

Field Trip # 1: Tour of Design Facilities at Steven Schaefer Associates, Inc. and Blue Ash Recreation Center Expansion Project

Date: July 23, 2008



On July 23, 2008 the REU and RET participants, the REU Graduate Student Mentors, and Faculty Mentor, Dr. Swanson, went to visit Steven Schaefer Associates Inc. in Blue Ash near Cincinnati. When the group arrived, one of the structural engineers, Mr. Jeff Bolchalk, employed by the company presented a lecture about their company, various projects they had undertaken, and the civil/structural engineering profession in general. The representative spoke about engineering projects, from conception to completion. He spoke of the difference between architects and engineers, how they communicate with each other, and the channels through which the person or persons who are financing a project communicate their needs. He explained the role and importance of technical drawings and how engineers work with contractors. The participants were then given a tour of their design production center.

Following the lecture, the group was escorted by Mr. Bolchalk to a construction site of one of Steven Schaefer's ongoing project, the Blue Ash Recreation Center Expansion. The project involved the demolition and rebuilding of half of a community center while the other half remained in operation. The portion of the structure that was to be rebuilt would house an exercise facility on the second floor, meeting rooms on the third floor, and an emergency shelter in the basement. Aside from the obvious challenge of constructing something immediately adjacent to a functioning building, other challenges were described to the REU and RET participants. The engineer explained that the structural steel used was more robust than that which is typical for a structure of this size in order to minimize the auditory and vibratory disturbances that would result from having an exercise facility on the first floor. The photographs below shows the construction in progress at the facility visited.





Construction in Progress at the Blue Ash Recreation Center Expansion Project