

# Earthwork Services

**Headquarters:** Cosmopolis, WA

**Company Established:** 1986

**Employees:** 9

**Primary Products:** Computer-aided Earthwork Analysis

David Zimmerman, owner of Earthwork Service has spent most of his life, from grade school on, doing computerized earthwork take-offs. In the early 60's his father, Dick Zimmerman, a civil engineer employed by the federal government, developed some of the first earthwork and engineering software available. His software, written in binary code and running on IBM main frames, was used in designing the federal interstate highway system. As his father's business grew, David joined him, and shortly after graduating in civil engineering in 1986, David relocated to Seattle, Washington and opened Earthwork Services Inc.

After slugging it out in Seattle traffic for 7 years and dealing with exploding real-estate and labor costs, Zimmerman moved his business to a farm near Cosmopolis, WA. From there he can still provide his services to a growing national customer base, yet own and live on a large piece of river front property he never could have dreamed of owning near Seattle. Other factors included proximity to Westport for world class surfing, and the slower pace of a rural area.

Earthwork Services provides computer-aided earthwork calculations to engineers and contractors which can be used in negotiating bids, settling engineering issues and verifying cost estimates. The Internet allows Earthwork Services to receive engineering drawings from literally all over the world. They complete design/calculations from their remote site and fire the work back electronically and via express shipping. From CADD files and/or grading plans, they provide:

- 3-D graphics and plotted cross-sections
- Color shaded cut/fill depth maps in plan view
- Cut/fill grid elevation maps in plan view
- A Digital Terrain Model for grading control equipment
- A virtual reality drive-thru
- Earthwork volumes

"Communication with customers is a critical component of our service, ensuring that the work is done right and on time," says Zimmerman. Earthwork Services currently uses 4 dedicated dial up Internet lines as they are off the high speed grid. "We desperately need a faster Internet connection," says Zimmerman. "Dial-up internet access just creeps – it's killing us." The company is currently looking for faster internet access options and may be forced to move the business into Aberdeen if they cannot resolve this issue over the next year.

Zimmerman feels good about being able to provide good jobs in the rural community with few options. "Some of my employees were working at McDonalds and washing cars, now they are able to afford a home mortgage."

Earthwork Services has been enjoying a growth of about 20-30% a year, over the last 5 years and currently serves over 1500 engineering and construction companies nationally. At this point Zimmerman says too much of a good thing can be a bad thing, and has taken action to reduce the company's growth by reducing some of the services they were offering. "There is more to life than money and growing a business. We wanted a place with access to the rest of the world, where we could get a bigger bang for our buck, but have a slower lifestyle." Zimmerman believes his values are shared with the kind of people who are bringing small businesses to rural areas.

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