

City Recognized for Commitment to Training Engineering Students

By Eric Jones

About 12 years ago, civil engineers in the Willamette Valley got together and worked with Oregon State University to expand a multidisciplinary internship program to include a strong civil engineering component. Civil engineers, particularly those in public agencies, typically have a different role than their counterparts in the mechanical, industrial, electrical and computer engineering fields. That initial effort led to the formation of CECOP, the civil engineering branch of MECOP (Multiple Engineering Cooperative Program). A board of volunteers, one from each company, oversees the program, the selection process and employment evaluation. The program started at OSU but now includes OIT and PSU engineering colleges.



Traffic Engineer Tom Larsen (left) and City Engineer Mark Schoening

MECOP is a three-way partnership between the agencies and companies who employ of engineers, the university that provides basic training for the engineers and the engineering students who delay their graduation but gain valuable experience through working internships.

The goal of the program is to provide students with the experience to be job ready when they graduate, provide an improved learning environment at the university and attempt to keep as much of the technical talent produced at Oregon universities working here in Oregon. The participating companies get access to first-rate students who are talented and eager to learn and grow in their profession. The program uses two six-month internships with employers who will treat students just as if they were recent graduates and give them a professional experience. Students are paid approximately 70% of a starting engineer's salary.

The City of Eugene recently was recognized at the MECOP/CECOP biennial banquet for employing dozens of student interns during 10 years as a member agency. City Engineer Tom Larsen was recognized for 10 years of service on the board of directors. This summer two OSU civil engineering students will be participating in six-month internships on the Public Works Engineering project teams. For more information, contact Tom Larsen at 682-4959.

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