VAS Selects McGuire Woods Consulting

VAS has selected the firm of McGuire Woods Consulting as lobbying consultants before the General Assembly and Virginia state government agencies.

Save the Date: Winter Seminar 2020
The Mount Vernon Chapter will be hosting the first seminar of the new year. The seminar will be on January 17, 2020 at the Hyatt Regency in Fairfax. More information to come soon.

---

**Calendar of Events**

**72nd Annual Convention & General Membership Meeting**

April 29 - May 2nd, 2020  
Wyndham Oceanfront Hotel  
Virginia Beach, VA  
Make Hotel Reservations - [Click Here](#)

---

**Promote Surveying During GIS Day**

Wednesday November 13 is GIS Day. Use this observance to promote your work in surveying. GIS and other geospatial disciplines and activities that serve your clients, society, and public health, safety and welfare. Go to [www.gisday.com](http://www.gisday.com) for ideas and information. Send information on your GIS Day activities to [info@vasurveyors.org](mailto:info@vasurveyors.org).

---

**Training Opportunity**

FEMA Region III, in coordination with the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, is offering an in-person training to floodplain managers and other community officials involved in submitting LOMC applications for map amendments and revisions. The event is free, but registration is required. Click below to register on either date.
Advertise Your Firm in Old Dominion Surveyor

Get the recognition your firm deserves. Advertise in an upcoming issue of ODS today! 

Advertise with us Today!

Limelight: Kris Caister

Kris Caister is the President of the VAS Monticello Chapter and works for Timmons Group in Staunton, Virginia.

Please provide a short history of your education and work history

It is hard to believe that I was on track to become a psychologist when a chair lift ride with a stranger in Montana changed my life. After hearing that I worked with high school students at a local wilderness therapeutic boarding school, a fellow skier (and disguised Surveying Instructor at Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC), Dave Dorsett) mentioned I should send some of my students his way. I was in his office on Monday - not exactly the student he had in mind.

It is not like I didn't know anything about surveying. I spent a lot of time in the "woods" where I grew up in Lynchburg, Virginia; ironically, I am chagrined to remember pulling up a survey stake or two as a kid in the hopes of stopping the incoming residential development. While gaining my Environmental Sciences undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia, I also formed a strong foundation in land science fundamentals such as hydrology, geology, calculus, early GIS, and how these systems interact.

Prior to said chair lift ride, I was serving as the chair of the board of a local planning and land use organization in the Flathead Valley of Montana. It was on that board that I started to recognize the value of surveying as the fundamental aspect of land development and stewardship. So several months later, while realizing that the ambiguous world of psychological therapy was not a lifetime desire, I was back in the chair as a student to achieve my A.A.S. in Surveying at FVCC by 2004.

Full speed ahead after graduation: run a few marathons, get married, work a 20 mile very rugged corridor survey in the Yaak, Montana and find my first quarter section stone, have a kid, field work on river restoration projects in Oregon, Idaho and Montana, do a lot of subdivision field/office work in 2005-2006, move back to Virginia to be closer to family and have another kid and start working in a more urban setting in a very bewildering metes and bound state!
What do you feel is your greatest achievement in your career?

- Staying in the profession! By perseverance, love of the profession, having a good attitude and a bit of luck in having people watch over me, I survived the recession and continued to learn and grow.

- Offering encouragement and enthusiasm to colleagues who are pursuing continued development of their surveying career. You are on the right track, keep learning and adding to the amazing history of this profession!

- Substantial projects achievements: the Yorktown Terminal offloading expansion, the Main at Norfolk initial building control layout, Prince William County Landfill Wetland reclamation, Augusta County Courthouse design surveys and the layout for the current build of the Center of Developing Entrepreneurs (CODE) come to mind.

What surveyors have been your mentors and what was special about what you learned from them?

I am not sure if reverse-mentorship is a thing, but I feel my greatest mentors have not been those assigned or even direct supervisors but are instead the colleagues and clients that I interact with on a day to day basis. Whether I like it or not, they are offering constant feedback (positive and negative) to do better and learn more. If a colleague does particularly well at a task and I know that I helped coach them in that task, then I am the one being mentored. If a client calls and doesn't like the layout or the invoice then they are mentoring me to learn something and to improve.

That said, specific, traditional mentors have been with me every step of my surveying path. David Dorsett, the now retired surveying instructor at FVCC, was instrumental in fostering excitement about surveying. His classes on boundary case law were very intense, very interesting and very eye opening when it comes to assessing the inevitable conflicts in boundary evidence. Dick Smith taught me how collect field data that would be "gold", Andy Belski built my CAD foundation, Cheryl Stockton taught me to mind the details and was exceedingly patient with my transition to Virginia surveying and Joe Medley is a wizard at helping me polish deliverables.

Would you recommend a career in surveying to others, and why?

Of course! Surveying is a perfect synergy of history, math, law, science and art. But surveying is also about storytelling. When following the footsteps of the original surveyor, it is natural to start to develop a story about the people who lived in the area and who asked for the original lines to be run. Why did the landowner want a survey? How did the surveyor run the lines on the ground? How much did he get paid or was it a trade?
Much of this story is fanciful but it is also important to help tease out the intent of the survey or to just make the sometimes-arduous task of chasing names in the courthouse to determine senior rights more fun. For instance, while reading the deeds for a recent survey, I ended up back in Deed Book 1, where a son of a member of the Order of the Golden Horseshoe had deeded two acres for the jail, stable and courthouse for the Augusta County seat. Imagine the stories around the events in history in the mid 1700's!

What has been the greatest change in surveying you've witnessed in your career?

The obvious answer is that technology has been the greatest change in surveying. This is easy to see, constantly and quickly changing and very helpful. However, the slower and perhaps more pervasive change is the retirement of the bulk of surveyors from the profession. Their large personalities will be missed most certainly but the real change will be in the loss of their knowledge of the fundamental skills of surveying in the field and in boundary retracement. Their retirement coupled with the gap in new surveyors joining the profession has the potential to disrupt the reputation, longevity and integrity of the profession. However, there is also an opportunity in this gap. Surveying has the chance to recapture the imaginations of younger people and enhance the power of enterprise as the objects and interactions of our everyday is tied together geospatially. Whether it is the advent of autonomous vehicles or the creation of augmented reality games and teaching devices, only surveyors have the knowledge and skills to provide the geospatial accuracy that will allow these technologies to work safely and effectively. There is a lot to do.

Surveying has the chance to recapture the imaginations of younger people and enhance the power of enterprise as the objects and interactions of our everyday is tied together geospatially. Whether it is the advent of autonomous vehicles or the creation of augmented reality games and teaching devices, only surveyors have the knowledge and skills to provide the geospatial accuracy that will allow these technologies to work safely and effectively. There is a lot to do.

Recruit a Member

Did you know that when you recruit a new member to VAS you will receive a 25% discount on your membership dues? Spread the word about the great work VAS is doing for the surveying profession and be sure to tell the new member to include your name on the recommended by portion of their application.

Read More

WOW 2019 Recap
For the second straight year VAS has been fortunate to be part of the Worlds of Work 7th Grade Career Exploration Event in Winchester, VA. The event is attended by nearly 3,000 7th graders from seven participating counties. The VAS tables had been strategically placed in the information technology section, attracting large crowds. Lisa Goodwin, Brent Evans, Remy DuCote and Greg Perkins took turns educating our future generation on robotic instruments, drones, 3D scanning, map reading and the rich history of the profession. Several of the students took turns running an instrument and level. We also captured a lot of attention with our large monitor showing videos of current technology and surveyors in action. The event is well worth our time and a wonderful chance to inform a young audience about the opportunities in surveying.
SAFETY MINUTE

Safe Driving Tips

Did you know ????

You can ensure safe driving by including an inspection of any motor vehicle you drive, on or off the job. Check all lights, brake lights and turn signals; be sure that windshield wipers, the horn, and if applicable, the back-up warning device are in working order. Check the brakes, both the foot pedal as well as the hand brake. Check the status of the inspection sticker. Check the oil and make sure you have enough fuel. Report any defective or broken parts on company vehicles to your supervisor.

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

**As the driver** or operator, you are responsible to make sure that all bins are closed, the load is secure, and the area is CLEAR before moving the vehicle. Extreme caution must be used when backing vehicles. Turn around instead of backing up whenever possible. If you must back-up and you have someone riding with you, have your passenger get out and direct you so you can back-up safely. When backing a vehicle in the vicinity of other workers or in a congested area, a signal person should always be used.

The operator must observe **posted speed limits**. Many accidents are caused by driving too slowly as well as too fast. Use turn signals when turning and when pulling out onto the road or highway. It is the responsibility of every employee who drives a company motor vehicle to be licensed, and to know and obey all state and local regulations pertaining to its operation.

Always carry your driver’s license with you. Many states also require that the vehicle registration be carried in your car, van or truck. Every person who operates a motor vehicle has an obligation to themselves, their family, their employer, other drivers and pedestrians to operate their vehicle in a safe and courteous manner. **Be a defensive driver!** Make allowances for mistakes, lack of skill and lack of knowledge on the part of the other driver. Control your temper and be alert at all times, looking far enough ahead to recognize and avoid impending situations. You’re in the driver’s seat - a lot rests on your shoulders. **DRIVE DEFENSIVELY!**

**SEAT BELTS SAVE LIVES! BUCKLE UP - THE LIFE YOU SAVE MAY BE YOUR OWN!**

---

ETSU's Surveying and Mapping Program

East Tennesee State University's surveying and mapping program recieved a 2019 Education Award from the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying.

[Read More](#)

---

In Memoriam
Douglas Legge passed away on Tuesday, October 8, 2019. He spent over 40 years land surveying in the Northern Shenandoah Valley. Read More about Douglas Legge's life.

Order Your VAS Apparel

VAS is pleased to work with Land's End to provide an opportunity to purchase quality clothing with the VAS logo embroidered on it. Go on, showcase your membership in VAS. To start shopping and place your order, Click here

New Job Announcements

To see new job openings click here

Stay Connected