



FOR: THE ACE MENTOR PROGRAM

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**ACE Mentor Program of Frederick, MD  
Wins National Design Competition for ACE Affiliates  
Sponsored by the Construction Industry Round Table**  
*ACE (Architecture, Construction and Engineering) is the Leading High School  
Mentoring Program for the Construction Industry*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 17, 2008)** -- The ACE Mentor Program of Frederick, Maryland took home top honors as the winning entry in the second annual CIRT-ACE Design Competition conducted in conjunction with the Construction Industry Round Table's (CIRT) Spring Conference in Washington, DC. The Frederick Team was one of 10 entrants vying for a first place prize of three thousand dollars and bragging rights as the best student design presented by an affiliate. ACE of Palo Alto, California took second place, and the ACE Mentoring Program of Greater Kansas City was third.

The design competition is a collaborative effort between CIRT, which represents the senior executives of many of the leading firms heavily involved with ACE, and the ACE Mentor Program of America as a means for CIRT to support the program as well as bring attention and focus to its important efforts to reach out to high school students who may be interested in better understanding the design and construction industry. To that end, ACE has been expanding rapidly over the past few years with a volunteer network of mentors and students arrayed in a national Affiliates system.

The design challenges were actual projects that attempted to stress the practical aspects of the profession, particularly with respect to constructability, use of materials, meeting deadlines, and establishing reasonable expenses or budgets. Frederick's entry entitled "Re-Routing Transportation," was aimed at relieving congestion and commuter traffic along the I-270 corridor. To achieve this, the students proposed a new aero-rail line that would not only make urban transit more energy-efficient and enjoyable for thousands of commuters each day, but also enhance and revitalize a local urban center.

(more)

**ACE Mentor Program of America**

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***Career Directions for Students in Architecture, Construction and Engineering***

In their presentation to the judges, the students showed how a line could be built between Frederick and Rockville, Maryland, to connect with Washington, D.C.'s metro system. For the Frederick terminus, the team planned a multi-functional building to accommodate rail and other forms of transportation under one roof. The students also designed the structure to serve local residents and visitors as a vibrant community center.

More than 50 students belong to the ACE Mentor Program's Frederick affiliate, which the national ACE Mentor Program named Emerging Affiliate of the Year in 2006-2007. Commenting on her role in the project, Melissa Huston, a senior at Linganore High School who plans to study civil engineering at Penn State, said, "ACE has given me a positive experience that encouraged me to pursue a career in architecture, construction or engineering."

The Palo Alto team planned a sustainable housing unit called The Beehive. Designed in little hexagonal components that allowed other hexagonal components to be "clicked" together to form the unit, it was a pre-fab home intended to be built quickly following a natural disaster.

The Kansas City team created a community recreation center called The Marshall Plan. It was built to the U.S. Green Building specifications and used as much recycled material as possible including recycled water. It also used solar panels for heating.

The teams were judged on four major elements: creativity, quality of presentation, design process, and design elements/aspects. The thought and effort that went into each of the entries reflected well on the collaborative approach created between the students and mentors which is at the very heart of the ACE program. "The true goal is to judge the ability of the students to make a coherent, well thought out, clear presentation on their team's design/construction approaches within the project's objectives," stated Mark A. Casso, President of CIRT.

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CIRT is a national business trade association composed of approximately 100 CEOs from the leading architectural, engineering, and construction companies doing business in the United States; these firms' activities include billions of dollars in both public and private infrastructure projects that improve the quality of life for all Americans. For more information on this and other issues affecting the design and construction industry, check out: [www.cirt.org](http://www.cirt.org)

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 see [www.acementor.org](http://www.acementor.org).