

STEM SPOTLIGHT

Michael F. Rebick, PE

Project Manager (Transportation Operations)
Gannett Fleming



Bachelor of Science in Engineering with emphasis in Civil
Arkansas State University – 2004

Master of Science in Civil Engineering with emphasis in Transportation
The University of Memphis – 2009

Q How did you select your college major?

A The college undergraduate orientation was rather stressful for me. The incoming freshman class was split into groups of 50 and put into a classroom and everyone was given a newspaper style course catalog (this was before online registration). A university staff member then said, “Ok everyone, the catalog lists all available courses and times offered by major...take 15 minutes and make your schedule!” Not really knowing what to do and never having put serious thought into selecting a major, I remembered that my parents urged me to look into engineering; so I flipped to the engineering section, looked at the classes and thought, I can work with this. I never looked back after that.

Q What was the biggest influence in your selection of major or career?

A My most profound influence was actually my parents, Mike and Mary Jane. They knew I excelled in Math and Science all throughout grade and high school. They convinced me that a career in engineering was sustainable and that engineers would always be in demand. They were right, as parents usually are!

Q If you could go back to high school and select any elective course to take that would have better prepared you for college, what would it be?

A I attended a college preparatory high school, so I felt pretty good about my first semester at college. My senior Calculus class in high school was nearly day-by-day exactly like freshman Calculus in college. However, as a high school senior I had the option to take a Business or Physics class. I chose Business, but looking back, I wish I had taken Physics because it was an engineering requirement in college.



Q What is your favorite aspect of your job?

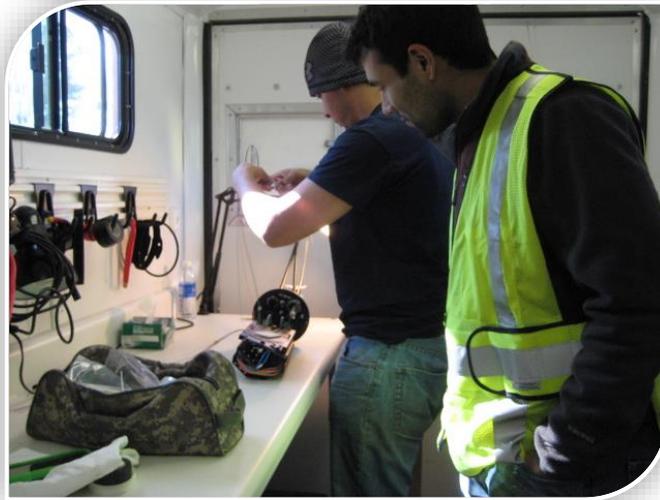
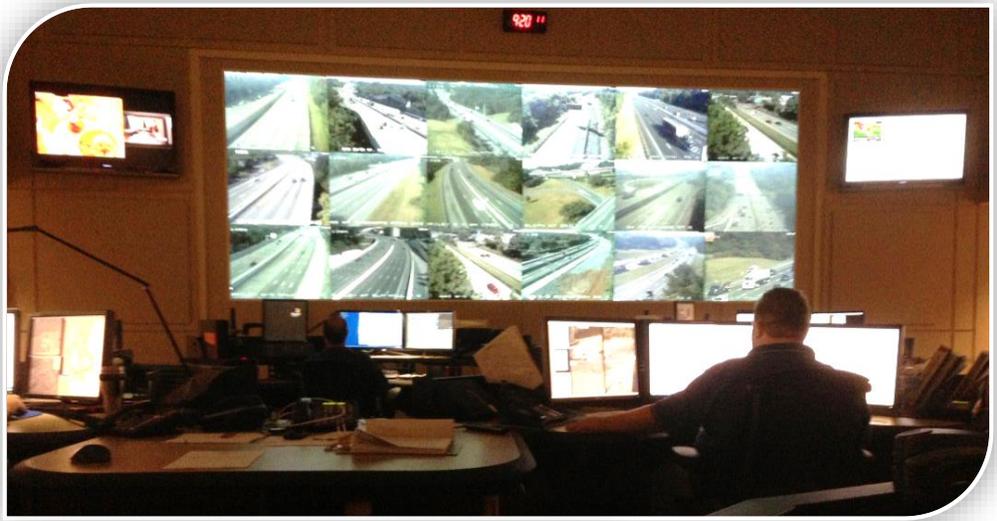
A Being the person in charge and the one others look to for answers and solutions. When I enter a room to lead or participate in a client meeting, most often, I am viewed as the decision maker and/or problem solver. This doesn't happen overnight though. It takes time, hard work, and dedication to the job to build that type of reputation.

Q How do you/your company make a positive impact on society?

A Gannett Fleming impacts the Greater Memphis Area everyday by ensuring that the Tennessee Department of Transportation's (TDOT) SmartWay traveler information system is operating at peak performance levels. We oversee TDOT's contractor and make sure they are maintaining the Interstate overhead message boards and the traffic monitoring cameras. From a Transportation Management Center (TMC), TDOT staff utilize the cameras to verify incidents, accidents and congestion mostly, and post important traveler information on the overhead message boards for the purpose of reducing traffic congestion. This is ultimately a positive environmental benefit, because the less traffic congestion there is, less fuel is wasted sitting idle and less harmful vehicle emissions are put into the air.

Q What's the most interesting thing you have been able to do in your professional career?

A Being involved in all phases of a project, from planning & conceptual design all the way through to construction and maintenance of said project. Most engineering professionals focus on one discipline or aspect of a project, such as, just the planning or design or construction. So far I have been fortunate to be involved in all phases of project development during various times of my career.



Q What makes you get up each morning excited about your profession?

A Knowing that I may face a new challenge. In my position, no two days are similar. One day I might be outside on a project trying to problem solve an

issue that is not working, and another day I might be in the office writing a proposal or a plan to present to a customer to help them with their transportation needs. Although organization and time management are very important in engineering, the thought of problem solving is exciting every day.

Q What advice would you share with K-12 students that are considering your profession?

A Students considering a profession in any field of engineering need to be prepared to work very hard on their education, especially in math and science fields. Dedication to education from K-12, especially high school, is the best tool to prepare yourself for college and eventually a career. However, engineering and even college is not for everyone, so the best advice I can give to someone wanting to be successful in any profession is find something you enjoy doing and then get really good at it. Passion and applied effort toward anything in life are the keys for success.