Keeping Virginia Roads Safe, Maintained, Flowing is a Cool Job for SVCC Grad

Shane Mann's job is cool because it keeps traffic moving safely through the state of Virginia. A 1990 graduate of Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC), he was recently named the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) Richmond District engineer.

Mann will be responsible for the construction, maintenance and operations of nearly 19,000 lane miles of roads in the Richmond District's 14 counties: Amelia, Brunswick, Charles City, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico (except secondary system), Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, New Kent, Nottoway, Powhatan and Prince George. The Richmond District is VDOT's largest roadway network in the Commonwealth.

About his job, he noted, "I think my job is a 'cool job' because I get to improve the transportation system in the area in which I grew up. I have been involved in projects that will be there for 100 years or more. It is very satisfying to build something that your children will use for years to come."

After his graduation from Nottoway High School, he was enrolled in the Drafting and Design Technology program at SVCC.

"Mr. John Finch was the instructor for that program and was a great mentor to me. After high school, I was not ready to leave home and attend a university. Being able to stay home and continue my education was the right thing for me. The lower cost of the community college was a huge plus as well," Mann said.

A local company reached out to the college for a part-time drafting employee and Mann was able to get the job with the help of Finch.

"Having that opportunity (and income) was another very positive element of my SVCC experience. I made some friendships during my time at SVCC that continue to today," he said.

Upon completion at SVCC, Mann transferred to Old Dominion University and received a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering (Cum Laude). With the classes from SVCC, most of his electives were completed and he could focus on engineering classes.

After ODU, Mann went to work for a consulting engineering company in Richmond and worked there for 12 years as a bridge designer. During this same period, he obtained his master's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Virginia.

In 2011, Mann joined VDOT as an Area Construction engineer providing oversight on highway and bridge projects. In 2013, he became the District Construction engineer providing oversight of the construction program for the Richmond District

"I am a huge advocate for the community college system. I have four daughters and three of the four have attended community college (two have degrees from and one is attending John Tyler Community College now). With the high cost of tuition at the four-year universities, the community college system is very economical alternative," Mann said.

He also added, "I would like to mention that fact that VDOT is always hiring employees with two-year degrees. We need employees that have the skills provided by community colleges. Maintenance supervisors, construction inspectors, right-of-way agents, business supports are all positions that do not require four-year degrees."