

Employee Spotlight: Joel Morgan



Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I grew up in Wyoming, graduated from Calvin College, spent time in Minnesota and somehow wound up living only a mile or so from my childhood home. I've been married for 12 years and have three wonderful kids and two cuddly cats who adopted us (Cinnamon and Clovis). I love playing guitar (hit me up guitar players!) and reading (anyone else love Brandon Sanderson's work?).

What is your position at Kent County and what individuals do you work with?

I am the senior engineer in the Drain...

Commissioner's office. I work with a wide variety of people – county residents who have drainage problems, contractors doing work for us, engineers designing improvement projects, attorneys, real estate developers, and many more!

What are two or three things that staff should know about your role?

Our office deals with drainage and flooding issues which is quite a niche set of problems to solve but each day is diverse and poses its own unique challenges. My role largely lies in coordination and communication – making sure that people with problems are heard and that we are solving their issue in a timely manner. I love to talk and to make things happen so my role suits me.

What is the most rewarding part of your job? What is the most challenging?

Watching a construction project finish up and handle that first big rain event just as it was designed is a huge fist pound moment. One challenging aspect of our office is that we specially assess (tax) costs back to county residents and many times, they don't like or understand why they have to pay more on their property taxes. Try as we might, "a person convinced against their will is of the same opinion still", and they like to let us know how upset they are, loudly.

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Do you have any interesting/fun stories about your experience working with co-workers or clients/residents?

Ken Yonker, the Drain Commissioner, and I always seem to get ourselves stuck whenever we go out to inspect a County Drain. Sometimes, it's a dead battery or flat tires. Once, we ended up face first in a ditch. Sometimes, we leave our boots behind in the muck. Whatever the situation, it's always quality time when Ken and I are out together.

Is there anything else you want to say/talk about?

We are always willing to take someone on a ride-along to see what we do. It'll be fun but you might get stuck!



Drain Commissioner, Ken Yonker, inspecting a drain. Photo taken by Joel Morgan.