our past guides our future
Morrison-Maierle has 10 offices throughout Montana, Wyoming, Washington, and Arizona.

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Life is essentially divided into three terms—the past, the present, and the future. It is important that we learn from the past to do even better in the present, and also to learn during the present to live even better in the future. This is easier said than done, but it is much easier to accomplish if the past has provided a strong foundation.

We are very fortunate at Morrison-Maierle that our past is based on a very strong foundation. As you will read more about in this Year in Review, our company was founded by two extraordinary individuals—my grandfather, John Morrison, Sr. and Joe Maierle. These two men were more than just excellent engineers; they were also men of great character who truly cared about the communities where they lived, worked, and played. They certainly gave back to these communities with their talents as engineers, but they also had the strength of character needed to build a company that has passed the test of time. Their core values of integrity, commitment, respect, and excellence attracted other individuals with the same core values. This gave them the ability to create a company with such a strong culture that it has just been naturally passed on from one generation to the next.

Morrison-Maierle has built upon the foundation provided by John and Joe in a significant way. We have truly learned from the past and become an even better company today. We have not only grown from two men working in my grandfather’s basement to a company of nearly 250 people, but we have also expanded our technical capabilities and reinforced our culture of great client service. Our reputation and brand is strong because we have used the lessons from the past to improve ourselves over time.

Our award-winning projects speak for themselves and reflect on the amazing people currently working for Morrison-Maierle. We must also remember that for every award-winning project we have each year, there are literally hundreds of other projects we performed that do not win awards. However, each one of these projects still give our clients solutions that build better communities. This is a blessing for all of us in our professional lives—we have a job that truly makes other people’s lives better. How gratifying is that?

Our future is very bright and we are making great progress toward our VISION2020 goals. We should always remember the great quote by Walt Disney, “If you can dream it, you can do it.” Let’s all have that statement in mind as we work together to shape our future. We will be amazed at what we can achieve if we all pull together in the same direction!

All my sincere gratitude again for a fabulous 2015. You all make me so proud, and humbled, to be your President.

Sincerely,

Robert Morrison,
President and CEO
John Morrison and Joe Maierle met while working for the Bridge Division of the Montana Highway Department in the 1930s. Back then, Montana lacked interstates, bridges, and modern-day transportation systems. In fact in many parts of the state, transportation was nothing more than single-lane, dirt roads.

Conversations and collaborations at work made John and Joe realize they shared a common goal—they wanted to create solutions to help pull Montana “out of the mud.” So they put their passion to the test, and in 1945 built a start-up business housed in John’s home.

From day one at Morrison-Maierle, John and Joe decided their main goal was client satisfaction and the way they were going to achieve that was to create solutions that helped them build better communities. They approached their business like they built engineering projects—one step at a time and with integrity, commitment, respect, and excellence. These four words became our building blocks and symbolize the way projects are designed and clients are served today. As a result, Morrison-Maierle has been creating solutions throughout the western United States for more than 70 years.

From two engineers with deep commitments to communities, Morrison-Maierle has grown into a Top 500 Design Firm that is built on four core values. Our firm uses these building blocks to create solutions for airports, buildings, land development, natural resources, mining, surveying, transportation, and water-wastewater projects.
So what exactly did we accomplish?

With hard work and commitment, we achieved each one of these initiatives in 2015.

Here’s a brief summary:

▪ We acquired the Cody, Wyoming-based Holm, Blough and Company, which greatly expands our presence in Cody and depth of our survey expertise in Wyoming. As a result, we now meet the 15-person requirement to be considered “local” in Wyoming professional services solicitations.

▪ We moved into a new office space in Spokane that has room for three more employees. In addition, we hired Kenet Bertelsen who has strong business development contacts in mining, natural resources and water/wastewater.

▪ We made our Mining Market Group fully functional by creating organizations, assigned staff, and organized them appropriately within our accounting and client management software systems.

▪ Our Airports Market Group successfully completed several projects in Arizona for the City of Phoenix, Yuma, and Phoenix Mesa-Gateway. We moved our Phoenix business operations into the Bozeman Office group.

▪ We partnered with firms in Montana, Wyoming, and Washington to pursue projects in several different market groups. With this move, we also explored potential relationships using alternative delivery methods with a variety of companies.

▪ We purchased the equipment and trained our staff to bring laser scanning capabilities to our clients. While the training is ongoing, we conducted approximately 15 major scans by the end of the year. This capability has been a great addition and our clients have been extremely satisfied.

As part of our VISION2020 plan, we expanded our Cody, Wyoming, operations in 2015 with the acquisition of Holm, Blough and Company

How we’ve grown

In business for more than 34 years in Cody, Holm, Blough and Company (HBC) became part of Morrison-Maierle in late December 2015. HBC founders Roy Holm and Paul Blough, along with their staff, joined Theresa Gunn and Frank Page at the former HBC location at 1402 Stampede Avenue.

“Holm, Blough and Morrison-Maierle are both built on the same principles of integrity, respect, commitment, and excellence,” said Bob Morrison, president and CEO of Morrison-Maierle. “We share a similar culture and are committed to our clients and the communities we serve. Because of our common values and a culture of excellence, both firms have been in business for quite a long time. We’re very excited to work hand-in-hand with this group of talented individuals and grow our operation in the northwest Wyoming region.”

The acquisition brought a broad range of engineering, planning, science and surveying capabilities, which Gunn, Cody Regional Office Manager, said will only build on the strong business that HBC has developed throughout the Big Horn Basin area.

“When you walk through the doors of Morrison-Maierle and Holm, Blough, you will see the same faces, only now we can offer you the expertise of nearly 150 engineers, surveyors, planners, and scientists in nine different market groups,” said Gunn.

Holm agreed that this was the right decision for HBC.

“Paul and I are 100 percent committed to this new plan for our business. This is the right thing to do for our clients, partners, and most of all, our employees. We are ready for the next steps, and know that Morrison-Maierle is the best partner for us.”

“Morrison-Maierle is a good fit for us and is a good partner for Cody and our clients throughout Wyoming. This was a natural progression for Roy and me. We will still be able to serve our clients as we always have with a personal touch, but now we can also offer them many more areas of expertise,” said Blough.

It has been nearly three years since we finalized VISION2020. Many of our employee-owners helped craft our Core Purpose—“We create solutions that build better communities”—and confirm our Core Values—Integrity, Respect, Commitment, and Excellence during our 2013 kickoff session. Since then, we have hired new employees who have started their careers with this plan in place.
In 2013, our VISION2020 planning session pulled together our employee-owners’ ideas and avenues needed to achieve our goal of becoming the preeminent engineering firm in the West by 2020. The result of this session was a set of guidelines that will lead us to our goal. One of the vehicles used to meet these challenges are Breakthrough Work Groups.

One of strategies in VISION2020 is to “Actively work to grow and strengthen our brand.” In 2014 we set a target to develop clear strategies for company branding, differentiation, and positioning. This target was assigned in late 2014 to the Branding Work Group, commissioned by CMO Jason Mercer. Jason put out a request to all employee-owners for participation and Aliza Etzel (Billings), Dave Potchak (Missoula), Keely Matson (Helena), Erik Renna (Bozeman), and Bill White (Spokane) expressed interest and were assigned to the group.

The Branding Workgroup was asked to evaluate the Morrison-Maierle “brand” and recommend changes—if needed—to promote VISION2020. The group was instructed to develop a blueprint for strategies and messaging for company branding, differentiation, and position that communicates our core purpose, core values, and vision to our clients, business partners, and the public.

Initially the group struggled somewhat to determine if Morrison-Maierle actually needed to be rebranded as our reputation is extremely strong and well known, especially in Montana. However, after reviewing prevailing trends and our company’s desire to grow, the group determined that some retooling of our brand was necessary in order to create a more distinctive, concise, and memorable impression within new markets. However, they said Morrison-Maierle’s current core values and vision are solid. Rebranding should improve on how these are communicated to others.

After research on our competitor’s branding and trends throughout the nation in the A/E/C industry, the group found that using an identifying symbol and/or tagline as a means to present what an organization represents not only embodies the services offered by the company, but also its mission and core values. Their final recommendation was that the Corporate Leadership Team and the Marketing Services Department work to create a symbol and tagline that embodies the vision and value of Morrison-Maierle. They also recommended that the story of our founders John Morrison and Joe Maierle be personalized to reflect our core values which they held and lived and their desire to design projects that were building blocks for communities.

Keeping the work group’s direction in mind, it was determined that each block in our logo should represent one of our Core Values—Integrity (dark blue on the bottom), Commitment (medium blue on the right), Respect (aqua on the left), and Excellence (lime green).

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Morrison-Maierle took home
ACEC Montana's Engineering Excellence Grand Project Award and several other top honors and rankings.

ACEC Engineering Excellence Grand Project Award — East Belgrade Interchange/Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport
The Montana Chapter of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) awarded Morrison-Maierle with the 2015 Grand Project Award for its work on the East Belgrade Interchange/Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport. In addition to this award, the company also received seven additional excellence awards for recent engineering projects.

More than 10 years in the making, the East Belgrade Interchange project and the improvements at the Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport are a showcase for what Montana local agencies can accomplish. These two large, interdependent projects required coordination between stakeholders, state and federal agencies, landowners, and designers at a level we've not previously witnessed,” said Transportation and Airport Market Group Leaders Philip Forbes and Scott Bell in a joint statement.

Tell Dell Award — Dell's Partner of the Year Award — Morrison-Maierle Systems
Systems received the “Tell Dell Award” at the Dell SonicWall conference in Las Vegas in 2015. In business since 1982, this is System's first national award. Dell's Partner of the Year Award is given for customer advocacy and gives to a company that has received accolades for going above and beyond for their customers. This is the first time this award has been given to a Montana technology company.

To achieve this award, Systems had to show capabilities in security, servers, storage and app security. With customer service specialists in each of their offices, Systems also has a master-level security specialist, which is rare for a company of just 15 people.

America's Transportation Award — Best Use of Innovation Regional Award — Morrison-Maierle
The America's Transportation Awards—co-sponsored by AASHTO, AAA and the US Chamber of Commerce—annually recognizes the best of America's transportation projects in four regional competitions. Working with our client, Montana Department of Transportation, the Deep Creek Canyon Weekend Bridge Replacement Project was named one of the 10 finalists in the American's Transportation Awards competition.

Montana Department of Transportation’s $2.75 million Deep Creek Canyon Weekend Bridge Replacement project was completed in three weekends rather than the originally estimated nine months, minimizing delays to motorists, tourists, businesses, and emergency response crews near Helena National Forest. Instead of causing a 150-mile detour or constructing dangerous detours in the narrow canyon, the accelerated bridge design and construction processes saved time while replacing three bridges damaged during spring floods in 2011.

Montana Sustainability Building Awards — Montana State University, Jake Jabs Hall
Montana State University, Jake Jabs Hall/College of Business

ENR Mountain States Best Projects Awards — Montana State University, Jake Jabs Hall/College of Business

For the second consecutive year, Morrison-Maierle has been named as one of the “Best Firms To Work For” by professional services industry leader, The Zweig Group. The Zweig Group’s “Best Firms to Work For” list began in 2001. Morrison-Maierle was ranked #3 by ENR’s Intermountain Top Design Firm — Morrison-Maierle of Montana

ENR Top 500 — We were honored once again by being named to Engineering News-Record’s Top 500 Design Firms in the country at number 347. The Top 500 list, published annually, ranks the largest U.S.-based design firms, both publicly and privately held, based on design-specific revenue. Since ENR began these rankings in 1985, Morrison-Maierle has been ranked all but six years.

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ENR Mountain States Top Design Firms — Morrison-Maierle was ranked #7 by ENR’s Mountain States Best Projects Award — Montana Sustainable Building Awards and ENR Mountain States Best Projects Award

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PSM’s Premier Award for Client Satisfaction — The Premier Award for Client Satisfaction, presented in partnership with Client Feedback Tool, honors A/E/C firms that provide their clients with top quality communications, impressive performance, and cost effective solutions. Morrison-Maierle and 18 other firms were selected.

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We have been fortunate to have completed projects this year that have had positive impact on our clients and their communities. The City of Libby now has a new storage reservoir (Flower Creek Dam) for their municipal water needs. We installed a secure and safe wastewater system for the next 50 years. The Flathead National Forest Water Users Association now has a very reliable water system that will lift their irrigation reincrease every year and give them vastly improved flow. The Flatland floodplain team completed the West Gallatin River floodplain project which provides sound information for flood hazards for property owners and county regulators.

In what geographic area or specialty is your group best prepared for growth? A comment that we have heard repeatedly from our clients this year is how much they appreciate the Morrison-Maierle’s client service. Quite often this comment is preceded by a discussion of the projects they have had with either a larger or smaller firm. Although the Morrison-Maierle experience they have had with either larger or smaller firm have had with either a larger or smaller firm, they consistently respond strongly to our client service. Our client service is our best opportunity to show the world that Morrison-Maierle is the right firm to be built on strong client relationships and our ability to provide quality projects with a quick turnaround time.

In what geographic area or specialty is your group best prepared for growth? Geographically we are poised to see growth in northern Idaho and eastern Washington with the completion of the River City Office. Coincidentally, traffic impact analyses and transportation corridor evaluations represent the greatest strength of that office. Also, our Bridge Division has grown significantly with the successful completion of the West Independence Bridge (Helena, Bozeman, Kalispell, Missoula). The future projection of new projects should continue the growth of our communities and their clients.

What type of project really energizes the members of your group? It’s pretty simple. Morrison-Maierle’s core purpose is “we create solutions that build better communities.” How does your market group best fulfill this purpose? Morrison-Maierle’s core purpose is “we create solutions that build better communities.” How does your market group best fulfill this purpose? What trends in your market will you give the best opportunity to serve new or existing clients? The majority of the work that the Morrison-Maierle team performs is to either rehabilitate existing infrastructure or to complete new projects to facilitate the growth of our communities and their clients.

What type of projects really energizes the members of your group? Our clients are continually looking for ways to grow in their current locations and often seek new locations to serve new or existing clients. This year we have had several projects throughout the state that build better communities. Depending on public funding, we are well positioned to work on projects throughout Montana and the surrounding states. We have also completed projects in Alaska, Utah, and are involved in projects in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Our clients are always looking for ways to grow in their current locations and often seek new locations to serve new or existing clients. Morrison-Maierle’s core purpose is “we create solutions that build better communities.” How does your market group best fulfill this purpose? What type of projects really energizes the members of your group? How can we be more competitive in our current locations and still stay open and accessible to our communities. The majority of the work that the Morrison-Maierle team performs is to either rehabilitate existing infrastructure or to complete new projects to facilitate the growth of our communities and their clients.

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In the locations we currently operate, development projects are becoming more difficult to obtain. Many of the prime, development ready locations have already been taken. Most projects we are working on now are located in existing areas where there is an interest for such an environmental, political, geological, access, or evolving regulations that govern the approval process. We pride ourselves in being able to get tough projects through the approval process by coordinating with challenging projects is where we can serve our existing and future clients.

What type of projects really energize the members of your group? Why?

We have been fortunate to be involved in many diverse development projects such as valley West, Spanish Peaks Resort and Yellowstone Club. When a series of projects for a client span multiple decades, our team is able to develop a deep and valuable history and enhance our expertise in producing even more important in the relationship side of services. Our goal is to realize a sense of partnership in our clients’ projects. They provide land surveying services to a wide variety of clients in Wyoming. We have been involved in a wide variety of projects including oil and gas exploration, construction, and ngineering, and working with end-users. That said, the main key is to make sure that we are informed of the latest the members of your group? Why?

Water is the substance for life. Without it, all life as we know it, and economic viability is possible. The focus of the Mining Group is providing solutions that build better communities.

What type of project really energizes the members of your group? Why?

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At Morrison-Maierle, our core purpose is “We create solutions that build better communities.” While the majority of these solutions are created by our engineers, surveyors, planners, and scientists, we also consider solutions as the things we do to give back to our communities. Here’s a look at just some of the ways we supported our communities as offices and individuals in 2015.

### Helena Office Volunteers
The Helena Office once again participated in a pre-game effort to stock Food Share. This effort helps assemble Kid Packs at the Helena Food Share. The fruits of labor for Bozeman’s ‘Can the Griz’ food drive.

### Kalispell Office Serves Back
The Kalispell office participated in Toys for Tots this past December, spearheaded by Joe Wolstein. Brad Kastelitz and Tom Briggeman, representing our Kalispell office, also participated in “Houses for Hunger.” The Northwest Montana Association of Realtors and their wonderful volunteers designed “houses” using unique combinations of colors and sizes of stacked cans. All cans were divided up and distributed to local food banks.

Bozeman Office Cans the Griz
The Bozeman Office once again participated in Cans the Griz, a pre-game effort to stock the Bozeman Food Bank. This year, thanks to this office’s efforts, the Food Bank has 1,670 pounds of food and $566 in cash from our employee-owners. The winner of the city-wide drive was Gailaani Association of Realtors, followed by MM’s First Floor employee-owners and our Second Floor employee-owners came in third.

Thanks to Brian, Sam, Dave, and Marty for loading up the truck and taking the trucking to the food bank.


Heather Mesler Indoor Soccer; Upward Basketball Sonya Leckner YWCA Helena Craig Nowak North-Central Montana Elementary School Science Fair GF Optimist Club Craig Schneider Discovery 5 Education Foundation; Montana Association of Registered Land Surveyors Brad Kastelitz USGBC Montana Chapter Flathead Valley Little Guy Football City Parks and Rec; County Parks and Rec; Kalispell Pewee Baseball; NMAA Charlottesville Tracy Campbell PTA; Christ the King Watershed Education Network


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In 2015, Chairman Jack Schunke announced that Julie Shiflett would be serving on Morrison-Maierle’s Board of Directors. Following Jon Carlson’s appointment in 2014, she is the second non-employee in the history of the company to serve in this capacity.

As a founding partner of Northwest CFO, LLC, Julie’s expertise lies in assisting emerging and mid-market companies so they may increase cash flow, profitability, sales, and company value. Currently, she also sits on the Board of Directors for Northwest Farm Credit Services and American Chemet Corporation and Subsidiaries.

“Involving people who are not Morrison-Maierle employee-owners is the right thing to do because it really takes us to a new level of accountability and brings enormous value to the work we do on the board,” says Schunke. “We’re able to look at things from their perspective; from the outside, looking in,” he added.

Similar to the experience Jon brings from working for a much larger firm, Julie has a wide variety of experience in both the public and private sectors. Her knowledge in finance, capital markets, human resources, information technology, and taxation have been especially valuable this year as Morrison-Maierle has gone through the acquisition of Holm, Blough, says Schunke.

“Having people on board with these kinds of skills will be especially valuable as we continue to grow,” added Schunke.