

Executive Profile

Bill Eshenbaugh: Country boy became 'The Dirt Dog'

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WHO AM I?

NAME: Bill "The Dirt Dog" Eshenbaugh

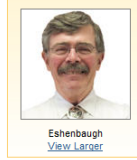
TITLE AND COMPANY: President, Eshenbaugh Land Co.

YEARS WITH THE COMPANY: 15

YEARS IN TAMPA BAY AREA: 5

NATURE OF BUSINESS: Land brokerage

EDUCATION: Finance and real estate, Pennsylvania State University



Eshenbaugh
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WHERE YOU GREW UP AND WHAT IT WAS LIKE: I actually went to a one-room schoolhouse in western Pennsylvania and grew up on a farm. We did not have a lot of money, but we had a lot of love in the family. We learned to balance time in order to get all the chores done, and that the value of hard work paid off.

Tips of the trade

How do you manage the information flow? I process e-mail between 4 and 5 a.m. and have a quick delete finger, and my daughter and assistant Krissy (job title of Whatever Makes My Day Easier) implements the paper flow with our clients.

What was your best business decision? To move to the Tampa Bay area in 1982

What valuable lesson did you learn from a mentor? Real estate has cycles, and cycles create both opportunity and risks.

How do you measure your own success? Collectively, commissions are certainly one measure but frankly, creating solutions to difficult land transactions is very rewarding. When I started out, I vividly remembered the Big Deals that closed; today I more vividly recall the Big Ones that get away.

How do you recharge your batteries? I enjoy fly fishing, riding horses, and traveling the Rockies with my wife, Lynda.

Background check

What did you want to be when you grew up? High school American history teacher

What was a turning point in your life? I left the trucking business in Pittsburgh and moved to the Tampa Bay area to start a career in real estate in 1982.

If you weren't in your current career, what would you be doing? Running herds of horses and beef cattle in Arcadia or Utah

What is your favorite activity with your family? My wife, Lynda, and I love to have breakfast on Sunday morning with our daughter, Krissy.

Who is the most influential person in your life? It is a tie between my dad and my cousin Wally. My dad started his family when he was 50 years old -- he lived to be 98 -- and taught us hundreds of daily lessons such as, "Take care of your tools and they'll take care of you." My cousin, Wally Waldenmyer -- 15 years my senior -- was the "cool guy" with the great new cars, boats and always traveling. He mentored me throughout my education and career choices. He was a very successful real estate developer and builder in Ohio and continues to this day to be a guiding force and touchstone for me.

If you could have dinner with one person you've never met, who would it be and why? President Teddy Roosevelt so I'd have the opportunity to thank him for creating many of the national parks in the Rockies.

Who are your heroes in the business world? Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, Michael Dell; other than that, my heroes have always been cowboys who live by the standard of "doing the right thing."

What is your favorite business book? "A Land Remembered"

What's the most personal item in your office and why is it there? My office is sensory overload in personal items, but perhaps the favorite is a photo taken of my grandfather and father in the 1930s when they were recognized as the "Best Potato Farmers in Butler County."

Words to the wise

What advice would you give to someone starting out in your field? Take as many industry education courses as you can, outwork your competitors, and do the "right thing" ethically.

What is your favorite quote? Cowboy Wisdom -- "You're never too old to teach or too young to learn" is a favorite along with, "Your word is your bond, maybe better."

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