

Good evening everyone.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests. We thank you all for coming here tonight.

As you all know, the activity of the Association of Romanian Engineers in Canada, in short, AREC, is based on volunteer work.

Our main goal is to help Romanian trained Engineers integrate into the Canadian working environment, and for this:

- We promote networking among peer Engineers,
- help them with their careers,
- and facilitate a better understanding of PEO's admitting procedure.

Started in 2003, by a small group of dedicated volunteers, AREC now is a mature organization. As far as we've been able to gauge, we are the biggest professional Romanian organization in North America.

A few months ago we launched the new face of our website, with a very friendly and interactive interface. Since then we get a new member almost every two – three days. We also did, and continue to do, a more aggressive advertising campaign in the Romanian media in Canada, and therefore more people know about AREC now. Last year, at this time, we had only 15 paying members and more than 400 supporters. Today we have 10 X more paying members, to be precise, 161 members and more than 600 supporters.

This amazing increase in the number of paying members indicates that there is a big pool of Romanian Engineers very interested in what we do. Please go to www.arec.ca and take a look at our website. You will find a lot of information about what we do. As an AREC member, you will benefit from the experience and expertise of AREC members through various networking opportunities. You will have access to online career services, to a job bank and other resources that can help you find a job and advance in your career. We are even posting Cultural Events with special discounts, and soon, computer discounted items will be offered, too.

As an AREC member you will also have the chance to participate free to all the meetings and seminars organized by AREC. Since the last 2008 Gala, we've had a number of presentations:

- one was about a very successful Romanian idea and application: the air-cushion based transportation systems.
- then a very successful meeting with a Canadian / Romanian VIP, PhD Mircea Mihaescu, present also here, today
- a presentation on "How to get a job and advance your career" combined with "Cross-Cultural Training" .
- and less than a month ago we had a seminar about how to become a PEO member

For next year, we are planning the following activities:

- In February, due to "public Demand" and since the last presentation was so successful, we will repeat the seminar on "Cross-Cultural Training", at a larger scale.
- In May we will have a meeting with a Romanian VIP
- We will then try to organize a picnic at the end of June
- A seminar about "How to start your own business" is planned for July
- A PEO seminar will be organized in September
- And then in November 2010 we will have the 5th annual AREC Gala.

All meetings, except the picnic and Gala, will take place at George KELK Corporation, which has always been very supportive of AREC's activities.

I want to mention another benefit of being a member of AREC, which is a professional association. Most of us are already benefiting from Meloche Monnex's preferred group rates for all your car and house insurance needs. In the third year since AREC become a partner of Meloche Monnex, the number of insured AREC members with Monnex continued to increase at a rate of 150%, compared to the previous year, which demonstrate how beneficial it is to be a member of our association, so please pay your AREC membership fee for 2010 ASAP.

We are very proud to acknowledge that in the last 12 months, 55 Engineers educated in Romania become PEO members. This is a great achievement, and we want to take this time to congratulate them. Some of the new PEO members are among us.

To conclude, now, I have a long list of people to which I would like to address our thanks for being great supporters of our association. Our thanks are going to:

- our guest speakers for attending and sharing their thoughts with us.
- all the volunteers involved in organizing this special event, especially to AREC's Vice-President, Mr. Daniel Cheoreanu, and our temporary Treasurer, Miki Peres.
I should not forget to also thank their wives, Mona and Gabriela, but also my wife, Sorina, for all the free time we got from them, so we could volunteer for AREC.
- Our sponsors - you can find all their names on the Program on your table. Please give them your business so next year they will be even more generous - we need it ! As for the sponsors I want to especially thank to:
 - Narcis Blidaru of TeoEx Ltd, Stelian Moldovan of REGS Consulting and Valerian Eftime for all the help and support we received in setting up our website;
 - Cornelia Monaru of Monaco Flowers for the beautiful floral arrangements they created for this event, as always.
 - Constantin Olos of Visualhawk Solutions for printing our Gala Programme
 - Mike Vladescu of Artimex International for providing some of the presents tonight.
 - Beatrice Knollenberg and Tudor Mara for preparing a number of articles about AREC, which were published by the Romanian media in Canada.
 - all the Romanian newspapers, which were always helpful in promoting and supporting AREC, and I would especially like to mention ACASA, Faptu' Divers, Observatorul, Agenda Romaneasca, Zig-zag, Actualitatea, and Jurnalul Romanesc.
 - We cannot forget to thank Benny, the owner of Hava Nagila restaurant, and the restaurant's personnel for their support in organizing this great dinner.
 - However, nothing could have happen here tonight without your participation, so most importantly, we thank you very much for being here with us.

Now, there is one more person that I need to offer our special thanks, Peter KELK of George KELK Corporation. We want to thank him from the bottom of our hearts for his continuous support shown to our organization and for his very generous offer to let us use the modern and very civilized meeting facilities at KELK. Thank you Peter.

As I did in 2008, I would like to end my speech by asking you to please keep AREC alive, by promoting our association to other Romanian Engineers, especially newcomers to Canada and, if you can, offer your support in our activities.

Thank you again, and please enjoy the rest of this evening.