



Engineering Design Source, Inc.

"I started the first Asian Indian-owned civil engineering company in St. Louis."



Jeffrey Varughese MBE/DBE

Aaron Verges MBE/DBE



George John

Brett Brooks

At Engineering Design Source, Inc. (EDSI), the owners embody the essence of trailblazers and resilient individuals. From Aaron Verges, Principal and Chief Technology Officer (CTO) to Jeffrey Varughese, Principal and Professional Engineer (PE), and Brett Brooks, Principal and Professional Land Surveyor (PLS), each leader personifies qualities such as self-motivation, innovation, hard work, and passion.

While these characteristics resonate strongly within the team, they find their fullest expression in the company's founder, George John, PE. As the visionary behind EDSI, John not only established the company but also played a pivotal role in mentoring each owner, fostering their growth, and facilitating their career advancements within the company. "I started EDSI in June 1995, after working as a civil engineer at another consulting firm in St. Louis. I had the urge to do something different, and I wanted options to start something on my own," John recalls.

John established the groundwork for EDSI within the comforts of his home, a solitary venture that, at times, felt daunting. His fortune shifted when an opportunity arose at St. Louis Lambert International Airport (STL). A major firm invited him to contribute to the grading plan for a new runway project in 2002. Securing a portion of the massive airport contract marked a pivotal moment for EDSI, enabling John to expand and move out of his home office. "It was my first big contract. From the early to late 2000s, the company experienced a growth spurt from one employee to twenty-five," John reflects.

In the early days, EDSI focused primarily on surveying, traffic studies and signals, and road projects. As the company grew, it broadened its engineering design services to include storm sewers, structural work, and expanded surveying capabilities.

To drive success, John recruited fresh talent such as Verges and Brooks, nurturing them into key contributors to the company's growth. Both share a passion for the profession. Verges' love for engineering started in high school, where he took classes in drafting. "My teacher encouraged me, saying this could be a potential career path," he recalls. Inspired by this insight, Verges pursued further education at a technical college, specializing in Computer-Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) technology. "My resume made its way to George," Verges recalls. Impressed by EDSI's vision and culture, Verges joined the team, not only honing his drafting skills but also seizing the opportunity to pursue a bachelor's degree in information technology, all while witnessing EDSI's growth at STL.

"In my 23 years with EDSI, I have been heavily involved in drafting, designing, and drawing for various projects, including Taxilane Charlie, Taxiway Foxtrot, Lambert Cargo, Taxiway Sierra, Taxiway Lima, and Taxiway Echo at STL," states Verges.

Brooks shares a similar heartfelt story with Verges. "I started right out of high school. Like Aaron, George mentored me, and I took weekend and night classes at a community college to further my education," Brooks recalls.

Varughese, the newest addition to the EDSI team, joined the company three years ago following a 10-year tenure at two large private companies, during which he obtained his engineering degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and earned his PE license in both Illinois and Missouri. "The past three years at EDSI have been great. We have seen significant growth, doubling both our revenue and our staff," Varughese says.

EDSI frequently manages multiple airport projects simultaneously. John emphasizes, "We're currently the prime contractor for on-call task orders concerning landside design services, which involve the infrastructure outside the terminals such as sewers, roadways, and traffic signals."

Additionally, EDSI has served as a subcontractor for surveying and design projects on the runways and taxiways for the past 20 years. The company's latest success is exemplified in its participation as a sub-consultant on the Airport Master Plan. The team provided phasing and structural exhibits to be included in the Master Plan. This included data on potential development projects and envisioning the airport's future as a consolidated terminal.

With this assurance and dedicated leadership from Verges, Varughese, and Brooks, John recognized the need for a new generation to take the reins to ensure the company's continued success. Today, with nearly 50 employees and securing major engineering contracts in Illinois and Missouri, EDSI continues to grow.

In 2021, John passed the majority ownership of the company to Verges and Varughese, both individuals are certified as minority and disadvantaged business owners. Several factors contributed to this ownership change. After 26 years at the helm, John wanted to take a step back from the day-to-day leadership role and ensure the future of EDSI for years to come. "Although I've relinquished ownership to the new generation, retirement isn't on my agenda," John states.

As majority owners directing the day-to-day operations, Verges and Varughese's commitment to EDSI remains unwavering. Verges affirms, "As the CTO, I ensure the company remains ahead of technological advancements by aligning them within our overall business strategies." Varughese is growing EDSI in the Illinois market, overseeing projects with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Illinois Tollway in Chicago.

Verges and Varughese are currently spearheading the company's relocation efforts in Chesterfield, upgrading from a Class B building to a Class A facility. With this expansion from 8,000 to 11,500 square feet, they aim to increase the staff in the next five to ten years, attract more clients, and preserve the legacy of George John, ensuring that his vision continues to thrive.