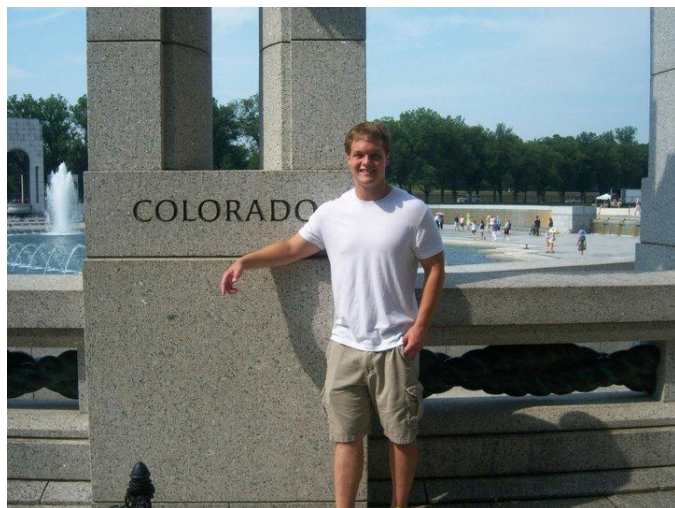


Colorado State University's Environmental Health (EH) program has offered me many exciting opportunities educationally and professionally. Most recently, during the summer of 2011, this has included an internship in Washington, DC that has improved my understanding of the whole industry of environmental and occupational health. The EH program requires that every student who comes through the program must complete an internship in order to graduate. This is a challenging requirement that forces each student to learn how to be both a good student, and a good prospect for employment. In addition to being an undergraduate EH student, I am also a Master's degree candidate in the health physics program thanks to Colorado State's Track III Master's programs. Through this program I have been able to meet many industry leaders in the field of health physics, including Ralph Andersen, the lead health physicist at the Nuclear Energy Institute, or NEI, at a seminar for the health physics students. After meeting Ralph, I applied to NEI and was able to intern there for the summer of 2011 under Ellen Anderson, the health physics project manager.



Me at the WWII Memorial

NEI is the policy center for the entire American nuclear industry and spearheads the fight for America to be run on clean, reliable, and cheap energy provided by the natural power of abundant and domestic uranium fuel. NEI is based in Washington, DC in order to be on the frontlines of this fight that often takes place in the Capitol building, where the United States of America's policies are created. After the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident following the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake that occurred on March 11th, 2011 off of the coast of Japan that killed over 10,000 people and submerged most of the East coast of Japan in a massive tsunami, the nuclear industry was suddenly under more scrutiny in the United States than had been seen since the 1986 Chernobyl disaster in Ukraine. That being the case, my focus during the summer of 2011 was to create informative presentations about Fukushima Daiichi utilizing both technical and nontechnical information to

be disseminated to both professionals and to the public through NEI's website and the Radiation Protection Forum (RPF) in Seattle, Washington in August.

My summer in DC was both an enlightening and exhilarating experience. Working for NEI, which is located in the heart of DC at 18th Avenue and I Street, or about four blocks from the White House, was a completely new experience for me. Fort Collins was the biggest city I had ever lived in up until that point, and I had never used public transportation in my life. In DC, I rode the Metro to work every day from the home where I was staying, about a block from the Capitol Building on New Jersey Avenue. I was able to soak in all of the culture and history that DC has to offer. I'd have never believed that the buildings were as amazing and intricate as they are or that the artwork and artifacts stored in the Smithsonian Institute were so astounding in detail and historical significance, unless I had seen it firsthand. Needless to say, I was impressed. I was able to meet congressmen, and even attended the annual Congressional Baseball Game, where Democrats and Republicans meet on the baseball diamond to battle for bragging rights. All of this was done when I wasn't working, and yet working at NEI was just as beneficial to my personal and professional development.



The Terrace at the Capitol Building

While working at NEI, I was able to go to multiple Nuclear Regulatory Commission meetings at the NRC headquarters, located in Rockville, Maryland and watch nuclear policy issues get debated on by high-ranking officials. I would write summaries about these meetings and report back to Ellen and Ralph on the findings. I also had the opportunity to go to a Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee (EPWC) meeting and watch senators debate the importance of the Fukushima 90-day report on the safety of American reactors of the same design as those affected by the tsunami at Fukushima Daiichi Power Station. In turn, I wrote summaries of both this meeting and the 90-day report as well as put together PowerPoint slides covering

the information for the RPF and for high-up NEI staff. I scoured for hours on the Fukushima Daiichi owner, TEPCO's, website looking for information that hadn't reached English-speaking news yet (thanks in part to Google Translator). I was able to find a lot of wonderfully rich and in-depth information about environmental, ecological, worker health and public health impacts that had yet to reach, and perhaps has yet to reach, the English-speaking population as a whole.



NEI's Office in DC at 18th and I

I enjoyed my time in DC very much, and after creating dozens of PowerPoint presentations, papers, and summaries, I was able to go to Seattle, Washington for the Radiation Protection Forum to help present information on the Fukushima disaster to Radiation Protection Managers from across the United States and from almost every nuclear power plant in the United States. This turned out to be a great way to get my name out there and network.

My experiences NEI have helped shape who I want to be professionally and where I want to go as a professional health physicist. I could not have asked for a better internship with a better company or a better group of people than those at NEI.