



My MATC Internship

Olsson Associates (Omaha)

Sarah Ostrander

As with every year, another summer has flown by. This summer was different though. For once, I wasn't nannying or working retail. Instead, I was given the opportunity to participate in the Mid-America Transportation Center (MATC) Internship program and was placed with Olsson Associates in Omaha. I was excited to gain professional experience in the engineering field, especially at a company as thriving as Olsson. Over the course of the summer, I helped with project editing, attended meetings, and gained valuable life skills.

The atmosphere at Olsson was incredible. Olsson puts a strong emphasis on teamwork. As a result, I was able to work alongside multiple engineers on a variety of projects. Each member of the team provided me with valuable skills and knowledge. From Tony Egelhorff, the professional engineer I worked under, to Zach Turek, a fellow intern, each team member answered my questions and explained new ideas, concepts and software to me.

My team members taught me how to do new things in AutoCAD and introduce me to new software, such as Microstation. Tony explained different components of projects and how they were important, such as parts of a sheetset. I also had the opportunity to attend a progress meeting for the 114th project. I was able to observe how different components of roads (roadway design, electrical, water, and the construction team) have to communicate to work effectively. At these meetings, they discuss the progress of the project and concerns that any group has. Heading into this internship, this was the part I was looking forward to the most, being able to participate in events where I may not contribute the most, but could learn more about the job and experience it firsthand.

At Olsson, I was a part of the Road-Bridges team. When I began my internship, they were nearing the end of the LaVista City Centre project. Through this project, I was able to see how a set of final plans came together. I helped with editing the sheets and models through AutoCAD. I also worked on quantities forms that included total costs of the project. Editing both the forms and the sheet set, it opened my eyes to how many parts of a road design that a transportation engineer has to consider and plan for. This range includes working with utility companies with the location of utilities, the phasing plans of how the road will be constructed, traffic control throughout the project, and where signs and pavement markings should be located.

While this project gave me the experience of how a project ended, I also got to see how a project began when they started Capehart. Unlike the LaVista City Centre project, this was a rural road, where turn lanes were being extended or added to the existing road. I helped create the beginning sheet set for the project and attended the kick off meetings. This project showed me how a project started from a 30% plan set of 15 pages to eventually end as the LaVista City Centre project with a 100 pages.

This summer has been an amazing opportunity for me to grow as a student and an engineer. I'm so grateful for all the people I met and the experiences that Olsson Associates gave me. The knowledge I gained will be an incredible help in the future as I continue through school and into a career. I truly enjoyed my internship with Olsson and the road-bridge team I was able to work with. I'm grateful for the opportunity MATC gave me in helping me pursue my goal of becoming a civil engineer.