



Students from throughout Monroe County high schools traveled Friday Morning to Stoneco in Whiteford Township to learn more about the fields of mining and construction during a job fair held at the company's new plant site. Milan students (from left) David Cothorn, 17, and Keith Gardner, 16, and Ida student Josh Adam, 16, listen to a presentation on Global positioning system usage in surveying from INTEC survey crew chief Luke Hertzfeld (not pictured).

## Students mine job fair

■ Sixty-one high school students learned about mining and construction - and the availability of jobs in those fields - in an event held at Stoneco's quarry.

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Justin Brammer was enthusiastic about the prospect of driving bulldozers and other heavy-duty vehicles after he listened to Ray Ryan's description of the work.

"You see all those guys working on big equipment," he said as he walked away from the talk. "I just think it looks fun - and you make pretty good pay."

Justin was among 16 local high school students who attended a mining and construction job fair Friday sponsored by Stoneco of Michigan. The fair took place at the company's quarry on Whiteford Rd.

Sloshing through fields during a light rain, students talked easily with presenters about possible jobs. The fair combined practical advice, displays of some striking devices and information about pay and benefits.

In addition to providing information about jobs, the fair created an avenue for the community to learn about Stoneco, according to Jason Rivard, a Stoneco sales representative. The companies

four quarries, he said are places that tend to be "kind of a mystery" in the region.

Mr. Ryan delivering his presentation on behalf of Local 324, Operating engineers, noted that apprentices "make \$30 (an hour) in wages and benefits" from the time they start - about 70 percent of what a full journeyman employee earns. That Salary, he noted, is "nothing to sneeze at."

But the work can be slow in coming. Mr. Ryan said in an interview that prospective apprentices can wait years after their initial tests before they're called in for work.

"Its not going to be an overnight deal," he said.

Electricians say their job market is tight, as well.

Dan Sniegowski, a Stoneco maintenance electrician, said competition among contractors is intense. Rob Ponke, a construction electrician for Coyle Mechanical in Toledo, noted that the market for electricians is much tougher today than it was a few years ago.

Mr. Ponke spoke after a presenting a tabletop filled with electricians' tools to some interested students. These tools included common ones, such as wrenches and cables, as well as some more unusual ones. He demonstrated, for instance, a lock about an inch in diameter that snapped over an outdoor power switch. The lock,

he said, makes sure the switch stays in the "off" position while an electrician is working.

Otherwise, he explained "Somebody might come along and say, 'Why is this off?' and turn it on."

Tools and technology became topics in other presentations, as well. The joystick for loading trucks, explained Daryl Kin, originated in the video arcade.

The joysticks in the loader are being modeled after what kids know," said Mr. Kin, Manager of Northern Ohio Explosives.

"Its interesting," added Matthew Stimmel, a Vibra-Tech field technician, "how technology moves with the generations."

Mr. Kin described heavy work in rough elements as he explained his company's projects.

"The quarry doesn't shut down because it's raining," he said.

But he described the work as exciting, unpredictable, and demanding.

Mr. Rivard said 12 vendors attended the confrence with information about their professions. These Presenters included members of Stoneco, along with companies under contract with Stoneco.

He said Rick Becker, Stoneco's aggregate division manager developed the idea for a job fair and plans to make it an annual event.