

**ENS Marissa E. Ure**  
**Jr. COSTEP Summer 2010**  
**Ohio University**  
**Aberdeen Area IHS**  
**Minot District Office**  
**Minot, North Dakota**

What a fabulous summer! For my JrCOSTEP position I had the privilege of working for the Indian Health Service with Commander Molly Curry in the Minot District Office of Environmental Health. From day one the level of inclusion in the Public Health Service and the number of hands on opportunities I was provided thrilled me. I was frequently in the field helping out with food inspection surveys, attending meetings or collecting data for an observational hand wash study I was assigned. Other great tasks given to me this summer were complete responsibility of health inspections at a Pow Wow, visual surveys of homes for mold, work on an environmental health course, and interaction with professionals in my field.



I definitely found the hand wash study to be the most exciting part and focus of my time as a COSTEP. There were so many different aspects of the study and things that had to be completed throughout its duration that it really forced me to multitask and call upon different skill sets. Much guidance was received from Molly along the way, but all of the responsibility for setting up surveys, organizing paperwork, and reporting final results fell upon another COSTEP and myself. Having the ability to be completely involved in a project from first coming into existence to conclusion has been so rewarding and enlightening. Prior to this summer, I had no idea about how to attack a study like the one I was assigned this summer.

The U.S. Public Health Service JrCOSTEP is without a doubt an ideal internship, but I almost didn't have the chance to participate. This past April I received a call from Molly, just a little over two months from my start date, informing me that a critical aspect of hiring at USPHS was being restructured and therefore didn't have a way to issue orders for new Commissioned Corps Officers. I was so disappointed and of course worried as to what I would do if I wasn't able to complete a required internship this summer.

Fortunately, so many members of the PHS knew that students were depending on their summer internships for graduation and they did everything in their power to make sure that we still had a position. The Aberdeen Area even went so far as to find a way to

hire students through the Civil Service and that's exactly how I started with IHS. Thanks to so many people wanting the students to succeed in being hired through the PHS my orders were issued and I spent the majority of my summer working as a COSTEP. I owe much thanks to so many people for their time and efforts in seeing to it that the JrCOSTEP worked out this summer.



My final week working with IHS proved to be one of the busiest and most rewarding weeks of my entire summer. The week started out with driving to Sisseton, South Dakota to help out with seat belt and speed surveys. I really didn't know what this would entail, but I had heard really positive things and looked forward to the opportunity to learn about another entirely new area. The data collected from the seat belt surveys was really eye opening. Like everything else this summer I'm so thankful to have had the experience. After wrapping up my final surveys in Sisseton I was off to Aberdeen, South Dakota where I was to present on some

of the findings from the study I was working on throughout the summer. This was such a special occasion because Admiral (Ret.) Hartz, Director of the Office of Environmental Health and Engineering for IHS was visiting the Aberdeen Area Office. Presenting in front of the Aberdeen Area Office was such an exciting way to spend my last day as a COSTEP! I left so thrilled about all I had learned and accomplished throughout my summer in Minot.

This position has provided me with an astonishing amount of education related to environmental health, insight into a great career opportunity, and confidence in myself. Putting my experience into words does not adequately convey how much personal growth I have achieved and appreciation I walk away from this internship feeling. I cannot imagine a better way to have spent my summer and look forward to reapplying for a JrCOSTEP position summer 2011.