



Ones to Watch Fall 2022: James Simpson, LERA Consulting Structural Engineers

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James Simpson
Associate

What recent project, transaction or accomplishment are you most proud of?

One of my first projects as a design engineer was a 30-story concrete building in a high seismic zone. The opportunity to apply my graduate studies and learn an advanced analysis software to simulate the structure's response to recorded ground motions was extremely rewarding.

Tell us about a mentor or role model that has influenced your career choices?

My aunt is a civil engineer who fueled my interest in problem solving and structures. She organized family projects, such as building timber bridges over streams and crawling under old farmhouse foundations to find the root of an issue, igniting my interest in the world of structural engineering.

What 3 skills do you consider the most important to be successful in your industry?

1. Communication: it doesn't matter how well you know the problem if you can't communicate it to a layperson.
2. Enthusiasm: not every project is "sexy", but you can always learn valuable lessons from the experience.
3. Collaboration: know your limitations, and when to learn from others.

What is one lesson that you had to learn the hard way?

My work in forensic engineering is a constant reminder that the decisions we make have a real-life impact on those around us. Learning how to identify and fix mistakes, or how and when to respond to warning signs, is something I'm always looking to improve.

What do you enjoy doing when you are not working?

At the end of the day, or on the weekend, I'll put on some music and cook. I've been in the kitchen from a young age as my dad's sous chef, and I love the process—and sometimes chaos—of transforming ingredients into a delicious meal.