

BUSINESS

Local executive to help grow Louisville-based engineering firm in Southeast

By [Sophia Surrett](#), Daily Memphian

Published: September 29, 2024 4:00 AM CT

After more than a decade working in his family business, Allworld Project Management, Brent Hooks has been tapped to spearhead the regional expansion of Louisville, Kentucky-based Cornerstone Engineering.

The architecture, engineering and construction firm specializes in structural, environmental and geotechnical engineering.

“In Memphis, Cornerstone is here to represent the demographic of Memphis and allow others to see that this is a viable community and a good (city) launch to start a business,” Hooks said.

[New committee aims to give small businesses roadmap to success](#)

Two years ago, the 21-year-old firm implemented an aggressive expansion plan and growth strategy, increasing its employee count from 18 to nearly 80 within the last two years and expanding from one location to six, including to Memphis, Nashville, Atlanta and Cincinnati.

Hiring Hooks to lead the expansion effort for offices in the Southeast was the next step.

“We’re growing in leaps and bounds by hiring those nine to 10 level leaders that can make decisions and have connections in the regions,” said Chella Subram, founder and president at Cornerstone. “Brent is one highly acclaimed leader we knew already, so we’re going to have a great expectation for Memphis’ growth and surrounding regions.”

Subram met Hooks four years ago when Cornerstone first considered expanding into Memphis, prioritizing connections in Memphis. Subram said Allworld was one of them, where Hooks was the chief administration officer.

Hooks said he was looking for a new opportunity not long before Cornerstone approached him, even considering starting his own consulting firm.

“I’ve contributed a significant amount of effort to those organizations, and I’m forever grateful for my time (there). But I wanted to challenge myself in new ways and get back to the roots of what I was trying to do: grow organizations,” Hooks said. “This allows me to fuel that dream of mine.”



Brent Hooks

Hook said he sees Allworld Project Management as a “forever partner,” including working with Cornerstone Engineering as it establishes itself in the Memphis market.

Cornerstone said it was interested in Hooks’ work ethic; accounting and finance background; project-management professional certification; and connections.

“Brent’s been in the community (in Memphis) for such a long time,” said John Daniels, Cornerstone’s vice president of operations. “We see a great way for us

to expand there in Memphis. And there's nothing like a local presence, and Brent is."

Daniels said Hooks is a like-minded individual with Cornerstone executives, wanting to expand and grow.



"Brent is going to lead Cornerstone into the future in these markets, and as vice president in the company, (he) is going to continue to make

organizational changes that are going to positively impact our company," Daniels said. "We're really excited to have him on board."

Cornerstone had a Memphis office for more than three years, but it has achieved more in two months than it has in nearly two years, Subram said.

"With Brent on our team, there's really no limits on how we can grow, and now in the east," Daniels said. "We believe he has all the capabilities from leadership, network and problem-solving ability."

Hooks said he wants to help Cornerstone achieve its goals of assisting municipalities and large-scale organizations on multifaceted projects and establishing itself as a key player in the industry and market.

Hooks said Cornerstone can work on larger-scale projects around Memphis with its contracting license allowing it to work on projects up to \$20 million. Hooks said they are eyeing the Interstate 55 bridge project and are interested in stadium builds around the city.

[Let your hair down at District 12, a bar for millennial trendsetters](#)

The firm has already gotten its feet wet at Simmons Bank Liberty Stadium where the Memphis office's engineer-in-training has already completed some work.

"We are here to support the Memphis market and Memphis efforts as much as we can," Hooks said. "We look forward to adding value in a number of different ways."

Hooks said he is also seeking partnerships with the Greater Memphis Chamber, local business associations and the University of Memphis's STEM program.

"STEM has been a great thing that I have continued to push throughout my career," Hooks said. "We want to get more minorities and women interested in STEM, so our push is to partner with many nonprofit and for-profit organizations to facilitate and push their mission forward."

TOPICS

BRENT HOOKS

ALLWORLD PROJECT MANAGEMENT

CORNERSTONE ENGINEERING

Sophia Surrett

Sophia Surrett is a recent University of Alabama graduate, where she received her B.A. in news media and M.A. in journalism and media studies. She covers restaurants, residential real estate, and hospitality and tourism.
