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My Cumberland County: Tour Experience and Interview

NCACC Youth Summit 2015

Have you ever enjoyed walking or playing at a park, participating on a sports team, attending a concert or ball game, checking out books or using a computer at a library? Have you ever needed a copy of your birth certificate, received assistance from a police officer, needed medical care at a hospital, or used public transportation such as a bus? Chances are you have, the availability of such services is due in large part to the work of our Cumberland County Board of Commissioners. This summer I was fortunate to participate in the Youth Government Tour sponsored by my Cumberland County 4H Extension office. It culminated with a tour of the administrative offices of our County Board of Commissioners and County Manager offices at the Cumberland County Court House. I enjoyed the privilege of meeting Chairman Kenneth Edge and County Manager Amy Cannon. I also had the privilege of attending a Cumberland County Board of Commissioners Meeting at the courthouse. I would like to share with you just some of the highlights from my interview with Cumberland County's County Manager Amy Cannon.

In June of 2014, Cumberland County hired Amy Cannon to the position of Cumberland County manager following 15 years of distinguished service in the county's finance department. The County Manager's Office oversees all County departments, programs and operations established by the Board of County Commissioners. The office is also responsible for preparing a recommended annual County budget, preparing and publishing the agenda for board meetings and any other services determined necessary to the operation of county government. During our interview she discussed how she works to ensure any need, of any one of the seven commissioners, is met. One of her most important responsibilities is the budget. Work on the annual budget begins in January. The Cumberland County Fiscal Budget for 2016 has been completed and the goal of the budget was to balance increased demands for high quality services in our community with the goals of fiscal responsibility and sustainability. One issue she noted as being of importance to many Cumberland county citizens and therefore to her is Homelessness. Since 2014 she has included funding in her recommended budget for homelessness projects. One of the biggest surprises in her work has been how quickly plans and her agenda for the day may change, on a daily basis she is called upon to improvise solutions to complex problems and needs. Some of the most rewarding aspects of her work include helping people, meeting new people and being of service to her county.

I learned that as a citizen of Cumberland County I have a team of very competent, thoughtful and committed men and women dedicated to improving the safety, growth and quality of life we enjoy. I have been inspired to continue to educate myself and others on how our county works and to have a hand in helping to address the growing needs of my county.