

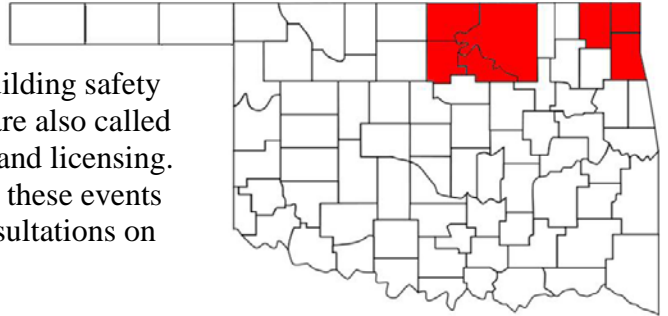
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As I enter my last week as an extern for the Indian Health Service I cannot help but look back and reflect on my time with the Oklahoma City Area. My adventure started in the Summer of 2009 which is when I did my first internship with IHS. At this time I was in the Area Office and my training focused on industrial hygiene with an introduction to food service safety. During my second internship I focused more on the policy and planning aspect of the duties of an Environmental Health Officer. I was also fortunate enough to assist the Emergency Manager of the Oklahoma City Area IHS, CAPT Richard Turner, in creating educational handouts for employees about what to do in the event of an emergency.



Now we come to my third and final externship. I served the summer of 2010 in the Pawnee Service Unit, with LTJG Aaron McNeill as my mentor. The unit covers several tribes in the North Eastern part of the Oklahoma. Some of the Tribes serviced by the Pawnee service unit are the Osage, Pawnee, Ponca, Tonkawa, Otoe-Missouria and the tribes of the Miami area. Some of the services

provided by IHS to the tribes are food safety surveys, food handlers training, building safety surveys of Headstarts, casinos, and health care facilities. We are also called in for consultation on topics such as injury prevention, safety and licensing. IHS also provides help to tribes hosting special events, during these events our duties include food, site and safety surveys as well as consultations on how to improve upon previous festivals.



Coming into IHS I thought my role would be to help enforce rules and standards but I was surprised to see that we play a much more the role of an advisor. This new approach provided me with quite a bit on insight on just

how much IHS is able to help tribes not only better their facilities but also to improve their reach and capabilities to better serve their tribal members. I find the experience of working with the tribes extremely rewarding because partnerships are created in working towards the goal of protecting and improving the quality of life for American Indians and Alaska Natives.



If you are considering working in the Environmental Health field I strongly recommend the Indian Health Service. Not only will you learn things that cannot be taught in a classroom setting but you will not find a more helpful and supporting staff than with IHS. I have also found that working with the native people of Oklahoma is extremely beneficial and offers a new way of thinking that encourages communication and cooperation to achieve common goals.