ENS Jayme Schenk
Jr. COSTEP Summer 2009
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Bemidji Area Office
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My name is Jayme Schenk and I am from Middleton, Wisconsin. I am currently a senior in the Environmental and Public Health program at the University of Eau Claire. In our program, the COSTEP experience is highly regarded because of all of the positive experiences that fellow students have had in past years. So when I started searching for summer internships, applying for a COSTEP was an easy decision.

I made contact with Tim Duffy an Environmental Health Officer in the Bemidji Area Office and kept in touch with him during the application and selection process. A few months after I applied, I was thrilled to hear I would be spending my summer working for Indian Health Services in Bemidji, MN

Fit testing at Red Lake Hospital

I spent the majority of my time in the field with Megan Arndt completing surveys on several reservations. We surveyed several types of facilities including, but not limited to, a fitness center, convenient store, food warehouse and a transfer station. We also surveyed a casino which involved many areas including campsites, maintenance buildings, the hotel rooms, the marina and the pool. In the field Megan always encouraged me to take the lead on the surveys so I could learn through experience.

Throughout the summer, I was able to participate in surveys at three pow wows. I was also given the opportunity to co-teach a Serve Safe class, and administer a pow wow food safety training. As a result, I have gathered alot of practical food safety experience.

During my time in Bemidji, I followed my preceptor Tim Duffy on a dental x-ray survey, where we checked x-ray equipment and estimated patient radiation exposures. Now that I know a little bit more about radiation and film speeds, I'm going to have to ask my dentist about the equipment they use. Tim also taught me how to use a Portacount so that I could do respirator fit testing at Red Lake Hospital.

I had the opportunity to learn about injury prevention by participating in a Ride Safe Sleep Safe conference in Bloomington Minnesota. I was responsible for the review sessions each morning, and helped facilitate a few hands on activities, including a mock interview and a smoke alarm installation race.

The majority of my summer was spent working on projects. My first project involved analyzing data from Webcident, an online database designed to keep records of incidents that occur in the workplace. My task was to find trends in these incidents and create a power point for each healthcare facility in the Bemidji Area. Hopefully, the problem areas we found will initiate further investigation and change.

Sleep Safe Conference in Bloomington, MN

My second project concerned green cleaning products used by housekeeping staff in healthcare facilities. I developed a guidance document which details why and how to go green, created a chart with all of the environmentally friendly products already being used by the healthcare facilities, and compiled a chart with suggested products to substitute the most hazardous chemicals being used. Finally, I researched green cleaning products on the market and came up with a comparison price guide so that facilities would be able to compare the costs of the more environmentally friendly products.

My final project was an audit of the recycling program that was recently implemented in the Bemidji Federal Building; where I work. I looked at the amount of waste and recycling being hauled out each month and compared these numbers to determine how effective the new recycling program was.

This summer has been a very rewarding experience. I have had the opportunity to participate in new things, and apply knowledge from my classes to surveys done in the field. Even as an intern I was given plenty of responsibility, and everyone I worked with treated me with respect. I was also lucky enough to be stationed with people that are fun to be around as well as learn from. I suggest this experience to anyone.