

By: Lydia Ryan

Rockingham County

This summer I was granted the opportunity to meet and interview one of my county Commissioners. Rockingham County Commissioner Mark Richardson was very excited about gaining this connection to 4-H. As an NC State Alumni Commissioner Richardson had heard of the program but had never participated choosing to follow the Boy Scout trail instead. Commissioner Richardson was like many adults I've interviewed, withholding. He choose to counter my questions with questions and let me figure out the answers, which proved to be more difficult than I had originally thought, but being the avid 4-Her I am I took the challenge head on and this is what I took from the interview.

When I asked what a County Commissioners job entailed Commissioner Richardson informed me that it was deciding where to give and take for the county, who gets how much land, money, etc. My next question to Commissioner Richardson was did he feel like he had made a difference in the local government. He replied that sometimes he felt like he made a difference but not always. I then asked Commissioner Richardson what he thought was the biggest youth issue in Rockingham County. He said as a principal he felt that Rockingham County was not providing enough opportunities in safety and education. When I asked the Commissioner what his platform was in the campaign and did he feel like he's achieved his goal. He said he feels like he had achieved this platform; he replied that his platform was very green covering economic development, quality of life and other environmental aspects, but he did not feel that he had achieved in improving the aspects of life.

I then asked the commissioner if there were any misconceptions about the job of county Commissioner that he did not expect. He replied that he had watched many County Commissioners in the past so no; he was not surprised by anything. My next question was if he found the goals that he had set for himself as County Commissioner were easy or hard to achieve and why. He responded that they were hard to achieve because you have to have the whole county agree. Then I asked him if he had any long term concerns for Rockingham County and he said he had concerns about the economy and individual rights. My second to last question for Commissioner Richardson was if he planned to run for reelection and he said that it was not a priority but if he felt like he was making a difference he would. Lastly I asked the commissioner if he planned to be in attendance in August and he said more than likely he would be there. I enjoyed my interview with County Commissioner Richardson and even though it was a challenging experience I look very forward to seeing him again in August.

