

**ENS Victoria Amburgey
Jr. COSTEP Summer 2014
Eastern Kentucky University
Holton Service Unit
Holton, KS**

Hello, my name is Victoria Amburgey and I will be graduating this fall with my Masters of Public Health from Eastern Kentucky University. I first heard about the Jr COSTEP internship with the USPHS from a professor, who recommended I apply for it. I knew this internship would be an excellent opportunity and an honor if chosen. I will be the first to admit I was a little nervous about traveling to Kansas for the summer especially considering everyone in Kentucky kept talking about the tornadoes. However, once I arrived it was truly like home and the staff at the Office of Environmental Health and Engineering, Holton Field Station was very welcoming.



Everyone at the Holton Field Station works as a team and really supports one another. LCDR Jamison Honeycutt, Supervisory Environmental Health Officer for the Holton Field Station and Safety Officer for the Haskell Indian Health Center/White Cloud Health Station was my preceptor for the summer. He was very insightful when performing soil evaluations for onsite sewage disposal systems due to his prior background with the Virginia Department of Health. Not only does he take care of environmental health issues at the Holton/Haskell Service Unit, but at least once a week he works with Haskell Indian Health Center on environment of care issues. LCDR Honeycutt made sure that I had an understanding of what was going on at all times and incorporated me into everything he was doing. Whether it may have been food surveys, pool surveys, fire drills, injury prevention planning, or safety monitoring there was such a variety of work. LCDR Honeycutt is not only a great preceptor but a true role model.



Throughout the summer we conducted many food surveys and institutional surveys. A few examples were Tribal casinos, food distribution centers, and senior citizen centers. We also surveyed pools and playgrounds. I also had the privilege of working with Kayla Davis, Environmental Health Officer from the Shawnee Field Office. She came for a weekend to inspect the Prairie Band Keepers of the Fire BBQ Contest. She was very encouraging with hands-on training and was so enthusiastic about the job. I was amazed at how much I learned in that one day.

One of the projects I completed for the summer was creating the Hazard Communication Program for the Kickapoo Tribal Head Start Program and the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Childcare Program. I had the chance to inventory the chemicals that were in use while contacting the chemical manufacturers in order to obtain the Safety Data Sheets (SDS). It was an educational experience to learn the multitude of chemicals used in our daily lives.

I also got to spend time with Jim Shane, the engineering technician at the Holton Field office and watch the process of installing a septic tank. It was a very eye opening experience to see all the work involved from the surveying, to finding the right contractor, until the final installation. Although personally I did not have much experience with septic tanks and waste water, Jim was very perceptive in helping me learn and took the time to answer every question I had. Thanks to him, I have much more knowledge regarding waste water systems.



One of the many things I appreciated about working at the Holton Field Station was the relationship between LCDR Jamison Honeycutt and LCDR D. Lyle Setwyn, USPHS Supervisory Environmental Engineer. I got to watch Jamison conduct soil surveys for the engineers. It was great to see how Environmental Health Officers work alongside the engineers to accomplish goals for the community. LCDR Setwyn was very accommodating to any question I had and was constantly educating me about surveying and communicating with the Tribe.

The other project was injury prevention related, planning and conducting a seatbelt survey to assist the Prairie Band Potawatomi Police Department. I spent around two weeks at 14 different locations and conducted over 48 observational surveys to calculate traffic flow of particular roads, then excluded the least used roads, and later calculated the seatbelt usage rates. These surveys will assist the Tribe when applying for injury prevention grants.



This summer was a great experience that only confirmed that I want a career with the Indian Health Service. LCDR Jamison Honeycutt was a great mentor that encouraged me to learn every day. The staff at the Holton Field Office was very helpful and encouraging. I have more confidence in my abilities now and was able to learn about cultures I previously didn't know existed. I recommend the COSTEP program with the USPHS to any student considering an environmental health career. I have made life long connections, now have a wonderful mentor, and I gained experience that will help me succeed in my future career.

