

Ask a Busy Person

Your background is in mechanical engineering. How did that lead you to Advanced Reserve Solutions?

🔗 In high school I liked architectural drawing and I enjoyed working on mechanical things. When I had to choose between architecture and mechanical engineering in college, I chose engineering, because I thought engineers had better job prospects than architects. After college, I worked in process engineering for a paper company for several years and then took a job designing envelope folding machines for the same company. I enjoyed that, but I had also been interested in construction for a long time. I grew up in Florida during a housing boom and I'd watched a lot of homes being built around me. I like seeing how things work—how they go together. I also wanted to work for a smaller company and I knew I wanted to start my own company at some point.

So I took a job with a small builder. I had to take a pay cut, but I was excited to be watching houses being built again. That's when I realized I'm more interested in buildings than in machines.



How did you move from building homes to preparing reserve studies for condominiums?

🔗 I started my own home building business in 2004. As a sideline, I did some small consulting jobs for insurance companies, reviewing construction damage claims, analyzing what went wrong. When I told a friend I enjoyed that work, she introduced me to her brother-in-law, who had started Advanced Reserve Solutions with a partner 20 years before. They were looking for someone to represent them in New England.

What do you enjoy most about this work? 🔗 Explaining complicated issues to people. I like educating people about their buildings. If reserve studies are



PAUL HUIJING, P.E.

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT,
ADVANCED RESERVE SOLUTIONS

only filled with spread sheets and technical jargon, condominium owners won't pay any attention to them. Maybe it's because of my engineering training, but I think if you explain things in a logical way, so people understand "why" as well as "what," they may not like your recommendations, but they will have an easier time accepting them.

What do you find most frustrating?

🔗 It concerns me when associations kick the can down the road. They know they need to increase their reserves, but they take a short-term view.

How did you get involved in CAI?

🔗 I joined when I began working with Advanced Reserves Solutions. But I already understood the importance of belonging to a trade association. I've been active in the local and state chapters of the Home Builders' Association for years. I know how much it helped me when I was building my construction company, so I was eager to get involved with CAI. Teaching

courses and writing articles helps the association by educating its members, but it also helps to promote my business. It's a symbiotic relationship in the best way.

What would it surprise people to know about you?

🔗 Probably that I'm an Iron Man (triathlon) competitor. I was a big-time cyclist when I was younger. I stopped when my kids were young, but I started cycling again when they were older. I decided to try a triathlon and discovered I was pretty good at it. I wasn't fast at any of the events (swimming, biking, and running), but I was consistent in all of them. I can operate at 85 percent all day. I biked more than 11,000 miles training for my first triathlon and finishing it was an amazing feeling. Shortly after that race, I discovered I had colon cancer. After I finished the treatment, I decided to do another Iron Man triathlon in Canada in 2016, and I finished it. I don't know if I'll do any more, but it was important to me after my bout with cancer to prove that I could.



What's the best advice you ever got and from whom?

🔗 I've gotten a lot of good advice, most of it from my parents. Two things in particular have guided me: "Be yourself," and, "Make sure you enjoy what you do." I give the same advice to my kids, or any kids. I tell them to think about what they would do for free, and then find a way to get paid for it. I also tell them not to be afraid to change direction if they decide there is something else they want to do. 🏠