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Providing a 'thesis' for engineers

By Kelly Murad
STAFF WRITER

• ITC partners with students

In working with students of today, ITC is creating engineers of tomorrow.

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As the largest independent electricity transmission company in the country, ITC has served as one of Michigan Technological University's corporate sponsors of the Senior Design Program since 2005.

The program requires students in their last year of school to work with professional engineers on a specific project as part of their curriculum.



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PHOTO by JOHN HEIDER/Novi News

ITC's new Novi campus and its six-story building which can be easily seen from the M-5.

ITC's grand opening

On May 12, ITC will celebrate the grand opening of its Novi headquarters at 27175 Energy Way, off 12 Mile Road, between Haggerty Road and Michigan 5.

Construction of the 188,000-square-foot facility upon the 85-acre property began last April.

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"It's kind of like our thesis for engineers," said Kevin Thompson, Michigan Tech alumnus and member of last year's ITC team for the Senior Design Program.

Thompson said each sponsor presents its team, which is typically composed of four or five students, with a real life problem, challenge or task.

"The intent is to provide these sponsorships so these kids can have an

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academic experience," said Jon E. Jipping, executive vice president and chief operating officer at ITC. "It's best if we can use (their project), but it's more for the benefit of the students to have a real-world experience."

ITC hired Thompson, 24, as an associate engineer in the relay design group and he is currently implementing his project from the Senior Design Program.

"I've pretty much picked up where I left off with the project," he said. "It's really helped a lot to have had that experience."

Michigan Tech is one of the few universities in the country to offer an energy conversion and power systems program.

"We need to be targeting those folks more," Jipping said. "We have to be diligent in identifying and mentoring through the Senior Design Program."

Jipping said every Michigan Tech senior graduating this month with a degree in electrical engineering, with a power concentration, already has a job lined up.

Even though senior Wade Ausloos, 23, is going into the Air Force after next week's graduation, he appreciates the experience of working with ITC through the Senior Design Program.

"It lets us see the actual expectations of a real engineering company," he said. "It's an actual engineering problem and we designed it from scratch. You can't simulate that in a classroom."

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PHOTO by JOHN HEIDER/Novi News

ITC Executive Vice President and operating officer Jon Jipping, left, is joined by Michigan Tech graduates and current ITC employees Sara Haggard, Goride Halt, and Kevin Thompson.

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PHOTO by JOHN HEIDER/Novi News

Learning Tree Center student Andrew Delacourt, left, helped to plant some trees last Friday at Novi's ITC location.

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