

**GIS STUDENT MATT RILEY,
CLASS OF 2009
REFLECTS ON HIS YEAR AT THE VOINOVICH SCHOOL**

Matt Riley began as a Graduate Assistant (GA) for the Voinovich School during the first quarter of Ohio University's Master's program in Environmental Studies. He worked primarily with underground utility mapping, which he said has become his "niche in the GIS world."

Two weeks after Riley had successfully defended his thesis, he received a job offer from a municipal water utility company – the same type of GIS consulting work he had done as part of his work with the Voinovich School.

"I think that that was a good place to be considering I was only out of school for two weeks," Riley said. "It was a very competitive position -- they received hundreds of applications and hired one person and that one person was me." Less than a year into his first job, the Department of Natural Resources called and offered him a job working back in Athens County.

"I'm from this region, so the opportunity to come back and stick around and provide a service to the area was too big an opportunity to pass up," Riley said.

He currently works on GIS projects involving coal mines because there has been a push to re-inventory coal mines using new technology.

Riley also feels as though his work with the Voinovich School helped him get to where he is today.

"A lot of the GPS equipment I used [at Voinovich] really gave me the upper hand when it came to hiring in my first and second job," Riley said. "My mentors were very hands-off with the project, gave me responsibility so I was actually held accountable. That experience of being held accountable for something really helped a lot too."

He said that he would definitely recommend the experience to others interested in GIS work.

"[Working with Voinovich] is what you make of it," he said. "Take it seriously, take advantage of the opportunities provided to you and the only thing you'll get out of it is awesome job offer after awesome job offer. Make the best of this opportunity because it will pay off."

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