

I was an **intern** last summer with a company then known as Conestoga-Rovers & Associates (CRA). We recently merged with an Australian company and just this month have adopted our new name of GHD.. I have been with this company for over a year now, first as a student intern now as a full-time employee and an Alabama engineer intern.

I began working as a technical apprentice (intern) with a forensic structural engineer doing forensic investigations in failure analysis, cause and extent of damage investigations, storm related damage investigations, and legal construction defects cases. While a lot of students may get to work in a design or construction management **internship** I consider myself blessed to have had the opportunity to do something unique and challenging. Everyday was a new adventure that consisted of anything from drafting a floor plan in AutoCAD to walking a 700,000 square foot industrial complex documenting storm damage to investigating a collapse of a 150 year old building under renovation. Additionally, I was exposed to multiple forensic disciplines including electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, fire science, and building science. The **internship** taught me an enormous amount about the engineering profession, ethics, project management, client interaction, professional report writing, and so many other practical skills. The **internship** was a taste of the real world of engineering and taught me so much about being responsible in the workplace, budgeting your time and resources, and perhaps most of all, in my case, how to write in-depth technical reports. These are skills that many times cannot be learned in school and if any student ever has the opportunity to work in an **internship**, he or she should strongly consider it. I can certainly say that I would not be in the job that I am now without first having the opportunity to learn skills and prove myself during those months as an intern.