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**BOARD ANNOUNCES NEW “ENGINEER INTERN” CERTIFICATION PROCESS
Computer-Based “FE” Exam Now Open to All Without Prior Board Approval;
Examinees May Apply for 6-year “EI” Certificate After Passing Exam**

HELENA – In an effort to make the first step toward licensure as a Professional Engineer more efficient for more people, the Montana Board of Professional Engineers and Professional Land Surveyors (PEPLS) has agreed to allow all candidates for the national Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) examination to register for that exam without getting prior Board approval.

Until now, only students enrolled in baccalaureate collegiate engineering programs could register for the FE exam without going through the Board. All other candidates, including engineering graduates (or graduate students in engineering with non-engineering baccalaureate degrees) had to apply to the Board in advance for permission to sit for the exam, which is administered by the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES.)

NEW EXAM, NEW LOCATIONS, NEW TESTING CALENDAR.

Starting in November, NCEES is converting from a paper-and-pencil FE exam—given twice a year and only at select locations—to a computer-based exam that will be administered in four two-month “testing windows” each year at Pearson Vue testing centers across America. National registration for the first computer-based FE exam will begin in November, with the first exams administered in January 2014.

In the last year, the Montana Board of PEPLS has been preparing for computer-based testing by:

- 1) Successfully changing state law to allow engineering exams to be administered in ways other than written (paper-and-pencil) formats.
- 2) In consultation with NCEES, the Board has voted to make Montana an “automatic” registration state for the FE exam only. This means anyone wishing to take the FE exam, regardless of educational status, can register with NCEES without applying to the Board in advance. This eliminates the Board’s “Engineer Intern by Exam” application. Previously, anyone not currently enrolled in a baccalaureate engineering program had to submit that application to the Board prior to sitting for the FE exam. (Montana is among a majority of NCEES Member Boards that have chosen “automatic” registration for the new FE exam.)
- 3) Candidates who pass the test, regardless of their educational status, may apply for a Montana Engineer Intern Certificate. However, even with passage of the exam, each Engineer Intern applicant still must meet the Board’s education/experience requirements before a certificate is granted. Once granted, the certificate will be valid for six years.

OTHER EXAMS STILL REQUIRE ADVANCE BOARD APPROVAL.

At present, the Board is changing its registration policy only for the FE exam. Candidates for the Fundamentals of Land Surveying (FS) exam, which also will be administered by NCEES in computer-based format starting in January, still must apply to the Board in advance for permission to register for that exam.

Meanwhile, the Principles and Practices of Land Surveying (PS) and Principles and Practices of Engineering (PE) exams will remain as twice-a-year, pencil-and-paper exams for at least one more year. Applicants still will be required to seek Board approval in advance to register for those exams.

THE GOAL: PROMOTE LICENSURE.

By allowing more individuals to register for FE exam, both the Board and NCEES believe they are encouraging more people, especially young people, to pursue licensure as Professional Engineers. “Passing the FE is just one step along that path,” said Board of PEPLS Chair David Elias of Anaconda. “But it’s an important step toward becoming a full professional.”

Elias noted that candidates for licensure still must demonstrate that they have the education, experience and moral character demanded by Montanans. “We’ll keep our Montana standards high to protect the public,” Elias said. “What we’re doing here is allowing more people to take that first step and start the journey toward licensure. That’s good for everybody.”

The Board of PEPLS is part of the Business Standards Division of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. Board members are appointed by the Governor.

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For more information on NCEES, its exams, policies and procedures, visit:

www.ncees.org