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Included below is a press release regarding a local student currently studying at Ferris State University. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

For Immediate Release  
Feb. 9, 2007

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### **Local student takes classroom experience to the next level**

BIG RAPIDS – Mark Soderman of Escanaba and 23 of his classmates recently completed an energy audit at Grand Rapids Public Museum for an Energy Analysis and Audit class at Ferris State University. An energy audit is a creative yet practical approach to energy conservation that can help an organization save thousands of dollars in energy costs. Previously, Ferris students performed an energy audit for the Big Rapids Charter Academy.

As a part of the curriculum for HVAC 451, Soderman and his classmates were required to investigate the Van Andel Museum Center. They conducted research that allowed them to analyze the design, operation and performance of the structure's heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration components and systems. Next, the students conferred with the building's maintenance personnel to discuss current operating and maintenance procedures, review known system malfunctions and gather appropriate technical information.

Under the direction of professors Mike Korcal, John Quilitzsch and Douglas Ford Zentz, students analyzed their findings at the museum through many procedures. They investigated equipment issues and made recommendations for repairs or upgrades. They researched utility data, customer design proposals and reviewed technical drawings.

Research and evaluations of the design, installation, operation and maintenance of the equipment, and systems and processes were also conducted. Finally, they conducted research to test and analyze the design, operation and performance of proposed equipment, and component and system modifications.

After the analysis, students provided the museum with options for energy conservation and system efficiency.

Professor Korcal noted that the class and exercise serve three important functions. "First, students have the opportunity to utilize everything they have learned in technical and non-technical areas such as math, science, physics and technical writing. Second, this class requires the students to learn how to work as a team performing an energy audit. In addition, students must provide information by effectively communicating with clients, teachers and peers by using verbal or advanced technical writing abilities. And third, this class affords the students the right to gain work experience they can capitalize on and add to their resume."

HVACR department Chair Mike Feutz agreed, "Capitalizing on this experience is what

students do. When students finish HVAC 451, not only can they do the job, they can complete an energy analysis and audit successfully, making them a highly sought after commodity within the manufacturing sector. This type of training takes students to the next level. It also allows HVACR bachelor's degree graduates to be placed before graduation and negotiate an above-average starting salary.”

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