



John Smith

2007 MATC Internship Report

HDR Engineering



This summer I had the great opportunity to intern with HDR Engineering for the second time. The UNL Mid-America Transportation Center provided me this opportunity to better understand the field I am studying, to learn what it means to work on a team, and to become part of a great company. Because of the MATC summer internship program, I was able to prepare myself for graduation, all while meeting new people and earning money.

At HDR, I worked in the Roadway Design section as I did last summer. This area in Civil Engineering has always interested me, and it's great to be able to go to work and learn more about it. Having a little experience under my belt allowed me to tackle a broader range of assignments. From jointing layouts to traffic phasing to guardrail design to bike trails to earthwork, I was able to see firsthand what an actual roadway engineer does. Talk about great career information. I now know what roadway design entails, and that I want to make it my career. I was able to work on two projects, one of which was a final design. It will be exciting when I can see something I actually helped design being built this winter. From this project, I also learned that there is more than just lines and paper to engineering work. These designs are actually built, and being able to communicate the design to a contractor is essential. One of the most important things I learned from this project, though, was something I couldn't learn from a book or a professor. I learned what it means to work on a team.

While working on the Council Bluffs 24th Street Final Design project, I built some great relationships and worked hard in the process. I experienced what it means to have pride in my work, to be dedicated to producing a final product that

represents my company, my team, and me. It's amazing how easy it is to put in long days when you have teammates right beside you. You are all working to meet a deadline, and again produce a great design. Working on the team, I felt like I contributed and that I was actually needed. I wasn't just an intern doing mindless work to keep busy (although I think everybody has to do that sometime as an intern!). It was also great to go out with those people you've worked hard with and relax when it is all finished.

Along with the relationships I built on my 24th Street team, I was able to build relationships that stretched beyond work. This summer, I felt like I was part of HDR. On Tuesdays, I participated in an HDR golf league. It was fun to meet people from all over the company who work in different fields. It was also nice to relax a little and get to know some of my coworkers. On Wednesdays, I played on the HDR softball team. This again allowed to me to have fun with other HDR employees. And with multiple luncheons and Friday afternoon drinks, I really felt like an HDR employee. It was great to work for a company that really invested in me. It's so much easier to come to work when you look forward to talking and discussing last night's softball game with your coworkers.

With all the skills, experience, and relationships I have gained this summer, I owe a lot to the MATC Summer Internship Program. I could not have found a better opportunity to get plugged into a great company and learn what "real-world" engineering is. I look forward to graduation and the head start I will have over those other job hunters. I'll have two summers of experience with multiple areas of roadway engineering before I even start full time. I have

connections with a great engineering firm and a great résumé. No other summer job could prepare me for the future as this one has.