

**ENS Danielle R. Black
Jr COSTEP Summer 2011
Eastern Kentucky University
Minot District Office
Minot, North Dakota**

I was honored to be selected to serve for the summer as a Junior Assistant Health Services Officer. The start of my summer as a Jr COSTEP was a little later than I had expected. It was a bit stressful to find the patience to wait on receiving my personnel orders. About three weeks after my projected start date, I was in Minot, ND to have one of my favorite summers. I had the privilege to work with CDR Molly Curry at the Minot District office. I found everyone in the office to be very kind and welcoming.



Little did I know after arriving, history was about to happen to the city of Minot. After my being there for three days, the crest of the worst flood in Minot's history inundated the valley of the town known as "The Magic City." Thousands of people had evacuated, hundreds of National Guardsmen came to help, and all kinds of emergency response agencies showed up. So many homes and businesses were under water, roads were closed both from the water and to give way to dirt trucks to build the dikes, and people were becoming emotional distressed.



An expected boil water advisory was implemented and lasted around two weeks. Since the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps has an emergency response function, I was told it would be good to try and get some first hand experience with the emergency response officials dealing with the disaster. I attended meetings that discussed how everyone would work together to control and try to organize the chaos and how to approach the steps that needed to be taken for relief. I never went into the homes that were destroyed by the flood, due to liability and requirements of disaster volunteers, however, I was able to drive around and see some of the damage it caused. To see the results from such a violent act of nature was unbelievable.

My summer project was putting together an "Introduction to Environmental Health" course that will be taught to tribal community members and leadership. I created PowerPoint presentations on the basic subjects in Environmental Health and showed how they all worked together.

On two occasions, I had the great opportunity to visit Belcourt, ND, which is on the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Reservation, close to the Canada border. I worked with Jim Dodd, IHS Environmental Health Officer, to conduct food surveys, investigate a septic tank problem, looked into a pest control case, along with seeing many more aspects of how environmental health came into play on the reservation. I was also shown the transfer center where solid waste was kept, the casino's lagoon, how a rabies clinic was run, and even attended a safety meeting with their "Safety Clan." I met the





Chippewa Tribal Chairman, the BIA Superintendent, along with many other important people who play a big role in helping the tribal community. I was given an informal tour of landmarks and environmental health systems on the reservation and how the culture was lived. I truly enjoyed seeing a different way of living and learning about Native Americans.

I also got to work on the Rosebud Reservation in southern South Dakota. Here I took seatbelt surveys of drivers at road intersections. We were collecting the data to show to the tribal government, so that they can more efficiently plan motor vehicle crash injury prevention. During my time here, I was asked to record a public service announcement for the local radio station. The announcement described the existence of parasitic worms in Rosebud Dam and the need for swimmers to use the lakeside shower to avoid “swimmer’s itch.” This announcement would be played on the air throughout the summer.

Other than working, I had many wonderful exposures to surrounding attractions and meeting many new people. I had to take the initiative to get out there, but throughout the summer, I met people that were from all around the world. I visited the very neat city of Winnipeg, Manitoba. While in Winnipeg I attended the annual Winnipeg Folk Festival with my preceptor and had a fantastic time. Since I did not work at any of the pow wows, I attended one on my own and enjoyed it very much. I found beautiful lakes & scenery to visit, and an excellent variety of wildlife, especially birds, along with great summer weather, which is very short in North Dakota.



I’m proud to have worked with an agency that works so hard to better the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives. I love seeing how everyone has to work together in order to make a difference. This internship was a very good experience for the work aspect and seeing a different part of the country and diversity. I am very appreciative to have been selected for this job with the government. I am definitely giving consideration into working for the US Public Health Service after graduation.