

## **PRINCIPAL SPOTLIGHT**

**Featuring**

**Donald B. Foster  
Vice President, Mechanical Engineer  
Farris Engineering**

What is your job description?

**Senior Mechanical Engineer on various types of projects (K-12 education, university work, churches, etc.) For many of these projects, besides being the mechanical engineer on the project, I am the project manager overseeing schedules, budgets, proposals, etc. I also spend about 10% of my time in various forms of marketing.**

What do you like best about Farris Engineering?

**Farris Engineering was started by Ray Farris in 1967. Hopefully to those that know us and to those who don't, the name brings to mind a firm of engineers who are dedicated to excellence and are known to provide excellent service to owners and architects.**

Tell us when you decided to pursue engineering – your “I must be an engineer “ah-ha” moment.

**I grew up in a small Iowa community without any future in farming. I had an interest in building design (High School shop class). During my first two years at a community college I saw a potential in solar energy. I wanted to get involved in something new. I called Iowa State and asked if they had Solar Engineering for a degree. They told me that I needed to get a Mechanical Engineering degree with an HVAC emphasis. I completed that degree and then continued my education at ISU an additional year, to obtain a Construction Engineering degree with a mechanical emphasis.**

What was the most important lesson you learned from a mentor or a client?

**I think one thing that was a challenge in my early years was procrastination on problems that come up in design/construction. I have learned to meet them head-on and early and work out a solution for all parties.**

Most memorable engineering project?

**Earlier in my career, I designed Millard West High School, a very large project serving many students and teachers. Most recently a project that achieved LEED Gold Certification was the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Mammel Hall, College of Business. This building was the Nebraska ACEC 2011 Engineering Excellence Grand Award Winner.**

What is the most important way ACEC Nebraska helps you in your professional career?

**ACEC Nebraska reminds me of the goal of achieving engineering excellence for the benefit of all building owners we serve daily. ACEC provides educational opportunities to help me become a better engineer and a better leader, thus enabling me to help lead my firm to excellence as well.**

What was the most recent movie you saw?

**Blindside**

Do you prefer plain or peanut M&M's?

**Plain**

Tell us about your family:

**I've been married to my wife Velda for 23 years. We have 4 daughters ages 21 to 12.**