



Business and Commerce Quarterly Update
January 10, 2014

TEXAS BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

The Texas Board of Professional Engineers (TBPE) is a Self-Directed, Semi-Independent (SDSI) agency whose primary mission is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the people in Texas by implementing the Texas Engineering Practice Act through licensure of qualified individuals and enforcement of the laws and rules. The TBPE has implemented statutory requirements passed during the 83rd Legislative Session by developing and adopting required rules. The Agency continues to make progress on its continuous improvement initiative, the Journey Toward Excellence, using the Quality Texas and Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence as the framework for optimizing agency operations and efficiency. The following summary outlines the agency's legislative implementation, ongoing activities, and process improvements efforts for the period of September 1 through November 30, 2013.

Leadership

Legislature

The 83rd Texas Legislature passed two bills related to the TBPE that the agency has implemented. Senate Bill 204 was the agency Sunset bill and House Bill 1685 was the Sunset bill for the Self-Directed, Semi-Independent (SDSI) program. As required by the bills, the agency has developed and adopted rules and fully implemented the necessary processes and procedures.

The primary changes made by the two bills were:

SB 204

- Continued the Texas Engineering Practice Act and agency operations until 2025.
- Increased maximum penalty from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per violation per day.
 - Rule change adopted November 2013
- Provided for enforcement capability including:
 - Summary suspension orders for imminent threat to public safety.
 - Cease-and-desist authority for unlicensed practice.
 - Rule changes adopted November 2013
- Changed the application fee structure to defer \$200 professional fee until licensure is conferred.
 - Process implemented August 1, 2013.
- Required criminal history record checks for all new licensees and all current licensees.
 - Rule changes adopted November 2013
 - Worked with DPS to develop procedures
 - Developed online process for in-state and out of state licensees
 - Vendor (MorphoTrust) started allowing fingerprint submittal October 1, 2013

- Communicating new requirements and procedures to PEs and Engineering Firms
- Working through customer service issues with MorphoTrust
- Approximately 13% - 1,800 of the 14,000 active licenses due to renew March 31 have completed the process

HB 1685

- Recodified the SDSI program from Article 8930 of Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes and created Chapter 472 of the Texas Government Code.
 - Rule changes adopted November 2013
- Generalized the SDSI program to cover all agencies with this status and set forth more comprehensive reporting requirements.
 - First annual report submitted November 2013

Operations

Enforcement

The Compliance & Enforcement division has implemented the first phase of the electronic case management process improvement project. This project is being developed in-house utilizing the internal IT staff programming and project management resources. The planned system will include increased automation and allow online submissions of complaints and evidence by the public. The division staff continues to actively work all existing enforcement cases and participate in outreach efforts to licensees and the public.

Licensing

The number of licensed engineers and examination candidates stayed fairly consistent from last quarter and continues to show a slight increase over the same time last year. The licensing department continues to see a steady flow of new applications to process and is the primary program responsible for the implementation of the new Criminal History Record Check required by SB 204. Licensing and IT staff are working with the Texas Department of Public Safety and its vendor, MorphoTrust, to develop and implement the requirements.

Strategic Planning

As part of our ongoing Journey Toward Excellence continuous improvement program, recommendations for changes to the agency Strategic Plan, which were developed in the summer by Board staff, were used to identify projects and goals for this year. Project teams were assigned and charges for each team were developed to help the teams stay focused. Projects cover most areas of the Agency operations grouped into Organizational Resource Development, Customer Communication, and Process and Product Improvements.

Customers

TBPE continues to use its website, email, electronic newsletters, and social media as effective methods of communication to licensees, applicants, and the public. During this quarter communications were primarily focused on informing licensees and applicants about the changes that were passed by the legislature. Scheduled outreach presentations and quarterly webinars were also effective methods for reach a wide group of customers. The agency also produces the quarterly eNewsletter to announce the Board information and statute and rule changes.

During this quarter, TBPE staff made presentations to more than 4,700 individuals through live events and two webinars that were presented in early September. The presentations offered by the Board allows licensees to fulfill the mandatory ethics training requirement and the webinar is the same content as provided in person by TBPE staff members. The new webinar program continues to receive strong positive feedback and high attendance and traditional face-to-face outreach is still offered to groups or organizations by request.

Workforce

The agency continues to keep the TBPE workforce involved in agency improvement projects and provide a voice and opportunity for individual participation in the development of agency processes and programs. In addition to the strategic planning described above, staff is involved with all aspects of Agency improvement initiatives and projects. During this quarter, the TBPE used the Survey of Employee Engagement (formerly known as the Survey of Organizational Excellence) which is administered for state agencies by the Institute for Organizational Excellence at the University of Texas at Austin, and should receive the results next quarter. This comprehensive survey measures employee satisfaction and gets effective input from staff at all levels. The results of the survey feed directly into the strategic planning processes for the Agency.

Measurement and Results

HB 1685 created Chapter 472 of the Occupations Code which mandated changes to the official reporting required for the SDSI program including additional measures added to annual and biennial reports and five year trend data for most indicators. The first annual report was completed and sent to the appropriate legislative and Governor's Office contacts in November. Staff has been updating data collection systems, reviewing and revising performance measure definitions, and developing reporting mechanisms for all Agency measures. The first biennial report will be due the first day of the 84th legislative session in January, 2015.

Finance

Revenue for the first quarter of fiscal year 2014 is right on track for the budgeted amount. Expenses are slightly lower than budgeted. Activity will continue to be analyzed throughout the year. The fiscal year 2014 budget approved by the Board in August 2013 is expected to further reduce the ending fund balance next year. There was an increase to the PE license application fee implemented during this quarter.