

Behind every successful company is an Unsung Hero

by Nathan Comp

It all adds up for Sims

Buildings once came in pretty much one shape: rectangles.

But as technology allows for increasingly complex architecture, so increases the complications survey technicians like Paul Sims are presented with.

For 15 years, Sims has worked for National Survey and Engineering dissecting designs to flush them of any dimensional discrepancies. He also mans a crew that uses his calculations to stake out layouts for buildings, column lines, underground utilities, and curbs and gutters, among other things.



Paul Sims

Age: 43

Position: Survey technician with National Survey and Engineering, a division of R.A. Smith & Associates Inc., Brookfield

"He's the best guy I've seen in the business," said Paul Taivalkoski, manager of National Survey's Survey Construction Services Group. "I feel very confident that when I give Paul plans, it'll get done correctly."

That's a big compliment, considering the high-risk nature of Sims' work. Cracking the geometry of designs and staking out a building's footprint can sink thousands of unnecessary dollars into a project if done incorrectly the first time.

The goal is to eliminate 99 percent of the discrepancies before the ground breaks.

"The nature of the work is high liability," Taivalkoski said. "Paul's attention to detail reduces that liability. He does such a good job breaking down the plans that the field crew has an easy time staking out the site."

Cracking between 50 and 100 plans a year, Sims must rely on more than just a complete grasp of numbers and geometry. According to Taivalkoski, Sims has a very even demeanor, which is a major asset when dealing with the architects and engineers whose designs he picks apart.

"He's great to have around the office," Taivalkoski said. "I'm more than confident in his abilities."

Sims recently worked on the design for the GE Healthcare facility at the Milwaukee County Research Park and is working on plans for a University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee student-housing project.