



The Value of a Picture

OAS Helps Clients Calculate Inventory and Plan for the Future



(Left to Right) Joel O'Neal, Teresa Sprunger, Elizabeth O'Neal Booth, Doug Miller, Sam Ault

Throughout the Midwest, huge opencast coal mines are bustling with activity. Although the number of US coal miners has been slashed in half, compared with the numbers twenty years ago, the existing miners use improved tools and business strategies to yield more than one billion tons of coal each year.

OAS Aerial Surveys of Seymour, Indiana, assists the productivity of coal and mineral mining companies by photographing their stockpiles on a monthly basis. The pictures help the mining companies manage assets, monitor output and ensure that inventory is not being lost.

"Our clients have hundreds of stockpiles. Monitoring these would be nearly impossible from the ground. But from the sky we are able to take close-up pictures and provide volume calculations that are within two percent of the actual volume," said Joel O'Neal, vice-president and general manager at OAS.

An ASPRS-certified photogrammetrist, O'Neal has worked in the aerial photography industry for more than 25 years. "Our work is about more than pictures," he said, "It's about providing a valuable business tool. If our clients see falling productivity or volume discrepancies in the images, they can change their plans or intervene to help the mines stay productive."

A certified Women-owned business enterprise (WBE), OAS completes extensive photo acquisition and mapping projects for civil engineering firms and private planners throughout the state and surrounding region. One of these projects includes aerial photography for the Ports of Indiana. These busy centers of commerce handled 3.8 million tons of cargo in the first half of 2005, a 19 percent increase from the same period last year. To accommodate the growing volume, the Port's are constantly expanding. They count on OAS to give them clear pictures of the surrounding areas.

"The high-quality aerial photography that OAS provides offers an efficient way for the port authorities to plan updates and expansions. The growth of the Ports is vital to the economy here," said O'Neal.

Delivering quality

Similar to the way their clients depend on OAS to provide the quality images to help their business stay profitable, OAS counts on Agfa to provide film that delivers the best results. OAS has been using Agfa's film for more than fifteen years.

"The Pan 200 film is versatile, which helps our team capture imagery at varying altitudes," explained O'Neal, "Pan 80 film provides high-resolution for very clear scanning. This is important because many clients today request a digital file in addition to film. Pan 80 ensures that they get the highest quality image for both."

O'Neal also mentioned that he receives sound business advice from his Agfa representative Earl Bechtel, which is of great value to his growing company.

Standing out from the competition

OAS was established in 1961, and in 1980 was purchased by its namesake, Frank O'Neal. Since then, the company has experienced strong growth, despite the fact that there are five competitive aerial firms within a 60-mile radius of Seymour, Indiana. Joel O'Neal, who coincidentally shares the same name as OAS's founder, credits his teams' commitment to clients for the success of the business.

"We really believe that if you treat clients like a part of your company, they'll want to stay and grow with you, so that's exactly what we do."

Today, OAS flies projects in more than 22 states, throughout the Midwest and all along the east coast. And although O'Neal

admits that his dedicated team of seven employees doesn't do much marketing, he explains that word of mouth travels quickly in the aerial industry. OAS's high-quality work combined with recommendations from loyal customers and new ones has created a solid reputation of value that continues to draw customers to the company.



Mine site photographed by OAS using Aviphot X100 film



Agfa's John Brandes

together the Aviphot aerial films to scanning, Aperture Image enhancement, your companies mapping software, and output to any of Agfa's newest generation of digital inkjet printers, you have a cost effective, efficient and high-quality workflow. We are firmly convinced that film will be used in aerial data capture for years to come and the marriage of film to digital output offers aerial companies the opportunity to deliver an excellent end product.

As I have stated in the past, in the world of industrial imaging, film offers many advantages and options while digital imaging technology continues to evolve. You cannot equate the digital revolution in consumer imaging with the demanding imaging requirements that face aerial companies every day.



Q&A with John Brandes

Q: With all the changes taking place with analog film products, what are Agfa's intentions for the Aerial Market?

A: Agfa's support for the aerial market follows our original plan of analog data capture film to digital workflow. This means that we intend to continue to offer a complete assortment of black and white and color aerial films and will also offer copy films and papers as long as the demand supports the manufacturing requirements. Our well established, and highly qualified Agfa Aerial Team is there to help consult, advise, and provide technical support as needed to our customers. We see an excellent marriage of today's aerial films, analog cameras, and scanners coupled with the digital workflow. Our beta testing of Agfa's Aperture image-enhancement software has shown outstanding performance and we expect the release of the first version during Q4 of this year. When you link

SPECIAL NOTE:

Agfa's Aerial VIP Seminar, normally held in September, has been rescheduled this year to join with our European VIP customer Seminar scheduled for November 14-18 at our headquarters office in Mortsel, Belgium. This will be an international event enabling our North American customers to meet and share experience with our European customers while seeing the latest Agfa technology. Contact your local Agfa sales representative for information.