

Engineering + Service = Us: Timothy Mills & TAM Consultants

These are not the engineers you're thinking of. They are not the socially stunted academics of *The Big Bang Theory*; nor are they sarcastic, snide, and superior Dilbert from Scott Adams' famed comic. These are the service-oriented, community-minded engineers of TAM Consultants. The firm's founder, Timothy Mills, P.E., has been serving the Hampton Roads area for 30 years. "We're licensed in North and South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania," says Tim, "but the bulk of what we do is in southeast Virginia."

What makes TAM Consultants different from the stereotypical engineer is inherent to their work: "We're a fairly small company...so everybody who works for us has got to be client-facing," says Tim, "and be ready to sit in front of a client and explain complex, technical matters in a way that laypeople can understand." And their clients range wildly, from private homeowners to city, county, state, and federal governments—fire stations, hospitals, and manufacturers. The scope of what they do for their clients also ranges wildly. "We provide engineering services, what we like to say, for the built environment," says Tim. "We work on everything from helping somebody with a broken foundation to working on project teams with several contractors and owners developing four hundred or five hundred billion-dollar hospital projects."

TAM Consultants has (normally) operated from a second-floor office on the corner of New Town Avenue and Discovery Park Boulevard for 15 years; since the shutdown, Tim and his team have mostly been working from home. Because their work is so tied to the construction industry—an essential business—their work has changed only due to individual clients' needs. Busch Gardens, for instance, has halted all their projects, but repair design for the James City County rec center goes on. "We've had a lot of meetings [with contractors] where we're standing six feet apart, wearing a mask," says Tim. Other current projects include the Cherry Point Marine Corps base in North Carolina, Dominion Energy in Richmond, various parking deck renovations, and Property Condition Assessments (the commercial property equivalent of a before-sale home inspection).

While Tim takes pride in the work he and his team does, and how they serve their clients and community, there is a second facet of TAM Consultants that he believes sets them apart. "I think TAM Consultants, as an organization, as a business, is good for our people," says Tim, speaking of his staff. "It's a good team. It's a place for them to earn a living, support their family...my mission is really to support them and help them grow professionally, to allow them to thrive in life." Tim speaks partly from experience—he moved to Williamsburg from his native New York to provide a better environment for his family back in 1990, and worked at three different consulting firms before opening his own in 2001. He continues to (literally) help build Hampton Roads into a place that attracts transplants from New York and California, while simultaneously investing in the community that makes it feel like home.

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