

Surveyor does mapping and more

Bartlett man's work spans disciplines on land, paper

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By Lesley Young

Jay Caughman compares his discovery of the world of land surveying to being reeled in like a fish.

"I was studying civil engineering at California State University in Fresno, and my first semester I took a basic land-surveying course," said Caughman, 40. "My professor recruited me to participate in a specialty program concentrating in land surveying. It was a hook in the mouth."

He finished his degree in 1991, and since then, Caughman, head of the land surveying department at Allen & Hoshall, has worked on such projects as the Tunica Airport, the 12-mile Wolf River sewer interceptor project and many other large-scale developments across the U.S.

"There is no other job like it," Caughman said. "It's so unusual. It's so unique."

Allen & Hoshall is an engineering firm in East Memphis that was established in 1915.

The firm studies, plans and designs buildings and electric utility, transportation and infrastructure projects for a variety of public and private clients around the world. It has offices in four states.

Caughman says land surveying involves many different facets, including outdoorsmanship, law, history, politics, science, forensics, title research dendrology and computers.

"Land surveying is the science of measuring, mapping and establishing positions from legal or technical plans and documents. A land surveyor must apply field measurement to legal aspects of boundary law and municipal and governmental relations," he said.

The Bartlett resident and father of two said he gains the most enjoyment out of interacting with such a variety of people on a daily basis as well as the broad range of projects that land on his desk.

"Each project and client is different and unique," Caughman said. "The quality of clients and projects that we work with offer challenges that keep us looking for new or better solutions to providing professional land surveying services."

After earning his degree, he became licensed after he passed a 16-hour examination required of all land surveyors in 1994.

He holds professional licenses in seven states and has served on multiple board positions of the Tennessee Association of Professional Surveyors, including president, as well as several commissions for the city of Bartlett.

When he's not taking continuing education courses in land surveying every year, he coaches tee-ball, basketball and soccer, and remains active in his church.

"I'm a little high strung," he said, "so I like to stay busy."

About Jay Caughman

Profession: Land surveyor

Family: Wife, Jeanine, 39; daughter, Elizabeth, 9, and son, Banks, 6

Education: Bachelor of science degree in land surveying-engineering from California State University at Fresno, 1991.

