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Jr. COSTEP Summer 2009  
Ohio University  
Aberdeen Area IHS  
Minot District Office  
Minot, North Dakota**



During the summer of 2009, I had the great privilege of completing a Jr. COSTEP under the supervision of CDR Molly Patton Curry at the IHS in the Minot district office.

I am currently a senior at Ohio University in Athens, double majoring in Environmental Health Science and Industrial Hygiene. I first learned about the USPHS and the COSTEP program during an environmental health course in the winter of 2008.

An OU alumna of the Environmental Health Science program and Commissioned Officer now working for the FDA in Chicago, came and gave a presentation to our class. She talked enthusiastically about her current job at the FDA and about the PHS and recommended that anyone interested should look into participating in a COSTEP as she had. I guess it goes without saying that I was very impressed and interested.

Upon arriving to my duty station in Minot, I was welcomed by everyone in the office instantly and knew that I was in for a great summer experience. Not only does the COSTEP provide participants an opportunity to apply what they have been learning throughout their educational years in a Public Health setting, it gives the individual a chance to travel to a new place and learn new customs they might never have experienced without it.

One of the first projects I had the chance to work on was an injury prevention newsletter for the entire national program, the first of its kind for the program. At the time of this writing, the newsletter is pending approval for distribution. Also within the first week I had the wonderful opportunity to travel to the Fort Berthold reservation and attend the Twin Buttes Pow Wow, my first, in order to assist in some food service sanitation surveys. Attending the Pow Wows and witnessing the Native American celebration of their culture and heritage has been one of the most rewarding things about my COSTEP, something I would never had experienced without it.

Another great project I had the pleasure of working on was a seatbelt/ speed survey. For this, I got to travel to Sisseton, SD for a week and help out IP specialist Shannon White.

Shannon had already used the IHS protocol to determine the location of the surveys and showed me how to complete one the first day I was there. After that, I was on my own. They actually gave me a radar gun for the speed surveys and I got to sit on the side of the road and clock speeders. Although I didn't get to pull them over or ticket them, it was fun to be on the other side of the radar gun for once.

Some of the more memorable things I have participated in over the summer are the food service inspections at the Pow Wows and at other establishments on the various reservations, mold inspections, developing a cultural orientation guide for new employees/ COSTEPS, teaching food handler training courses, attending the Minot district meeting, and presenting my findings of the mold reports to the housing authorities.

I often hear other students complain about lackluster experiences and the tedious nature of their internships. I haven't heard or read about a single student who has completed the COSTEP and had anything negative to say about it. I would recommend this experience to anyone who is passionate about a career in public health; you won't find a better program! I would also like to thank CDR Molly Patton Curry and everyone at the Minot district office, I couldn't have asked for a better summer.

