

NCACC essay

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Christina DeStefano, Public Information Officer

As the youngest woman and worker in the Henderson County Court house, Christina DeStefano earnestly loves her job as the Public Information Officer. DeStefano is part of The Office of the Henderson County Manager which includes staff responsible for implementing the directives and policies of the Board of Commissioners, as well as managing the day-to-day responsibilities of general county government, and developing the annual budget, a six month log task. DeStefano takes on many assignments and responsibilities which includes all of the public relations for Henderson County, issues of press releases' for state and local reporters, she runs the local ,channel 11 government station, video tapes and records the County Commissioner meetings, writes and issues the citizen and employee newsletters and does most of the event planning for County events. This abundant amount of work keeps DeStefano busy from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM every Monday through Friday. While this may seem like a heavy workload, DeStefano's upbeat, youthful and cheery personality motivates her to complete all of her tasks diligently.

Although she works for Henderson County, she is no native to the county or state. She moved frequently as a child, growing up in New Orleans, Louisiana, moving to upstate New York and finishing High school in Roanoke, Virginia. She stated working as the Information Officer right out of college, a week before graduating in fact. This was her first real job aside from internships, and she feels very grateful to have gotten a job so quickly out of college because many aren't as fortunate as her. She says that her double major of a professional degree from Appalachian State University, where she completed

both her undergraduate and master's degree, in community and regional planning and sustainable development helped her to stand out among other applicants because her degree was so narrowed and specific. While risky because of limited options, this helped her to gain an advantage over graduates who had less training in this certain field. When asked where she wanted to be in the future, she said that she would like to become a city or county manager, her current boss and the highest non-elected county position. She would like to start in a small city and eventually work her way up to bigger cities and counties. She likes the idea of being a County manager because she can be involved in many aspects of county government. Although this is an aspiration, she is perfectly satisfied and enjoys her current position. She was also recently assigned to be on the Henderson County Youth Council Advisory committee, a very new addition to Henderson County. Although she did not originally volunteer for the position, she seems very pleased to be a part of the new group of youth. She said that she thinks it to be very important for youth to be engaged in their county and to advance their knowledge of federal, state and county government, claiming that her own knowledge of it was sparse when she herself was a teenager. She is an excellent model to the youth of how "younger" adults can obtain important roles within government at an age such as herself.

DeStefano's many tasks all comprise of the simple-sounding "Public Information Officer." Her hard work, commitment and strive for excellence will get her many places within county government and hopefully to her desired position in the future.