



Sunday, February 20, 2005

MaineJobs

Maine's best job source.

To place an ad 24 hours a day call:

791-6100

Toll-free in Maine 1-800-894-0041 or visit MaineJobs.com

Scott D. Collins of St. Germain & Associates recommends that prospective engineers do internships to discover where their interests in the field lie. (Merry Farnum photo)

MaineJobs SPOTLIGHT: Engineer

At work with: Scott D. Collins, vice president & senior engineer, St. Germain & Associates, Westbrook

What does your job entail?

My primary responsibilities include management of projects, development of new business, and assistance with company operations. St. Germain & Associates is a consulting firm with expertise throughout New England in site investigation and remediation, environmental compliance, solid waste engineering and permitting and land development.

How did you get started?

After graduating from the University of Waterloo, I started my engineering career with an environmental consulting firm in Toronto, where I assisted with the decommissioning of an oil refinery. I moved to the United States in 1992 and opened and managed for three years a satellite office for a Canadian company and for the past 10 years have been employed by St. Germain & Associates.

What training have you had?

My college degree is in civil engineering. My

education focused on soils engineering, ground-water and wastewater. I worked with a variety of Canadian companies in Canada and overseas through Waterloo's co-op program. Since graduating, I have maintained and built my knowledge of the industry and current trends through speaking and/or attending seminars, conferences and specialized training classes.

What skills are essential to your job?

An ability to solve environmental and engineering challenges by understanding a project, planning a solution and coordinating resources to achieve the client's goals.

What is a typical day on the job like?

I do not have many typical days. Daily variety and meeting new challenges are some of the reasons I enjoy consulting. My day might comprise meetings with clients and/or a project team, reviewing data and writing reports, designing remediation systems, preparing proposals for new work, developing new business and presenting a site plan application in front of a planning board – some days are long!

What's your favorite part of the job?

Being part of a team that develops a solution to a challenge like engineering the redeveloping

of a contaminated property or working closely with a client turning a dream into a reality with receipt of an approval or permit from a state or local agency.

What's the greatest challenge?

Continually developing my ability to manage multiple responsibilities at the office and, at the same time, staying current with regulations and new technologies.

What kind of person succeeds in the job?

An engineer will succeed in consulting if he or she is successful in managing multiple projects simultaneously. Also, it is helpful to be able to write thorough and concise reports. A strong writer has an advantage in being able to effectively communicate with a client.

What advice would you offer to someone interested in a career in engineering?

When in college, intern with engineering firms or at organizations that employ engineers. I found this experience valuable as I was able to observe different types of engineering and confirm that consulting engineering was the career I wanted to pursue.

How's the job market for engineers in Maine?

I believe there are good opportunities in Maine and other New England states. I hear frequently from colleagues that they are finding it difficult to fill available positions. In fact, St. Germain & Associates looked for more than two years before recently hiring a senior civil engineer to manage our land development projects.

Produced by the Marketing Department of the Maine Sunday Telegram

This week online

- A state training program helps employers with the costs of training employees and provides employees with more upward mobility. Learn more about it in MaineJobs.com.

MaineJobs.com