

2015 MATC Internship Program

City of Lincoln

Public Works

By

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Transportation has been an important aspect of our everyday lives. From airplanes to cars, a transportation system can either decrease quality of life or contribute to the efficiency of the system. The effects of transportation on our economy are very well understood. Cities, states, and our federal government are in charge of monitoring, fixing, and paying for our roads. During the summer of 2015, I had the privilege to work as an inspector for the City of Lincoln Public Works Department. I was assigned to the federal aided 70th St. and East Borough Rehabilitation Project. During my stay with the City I improved my organization, communication skills, and learned how the construction process differs from the design process.

Society is changing at an incredible rate. Changes in technologies are requiring the work force to be more dynamic and be multi-tasking. As an inspector for the city of Lincoln, I was required to have a good knowledge of Microsoft Excel and Site Manager, an ASHTO computer software. The spreadsheets kept track of the tasks performed by the contractor during the construction process, and Site Manager was used to pay the contractor for the work done, keep track of samples delivered to the lab, and to report any activity at the project. Samples of concrete were obtained according to ACI standards. The samples had to stay at the job site for 24 hours in order to simulate real environment conditions. The samples were then delivered to the lab for testing. The inspector had to create sample lists on Site Manager in order to keep track of the samples.

Good verbal communication skills are very important in the construction field. The dynamic and fast-paced environment does not always allow for written communication. Since the project received federal money, the State of Nebraska and the Federal Government oversaw the project. State standard procedures and rules were monitored and enforced on a daily basis. Most of the time, verbal instructions were passed by the State to the City and to the contractors.

Collaboration with the contractors and the State contributes to a better work environment that only benefits the general public. The better we get along, the faster the project is finished.

One of my main responsibilities was to supervise traffic control devices. Traffic control devices were installed by the traffic contractor. Usually traffic control counts were performed twice a day, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. If there was anything that failed to meet the standards, I would report to the project manager. Another traffic inspection would be performed in the afternoon. If the problem was not resolved, the traffic company would receive an official warning. After the third warning, the project manager would notify the company it would not be paid for the services and devices that did not meet the minimum standards.

Unknown problems that are not thought in the design process appear on a daily basis. Designers are not always aware of all the factors and difficulties in building a project from a set of plans. The information provided on the plans sometimes doesn't match the physical environment. During the daily process of marking pavement for removal, a 1 ft. deep hole was discovered. The information is passed up by the inspector to the project managers and engineers who decide on a solution to the problem. As an inspector, I was in charge of helping the senior inspector mark pavement, according to the plans, for the contractor to remove. The plans did not always include all detrimental pavement for removal and sometimes the inspector was forced to not follow the plans exactly.

My experience with the City of Lincoln was fantastic. The faculty is composed of highly professional and enthusiastic people. As an intern construction inspector I learned how to organize my time in order complete all my tasks. I also learned how to communicate with people of different backgrounds. This internship provided me with the opportunity of seeing the implementation of projects that sometimes look different than the original design on paper.