



FOR: THE ACE MENTOR PROGRAM

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**ACE Mentor Program of Iowa
Awards Scholarships to Local High School Students**

**Second Largest Employment Industry in the U.S. Sponsors Program That Addresses
Growing Need for Talented Professionals**

DES MOINES, IA, April 6, 2009 – The Iowa affiliate of the Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) Mentor Program held its annual awards banquet recently to recognize the achievements of local high school students who have participated in the organization’s mentoring activities and to award four scholarships totaling \$10,000 to local high school students.

The ACE Mentor Program was created to address the growing need for skilled professionals in the architecture, construction and engineering industries - a shortage that could become a crisis if current trends continue. The ACE Mentor Program of Iowa is part of a nationwide program of outreach and mentoring for students in 136 markets across the country where ACE has a presence. The mentors are professionals from leading design and construction firms who volunteer their time and energy to engage, inform, and challenge youth.

“The construction industry is the second-largest employer in the U.S. With 50 percent of all buildings that will exist by the year 2030 not even built yet, it is a growing industry. However, current statistics project that the need for qualified, skilled individuals working in the field will far exceed the supply, with over 1 million job openings by 2012,” said Dr. Charles H. Thornton, Founder and Chairman of ACE. “This is a crisis that we cannot afford – the growth of our country depends on finding solutions. These national and local initiatives will help to begin the careers of a new generation of talented professionals and marks an historic opportunity for us to make a difference and continue the growth of an industry that is so important.”

The ACE Mentor Program of Iowa Awards Banquet was held at the Des Moines Art Center and recognized the efforts of 28 mentors from area companies as well as the 68 students who participated in the program. In addition to being exposed to the ACE industry through presentations and onsite visits, the students were assigned a project to complete; they formed

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Career Directions for Students in Architecture, Construction and Engineering

groups to design, engineer and prepare construction planning services for the city-owned Nollen Plaza in downtown Des Moines.

The student groups were divided into teams for the architectural, engineering (civil, structural, mechanical/electrical), and construction services. Each team presented their proposal using PowerPoint to an audience of over 160 people. Their creativity, professionalism, organization and team work was more than evident as they presented projects that one would expect to see from a professional architectural, engineering or contracting firm.

The Awards Banquet also featured the presentation of college scholarships that were sponsored by local companies. Four local students received a total of \$10,000 in scholarships courtesy of the Des Moines Construction Breakfast Club, Neumann Brothers, ACE Mentor Program of Iowa, Luke Altmix Simmons Charitable Foundation, Master Builders of Iowa and The Weitz Company. The students receiving scholarships were Chris Mikelson, Urbandale High School; Riley O'Connor, South East Polk High School; Dalton Jacobus, Hoover High School; and Holly Middleton, Urbandale High School.

About the ACE Mentor Program

The ACE Mentor Program is the fastest-growing high school mentoring program focusing on careers in the design/build industry. It was founded by the principals of leading design and construction firms, to introduce high school students to career opportunities in the industry. The mission of the organization is to engage, excite and enlighten high school students to pursue careers in the design/build construction industry through mentoring; and to support their continued advancement in the industry through scholarships and grants. ACE makes a special attempt to reach students that otherwise may not become aware of the challenges and rewards of a career in the design and construction industry. For additional information please visit www.acementor.org.