

Interview by: Jordan Purser

Upon notification that I needed to interview a county employee as part of my participation in the NCACC, I began considering who I would have access to. In speaking with my 4-H Agent, she suggested the Union County Manager, a friend of 4-H. I thought this was a great idea. We proceeded by scheduling an appointment for me to meet with Mrs. Cindy Coto, Union County Manager.

During the interview, as I talked with Cindy Coto, I began to realize that Union County could have picked no better person for the position of County Manager. Mrs. Coto started her career in Florida, where she studied at Central Florida University. She took a break from school to get married. Her very first job for local government was as a clerk. Over the course of her career, she took several night courses. Cindy took her accumulated credit hours to finish with a major in Liberal Science and several minors in programs such as business administration, elementary education, and management. She officially finished college at the age of 35. Mrs. Coto has worked in local government for 38 years. She spent from 1970 until 2010 in county government in Central Florida. In 2010, she relocated to North Carolina to accept the position of Union County Manager. In my opinion, she is a great county manager because she has the abilities and skills to lead and serve.

In the 38 years, she has worked in local government; Mrs. Coto has done many great things for the counties in the state of Florida and North Carolina. I asked her to name a few things that have been in her opinion her greatest successes. She listed great changes for the betterment of the community wherever she served. Whether it was revising a local economic plan, which brought much needed jobs to the area or overseeing the entire operation of building a new combination fire station and police station, she has been involved in life changing events.

As County Manager, Cindy treats the County as a business and makes sure all the bills are paid and at the end of the month the bank account does not overdraft. She oversees all activities including Public Works and Social Services. Some of the biggest challenges Cindy says are "Not having enough money to fund operations throughout the county. Without the funding to build new facilities and recreations in Union County, it is difficult to keep up with the population boom that is occurring". "A typical day in the office is never the same. I walk into the office expecting very few things. I know what meetings and appointments are scheduled--everything else is just going with the flow", stated Cindy Coto.

During this interview, it was obvious that Cindy Coto is a dedicated, caring and a professional County Manager. She truly cares about the people of Union County and that is the main reason she stated for working in local government—to work with people.