

Jody Lewis, Albemarle County
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Jody Lewis, Communications Specialist, Albemarle County

Your job title is Communications Specialist. What, in your own words, would you say you do?

I oversee communications and organizational elements for the County. This includes writing and editing content for our internal and external websites, as well as other communications materials such as news releases and e-newsletters. I manage our social media presence, and I also design publications and other highly visible marketing materials, including reports, brochures and advertisements.

What is the best part of your job? The most difficult part?

The best part of my job is the collaboration with all different departments. No two days are the same and I am constantly exposed to opportunities to learn and grow. Plus, the people I work with are very passionate about what they do. It is so rewarding to be a part of this civic-minded group, all working together to improve our community.

The most difficult thing so far has been wrapping my hands around all the work there is to do – figuring out how to prioritize it all.

How does your job most directly impact the average person?

I love being in a position to help inform our citizens about the important things that are going on in our community. I only started working for the County this February. In fact, I started the very week that Tom Foley presented his proposed budget to the Board of Supervisors. That process was extremely enlightening for me. I was woefully ignorant about all the effort that goes into creating a budget. In the four short months that I've been with Albemarle County I've come to understand how much really happens at a local level and that every citizen's point of view matters. I've made it a personal goal to try and keep my perspective fresh and to help all of our citizens find ways to communicate with their local

government - through email, social media, our new "virtual town hall," Engage Albemarle, as well as through traditional methods like public hearings. I'm not sure that many people realize the opportunities they have to be heard and I want to change that.

What is the most interesting project or work experience that you've had while with the County?

I really enjoyed getting our Engage Albemarle portal up and running and am very excited to hear what the community has to say! Along those same lines, I'm working on a community engagement portal for our website which will be a sort of quick, at-a-glance way for visitors to the site to see what's going on in the County right now.

What is a little-known fact about you?

I grew up in northern California and worked on the chase crew of a hot air balloon company right after high school. That is one of my most memorable and favorite jobs. The environment was physical, demanding, and very team oriented.