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Jason E Miller* (millerj@truman.edu), 100 E Normal St, Kirksville, MO. *Field Trips Motivate Students to Pursue Mathematics.*

A typical student with an interest in mathematics suffers from the misconception that there are only two things a person can do with a degree in mathematics: become a teacher, or go to graduate school. The prospect of these career paths appeals to some students, but it's not enough to motivate many others through a degree program saturated with abstract concepts and challenging courses that inevitably lead to lower GPAs than friends earn in other (more "marketable") majors. While the AMS has career archives and books and brochures that lay out the many career options for mathematics majors, first-hand experiences are much more powerful than the printed page. For five years, Truman State University has run a program that takes students in mathematics to a regional metro area for an overnight field trip. The program combines an intense orientation to networking and interviewing skills followed by half-day visits to two companies that value the skills and habits of mind earned by students enrolled in a mathematics degree program. Students who participate in a field trip are more likely to get an internship or to find a job in industry after graduation. In the last three years, we have extended the trips to other NSF supported training programs in STEM areas. (Received September 17, 2007)