

**ENS Justin Bell  
Jr COSTEP Summer 2011  
Colorado State University  
Oklahoma City Area  
Pawnee, OK**

My USPHS JRCOSTEP assignment was with the Oklahoma City Area IHS under the supervision of LTJG Aaron McNeill. Currently I am a junior at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, where I am working on my bachelor's degree in Environmental Health.

As stated I spent my summer working for the Indian Health Service as an Environmental Health Officer in the Pawnee Indian Health Center.

Each day was different than the next with no set schedule or daily routine, thus keeping the thrill of the job alive. We served ten tribes including but not limited to the Pawnee, Osage, Quapaw, Ottawa, and Miami. These tribes are spread around the Northern and Northeastern part of Oklahoma allowing me to get a feel for the state. My very first day I was brought along to help investigate a pest control complaint at a local casino's bar. The bar had built in gambling machines that acted as a breeding ground for the insect pests due to the poor engineering of the machines and food from the bar. Upon further inspection of the bar we found that there were additional gaps between the top of the bar and the support of the bar that also was helping to host this pest problem. Unknowingly this experience gave me the opportunity to see when a small problem can become out of hand and how it might have been able to be prevented in the first place. A slow methodical dissection of each location is what I learned to do with time. This process accompanied with the food code was applied most days in the inspections of casinos, restaurants, and early starts kitchen facilities.



Another part of my job other than food inspections was instructing food handler's classes along with issuing food handler licenses. I had the opportunity to design my own power point to use for these presentations that ranged from 6 to about 30 people. In my sessions I discussed possible sources of contamination and how to prevent them. This summer gave me a deeper understanding of the COSTEP program along with the IHS. It also gave me the opportunity to apply what I have learned in my schooling while gaining further knowledge of what a possible job position would be like in the environmental health field.

