By the time Jason Geschke arrives on a hospital construction site, he already has watched the building go up many times.

That is the nature of his job as the senior integrated construction coordinator in M.A. Mortenson Co.’s Brookfield office. And, he said, the job keeps changing as technology evolves.

“What started out as just coordinating the 3-D coordination process,” Geschke said, “has turned into preparing concrete-placement drawings for our self-perform crews, to virtual mock-ups of both interior and exterior spaces, to micro-virtual mock-ups of enclosure details, to 4-D modeling — where you tie the model to a schedule to show how the work will be sequenced — to [Concrete Masonry Unit] penetration drawings, to blocking drawings, to rebar coordination on key components, to modeling underground utilities.

“And the list goes on.”

Geschke first encountered the complexities of a hospital project during work on the Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin Clinical Cancer Center in Milwaukee.

“This was my first time going through what it really takes to build a building,” he said. “I learned a ton from this project. It was our Milwaukee operating group’s second project using 3-D coordination and for our subcontractors on this project, it was their first.”

Geschke said his most challenging project to date is the one he is working on: Froedtert’s Center for Advanced Care, which includes a three-story, underground parking structure and a nine-story building.

But challenges bring out the best in Geschke, and he has the technological savviness and innovative approach to excel in such situations, said Mark Sherry, Mortenson’s vice president and general manager.

“Jason displays calm competence,” Sherry said, “paired with a passion for bringing new technologies and processes to the building process.”

Geschke, a Union Grove native who graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1996 with a bachelor’s in architecture, joined Mortenson in 2006 as a building information modeling coordinator. But during the past eight years, his duties have expanded.

“I have the backing of a company that believes in the technology that I provide,” he said. “I’m not stuck doing the same tasks day after day and year after year. My tasks change as we move through a project. I like the diversity of that.

“I enjoy working with the different software platforms and seeing the advances that have happened in our industry because of them.”

— Andy Turner
Mel Langlais is Mortenson’s safety net

Mel Langlais got into the safety industry by accident. An engineer by trade, Langlais was on track to become a project manager or superintendent. But while she was working for an international Canadian company, an incident occurred in which three workers were paralyzed.

“We had just decided to open a U.S. division and we really had no business being in the U.S.,” Langlais said. “We didn’t understand OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration), and really didn’t have a competent person in the U.S. I drew the shortest straw and got involved.”

Langlais realized she had a knack for safety. It also was a way for her to differentiate herself from the other engineers early on in her career.

She quickly proved herself and was promoted from site safety engineer at Quebec-based ADF International to corporate safety health and environmental director.

Langlais later joined Minneapolis-based M.A. Mortenson Co. to manage the safety program for a more than $600 million hospital project in Chicago. Following the project’s successful completion, she was promoted to operating group safety director for Mortenson’s Wisconsin team.

Langlais acts as a liaison between government agencies on all safety-related areas and works with the rest of the Mortenson team on training, safety inspections and accident investigations.

Since joining the Wisconsin team, Langlais has overseen several successful safety programs on projects throughout the state including the Wisconsin Energy Institute in Madison, the Sealed Air Family YMCA in Mount Pleasant and several projects on the Froedtert Hospital campus in Wauwatosa.

“I will take a big mega project any day of the week because that’s what I’m comfortable with,” Langlais said. “Where I get concerned is those fire-drill projects that we start in a month, like a downtown renovation or a health care renovation that is a half-inch away from an ICU.”

Mark Sherry, vice president and general manager of Mortenson, said Langlais embodies the traits of a great leader: passion, intellect, enthusiasm, creativity and a commitment to the greater goal.

“From a safety standpoint,” he said, “she’s a hard worker, is focused on what’s upcoming in the industry, and has earned the respect of our skilled-craft workers.”

Langlais said she calls herself a “fact finder,” not a fault finder. “It’s always easier to have difficult discussions with people when you are able to do so in a relaxed way and not take yourself too seriously,” she said. “That has been my approach.”

— Corrinne Hess