

## Waycaster architecture firm merges business with Dungan Engineering

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Waycaster & Associates Architect, previously housed at 112 Main St. in Natchez, has developed a new partnership with Dungan Engineering, a firm with offices currently in Brookhaven, Columbia, Picayune and Magnolia.

Established in 1993, some Dungan projects include ballparks at the Lincoln Civic Center and Pearl River Community College, the Pearl River Interpretive Plaza in Columbia, the Commons Public Park in Crosby, Marion County airport upgrades and emergency bridge repair projects in Lawrence and Lincoln counties.

With approximately 40 years of architectural planning, design and project management experience, Waycaster & Associates Architect has been a pillar of the Natchez community with a hand in many city projects, such as the reopening of the North Natchez Youth Center and renovation work of the Duncan Park Canteen, Convention Center, City Auditorium, Civic Center, the Natchez Fire Departments and the City Council Chamber.

Waycaster has done numerous projects throughout Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, Florida and Alabama but in recent years moved its market group closer to home.

The company holds numerous awards from Mississippi Heritage Trust, Mississippi Main Street Association, Historic Natchez Foundation, American Institute of Architects and Mississippi Associated Builders and Contractors.

But as the sole proprietor, founder Johnny Waycaster said the business would have ended with him. While he has no immediate plans to retire, Waycaster said, "With my age, I'm sure the employees had some concerns. How long would we continue with this? But transitioning into a partnership changes a firm that is gradually slowing down into an opportunity to turn it around and grow the business. It'll continue well beyond me."

"It's similar trades but two different fields," Waycaster said. "We support them and they support us. ... It was just a natural step progression to become involved with them because we do so much with them anyway."

"Dungan has 100 plus employees and they can give us the technical support and the managerial support that we need to free us up from doing the things that are not design-related to give us the opportunity to grow and expand into markets we were not previously involved with," he said. "We've done a little bit in Picayune and we do quite a bit in Marion County but we've never ventured as far as Hattiesburg or Laurel. We're starting a project with Dungan now at Camp Shelby."

The small company that was slowing down is now growing, Waycaster said.

"We all look forward to it now. Before it was just kind of slowly grinding down but now it's an opportunity again. We're starting our second 40 years."

*Link to original press release:*

<https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2024/01/05/waycaster-architecture-firm-merges-business-with-dungan-engineering/>

