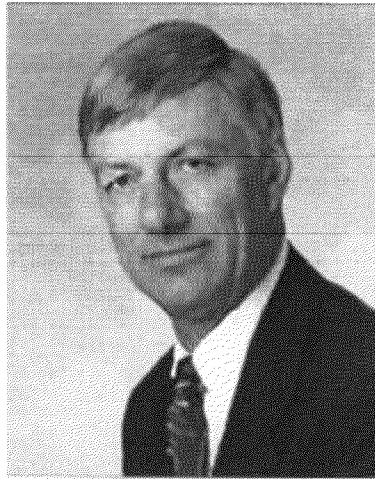


James R. Gills, Lake County Engineer

Prior to his election as Lake County Engineer in 2000, James R. Gills was a successful engineer and consultant in the private sector for over 30 years. "Just before entering public office I had my own business - Gills, Guard and Johnson," he said. "My areas of expertise included environmental engineering and storm water management."

With this background, it is no surprise that Gills has found a comfortable niche within NOACA's water quality planning program. During 2004 Gills is chairing NOACA's Environmental Advisory Committee as well as its Water Quality Subcommittee. After the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) issued new regulations for storm water control, Gills served on the NOACA Steering Committee that guided development of the region's Storm Water Management Plan.

In Lake County, Gills was part of a consulting team that educated local officials about the new EPA regulations and promoted a cooperative approach to storm water management. This evolved into the organization of a countywide storm water utility with a membership of 16 communities.



James R. Gills
Lake County Engineer

One of Lake County's five representatives on the NOACA Governing Board, Gills finds NOACA to be a vital place for regional decision-making. "It makes sense that infrastructure be approached from a regional perspective," he noted. "NOACA provides the region with a unified vision and a good, solid plan."

While active in water quality planning, Gills deals with an equal share of transportation issues important to Lake

County. "One of the reasons I decided to run for Engineer was the fact that many transportation improvement projects were stalled and in danger of losing federal funding," said Gills. "The county population was increasing but the infrastructure was not keeping pace with the rate of growth." Since taking office, Gills has made significant progress in getting transportation projects funded and implemented.

The Lake County Engineer also spearheaded last year's SR-2 Major Investment Study, which resulted in an investment strategy for widening the freeway, upgrading interchanges and other improvements. The Lake County Engineer and project consultant received many accolades for the study's timely completion and content. The Engineer also received an Ohio Consulting Engineers Award for the study.

Born in Mansfield, Ohio, Gills attended Case Institute of Technology, earning a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering in 1962. He became a registered professional engineer in 1966 and professional surveyor one year later. In addition to his engineering work, Gills has also taught classes at Lakeland Community College, on and off for the past 23 years.

Gills is married and has three children and five grandchildren. Gills and his wife Laura enjoy sports, including skiing and recreational boating. During the warm summer months they may be spotted cruising around the Great Lakes. "I live a simple life," he said. "Lots of work and little fun." The job must have some rewards - Gills is running for re-election this fall.



The Lake County Engineer took a lead role in conducting the Major Investment Study for SR-2 (above), which was completed in a record 15 months.