



# THE TREE LINE

News for Sunland Construction & Affiliates

## Business Development

**February 2019  
Edition  
Gotta Dig-it**

*Your Hard Work in the Spotlight. Thanks for your hard work, your professionalism and workmanship have kept jobs in the pipeline.*

*There are a number of jobs currently underway. If you are between jobs and are looking for a good opportunity, feel free to contact the Division Office to find out what work is available.*

In 2018, our Business Development team underwent numerous changes, including changing our name to “Operational Intelligence.” Our Operational Intelligence (“OI”) team consists of numerous professionals from all facets of the industry, and has combined industry experience of over 250 years.

Our OI Representatives not only seek bid packages, but also gather project information, market trends, resource loads and general market information to provide to management. This type of information allows the management team to stay up to speed with the current market climate and to plan accordingly.

The OI team works with internal and external clients to foster Sunland’s continued growth.

OI’s primary focus is building and maintaining long lasting relationships with current clients, while also seeking and developing relationships with new potential clients. Building these relationships requires patience and persistence, as sales representatives are not always well received when trying to make initial introductions to busy new clients. After successful opening introductions, OI seeks to entertain clients and build their trust in order to ultimately develop and cultivate strong, lasting relationships. Whether during a dinner, golf tournament or other event with clients, OI is always taking notes and probing the clients for more information to pass on to operations at Sunland.



While OI can be fun and rewarding, it does come with challenges. First and foremost, not everyone wants your product. Just because a particular client may like you doesn’t mean that the client will necessarily use your company for its current or future project(s). Of course, there are always competitors, and sometimes the competitors will have a better price and/or be more readily available for a particular project.

In these instances, it is OI’s responsibility to show the client that Sunland has a better product and that the difference is worth the cost. While competitors certainly present challenges, they can also be beneficial. They keep us innovative and on top of our game, ensuring that we are never pushed out of the market. The best way to beat your competition is to get to know what they are doing and what type of events/functions have been valuable to them and their relative success. Fortunately, we do have the benefit of working for Sunland, and its well established name and reputation is sometimes enough, in and of itself, to “win” the project(s).





# Co-worker Connection



**Melissa Nichols**  
**Operational Intelligence**  
**(Business Development)**  
*Sunland Construction*  
*Eastern Division*

**Which company do you work for and how many years of service?** Sunland Construction for 5.5 months.

**Tell us about your family!** I have been married to Jay Nichols for almost 22 years. We live in Columbus, MS with our 17 year old daughter Carson. Jay is in practice at the Nichols Firm, PPLC, law firm, with his father. Carson, our only child, is a junior and a straight A student at Heritage Academy where she is a member of the varsity basketball team. Since we live in the country on the Tombigbee River, we are able to have 2 Cane Corsos (Italian Mastiff), a Chiweenie and a pot belly pig.

**What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?** I love to read, watch movies by the fire and take walks with all of our dogs in warm weather. I love to dance. I don't do this very often in my older age but I still love it.

**Where do you see yourself (career wise) in 10 years?** This is a hard question. I recently joined the Sunland Family and I have a great deal to learn. So, I really don't have an answer to this question. However, God put this opportunity in my path and I know that he will bless me along this road.

**This year, what has been your biggest work-related challenge?** I have always enjoyed people and customer service and that part of the job comes very easy. Learning an entire new industry has been the challenge. I love a challenge.

**This year, what has been your biggest work-related achievement?** For me, determining how to "work" the Eastern Division's territory and "jumping in with both feet" from day 1. By doing this, I have been able to meet customers that Sunland has not done business with in several years.

**If you could have dinner with anyone past or present, who would it be and why?** I actually have two.

1. My great grandfather, Grand Daddy Hannah. He lived and died in Yazoo, City. MS. He was the first person to purchase and own a car (the salesman had to teach him how to drive) and he owned the only grocery store in the county. He was a kind man and gave food to those who didn't have any. I would ask him what is was like to live and raise a family with no technology, Walmart, or fast food.
2. Elvis Presley. Yes, I said "Elvis." He is one of the most iconic and loved entertainers in history. I grew up listening to Elvis with my mother. I was very young but I remember her crying for several days when he died. I would ask him the following questions:
  - When did you realize you were going to be famous?
  - How does it feel to have a continued influence on musical entertainers and fans?
  - If you could go back and change 3 things in your past, what would they be?
  - And then I would ask him to sing "Love me Tender"

# From Our Desk to Yours

## **“Business, Corporations, and why Focus Matters”**

Before we begin, let's first establish an understanding of some basic terminology...

**Business** in this context is the organized efforts and activities of individuals to produce and sell goods and services for profit.

Our **business structure** here at Sunland Construction, Inc. is a **corporation** – a legal entity that is separate and distinct from its owners.

A **legal entity** is any human or non-human entity, in other words, any human being, firm, or government agency that is recognized as having privileges and obligations, such as having the ability to enter into contracts, loan and borrow money, to sue, and to be sued, hire employees, own assets and pay taxes. So there are two kinds of legal entities, human and non-human: natural persons and juridical persons, which are other entities (such as corporations) that are treated in law as if they were persons.

Now that we've laid the groundwork, let's begin...

In a time not so long ago business could and, more times than not, would have been conducted with a man's word and a handshake, formal letter or simple one page contract, over the rotary dial telephone details would be hashed out, for example. As we have progressed through the years to today, business is now conducted with complex contracts that resemble novels that would give even the most avid reader nightmares, increased regulation that's not so easy to interpret, cell phones and computers with 24/7 instant access to everything, to name a few. So what does all this have to do with what and when I focus my efforts on and isn't business and corporations kind of the same thing and why does any of this apply to me? I'm just an employee.

The answers reveal themselves when we apply our understanding of the groundwork in the beginning of this article. As we continue through we realize that each of us are part of a corporation. While it's true that corporations enjoy most of the rights and responsibilities of an individual – Missing however, is a mind capable of independent thought and most importantly a soul...you the employees of Sunland Construction, Inc. are all part of what makes up the collective mind and soul of this great corporation. In a world that seemingly never unplugs we need to ask ourselves, **“Am I focusing on the right things at the right time?”** For each of us the answer to this question will be different but can be simply validated like this – does my answer reveal that am I distracted or does it reveal that I contribute to fulfilling the deliverable to the customer and in turn the company. This seemingly simple concept empowers individuals to conquer their fears and reach goals, it allows the underdog to conquer its oppressor, and it transforms would be ordinary companies into global powerhouses of success and longevity...and **THAT IS why focus and attention to detail from each and everyone of us matters...**

**Jeffrey A. Fletcher**

