters must be appealed pursuant to the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act.

The Board continued to grow and change. Concurrently, professional land surveyors continued to strengthen their profession and to seek stronger representation on the Board. On September 20, 1990, the Board established guidelines to distinguish those types of surveying services that could be performed only by professional land surveyors from those surveying services which could be performed by professional engineers and professional land surveyors. On December 10, 1990, the Minimum Standards for Property Boundary Surveys went into effect. These standards were promulgated as Chapter 25 of the Rules of the Board. Also going into effect at that time was a rule requiring all registrants of the Board to obtain an official seal and to date all work.

The trend in the 1990's was to strengthen the requirement for professional examination and education. Effective January 1, 1991, all persons teaching engineering design or in responsible charge of engineering design were required to be registered professional engineers. The requirement that all new applicants for Land Surveyor in Training certification have a Bachelor's degree also went into effect on this date.

In addition, in early 1990, the Board undertook a two-fold statewide informational dissemination program. Clerks of Court were advised about certain statutory requirements regarding the filing of maps, plats, or drawings depicting property boundaries in official court records. Various governmental agencies in the state, responsible for issuance of

building permits and reviews of engineering design plans for compliance with requirements of ordinances or codes, were advised about certain statutory requirements applicable to engineers.

Within a few months, Act 435 of 1991 increased the number of Board members from ten (10) to eleven (11). The new member was a professional land surveyor. Act 472 of that same year removed voting restrictions for the two (2) professional land surveyor members of the Board. The Board also recognized nuclear engineering as a new branch during this year. This increased the number of recognized branches to 10.

As the responsibilities of the Board continued to grow, so did the expenses. Accordingly, in 1993, pursuant to Act 47, the Board was empowered to increase registration and certification fees to a maximum amount of \$200.00. Any increases to these registration and certification fees were restricted to a triennial amount of no more than \$30.00. Furthermore, the act empowered the Board to increase renewals to a maximum amount of \$100.00 per year. The act also restricted any increase of renewals to a triennial amount of no more than \$15.00.

In early 1991, the Board forwarded letters to industries throughout Louisiana in response to concerns about industries' interpretation of the industrial exemption. Letters were sent to 373 firms. Responses were received from 319 of the firms. This project was concluded in late 1991. Sometime in 1992, a meeting was held with industrial representatives in Baton Rouge. 1993 witnessed the formation of the Industrial Advisory Committee (IAC) to tackle the problem of licensure of persons practicing engineering in industry.

The Board added Environmental and Control Systems as new branches during 1993 increasing the number of recognized branches to 12. Initial licensure for these two new branches was through education and experience, not examination. Act 53 of 1993 continued to strengthen the precept that engineering requires a highly technical education. Applicants for engineer in training (EIT) certification with a related science curriculum could continue to be certified through December 31, 1998. This act also allowed PE licensure for graduates of unapproved engineering curriculum to continue to be certified through December 31, 1998. Finally, Act 53 allowed the Board to assess reasonable cost incurred with disciplinary proceedings.

Effective July 20, 1994, an applicant for licensure in Environmental and Control Systems had to successfully complete a professional examination. Rule changes developed by the IAC authorized work performed in accordance with a system of engineering practices, previously approved by a professional engineer, to be considered as work supervised by a professional engineer.

Effective January 1, 1995, all new professional land surveyor applicants were required to have a Bachelor's degree. The Board also published its first Louisiana Journal in the fall of that year.

Mr. H. Glen Kent, Jr., J.D., P.L.S. was hired by the Board April 1, 1996 and assumed the duties

of the Executive Secretary upon retirement of Mr. Paul L. Landry on August 25, 1996.

Act 361 of 1997 changed the term in training to intern. Thus, an engineer in training became an engineer intern and a land surveyor in training became a land surveyor intern. The most controversial piece of legislation for 1997 was Act 365. This act empowered the Board to require that all persons registered to practice engineering or land surveying, annually complete up to fifteen (15) hours of Board approved continuing education. Even though many professional engineers and land surveyors had voluntarily undertaken continuing education, it had been a controversial issue for several years within the state. It took a controversial piece of legislation passed by the Louisiana State Board of Architectural Examiners (LSBAE) in 1995 to actually force the engineering community to accept continuing education. The 1995 act authorized LSBAE to mandate continuing education for architects and for engineers practicing design of buildings for human habitation architecture. However, the Board, as well as its registrants, was adamant that any continuing education requirements for engineers be administered solely by the State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. Accordingly, Act 365 of 1997, provided that persons licensed by the Board to practice engineering or land surveying may, by rule of the Board, be required to earn annually up to fifteen (15) hours of Board approved continuing education.

The Board under the changing administration throughout the years has made a laudable reputation for fairness in the dealings with applicants and in insuring that only qualified persons become registered as professional engineers and land surveyors. It has also been very vigilant in law enforcement searching for and handling violations by persons who practice or offer to practice engineering and land surveying without being licensed. Attorneys representing the Board have been very successful in court proceedings against persons who violate the law. In addition to the legal requirements for practice, Rules of Professional Conduct have recently been enacted to maintain a high level of practice by registered professional engineers and land surveyors. Louisiana and the profession are very fortunate to have been served by Boards with members of outstanding dedication and ability.

In January 2006, after serving the Board for almost ten years, Mr. Kent retired as Executive Secretary and was replaced by Donna D. Sentell. With this appointment, Ms. Sentell became the first woman to hold the position and is also the first Executive Secretary who is not an engineer or land surveyor. She holds a degree in political science.

NCEES celebrated 100 years of licensure in 2007. The LAPELS office received a proclamation from the Honorable Kathleen Blanco, Governor of Louisiana, in recognition of Louisiana's historic participation. The year 2007 was also a memorable year with the appointment of the first female Board member: Norma Jean Mattei, PhD., P.E., a civil engineering professor at UNO.

In 2010, the Board hosted a Continuity Meeting and invited all past Board members to attend. The event, attended by 24 of the 34 past Board members, was held at the Capitol Hilton in Baton Rouge. Board members, past and present with their spouses, were presented a plaque which lists all Board members with their dates of services. All Board

members were included in a half day forum, in which topics of mutual interest were discussed. Former Executive Secretary, Paul Landry, P. E., currently residing in San Antonio, Texas, was recognized as the attendee who traveled the greatest distance to attend the Continuity Meeting and Emeritus Member Chris Demopulos, P. E., P. L. S., was recognized as the oldest Board member and a representative of the 1977-1986 LAPELS Board.

During the 2010 legislative session, HB 341 was passed, which extended the term to 2012 for one of the surveying appointments to the Board. This adjustment provided staggered terms for the surveying appointments to the Board.

In September 2010, the LAPELS Board held the bi-monthly meeting of the Board on the campus of LSU in Baton Rouge. In July 2010, the LAPELS Board voted to travel to the various engineering schools in the state of Louisiana (LSU, LA Tech, McNeese, SU, Tulane, ULL, and UNO) to hold future September meetings.