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MATC internship program report

My summer internship experience at the City of Omaha

My summer was filled with a full-time internship at the city of Omaha special works project. During my time here I moved around from position to position to see how the whole operation is run from head to toe. The special works programs are about upgrading and maintaining the roads of Omaha. In a city with close to half a million people this requires a precise amount of coordination and planning. The department is broken up into 4 main groups: Surveying, inspecting, repairs, and managing. During my time here I was able to see the day to day functions of each of these groups and learned many lessons about coordination, planning, and management along the way.

Surveying

Some of the first people on the job site are the surveyors. In this industry many engineers hired in the construction business will start by surveying to get an idea of the very beginning of the project. For me this was a good insight to seeing the base of the pyramid that is construction. Surveying today is a very technology driven focus. GPS and satellites are the backbone of surveying. Using a GPS we can locate and mark the edges of the road and where they start and stop. Something that is taken for granted is how precisely straight, how perfectly symmetrical and flat our roads are. This is thanks to the GPS in surveying.

Inspecting

Once the surveying is finished the job is contracted out to the lowest bidder. For example, a project I worked closely with was the 4-million-dollar upgrade project on Harrison street which was contracted to Vrana. When a project is contracted out you work very closely with that company. Inspecting is very much a people job. I learned that communication is very important to a smoothly run workplace and a good inspector and a bad inspector can be the difference between a well-oiled machine and a lawsuit on a project. Inspectors are the people directly below the project managers. As someone going for a construction management degree this internship taught me just how important it is to have trustworthy and hardworking inspectors.

Repairs

In the biggest city in Nebraska you can imagine there are a tremendous number of roads and bridges to upkeep plus repair. Here I learned they have someone special for concrete panels, asphalt, and bridge safety. Even if you can upgrade every road planned perfectly, your efforts are meaningless without proper repair. Roads breaking down isn't a matter of if but when. Working with this part of the company I quickly got an on the job bachelor's degree in the science of both concrete and asphalt.

Management

At the top of the pyramid is the project managers. They oversee what all the other sections of the company do. They are the ones that are looked to when a problem occurs and if

I learned one thing this summer, it's that sooner or later a problem will occur. Their ability to problem solve is what makes them such a big asset to the public works department and the city of Omaha as a whole.

In conclusion I don't believe I could have found a more relevant internship. I learned from top to bottom the lifecycle of a road and how everything from highways to sidewalks is put together. I know more after one summer about concrete than I think I could have learned in 2 years of school. I am very glad to have had this internship and feel confident this information will help tremendously once I have my degree and officially enter the workforce.