

# Discovery Channel focuses on 'Sniff Squad' at Northampton landfill

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Photo by Bob Stern / The RepublicanA crew from Authentic Entertainment video tapes a piece for the Discovery Channel at the sanitary landfill on Glendale Rd. in Northampton yesterday. They are Christopher R. McLean, director of photography, left, and oncamera talent Summer Rayne Oaks.

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NORTHAMPTON - Until yesterday, Todd J.M. Donze was officially a Level 3 Project Manager for Environmental Compliance Services, Inc.

Now, the trained odor detector may forever more be know as a member of "Sniff Squad," thanks to a television crew with a nose for environmental news.

A team from the new Discovery Channel Planet Green was at the Glendale Road landfill yesterday to do a segment on the city's odor detection program.

Spurred by calls about bad smells emanating from the site, and under orders from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Northampton hired Environmental Compliance Services in February to serve as an objective third party in assessing odor complaints.

At a cost of \$600 per investigation - \$750 after 5 p.m. - the city has already exhausted its original \$24,999 contract with the Agawam-based company. The City Council will take up a request for an additional \$370,000 appropriation tonight.

Donze, who has been trained to detect and evaluate the intensity and characteristics of smells, stood by yesterday as the television crew prepared to shoot what will eventually be a six-minute segment.

Producer Thea N. Bergeron said that her company, Authentic Entertainment, has already filmed some 140 segments for the show "The G Word," which will air on the new channel starting tonight. Planet Green is an offshoot of the Discovery Channel.

"The G Word" ("G" stands for "Green") has also done shows on topics such as electric car races and the conversion of sewage to fuel, Bergeron said.

When he makes his site visits, Donze carries a small case containing vials of a chemical substance in various dilutions. While the quality of the ambient odor could range from lilacs to manure, Donze tried to gauge its intensity by comparing it to the substance in the vials.

"You look at the intensity and the characteristic," he said, "but you need to ignore the characteristic."

David K. Veleta, the assistant environmental engineer for the landfill, said the number of complaints has dropped dramatically over the last couple of weeks as the facility has instituted new odor control measures. Nonetheless, "The G Word" was enthusiastic about the topic.

With a cameraman in tow, interviewer Summer Rayne Oaks strolled to an overlook with Department of Public Works director Edward S. Huntley to talk about the system.

"Come on up," Huntley said. "We're at the top of the world here."

After one elaborate explanation by Huntley, Bergeron asked that he break it down into smaller sections.

"That's a really long answer," she said.

As they wrapped that segment, Rayne told Huntley, "Thank you so much, but I have to meet one of these odor responders. I have to see if my nose is as good as theirs."

Bergeron said the segment might air sometime next month. She did not say if it would be titled "Sniff Squad," but the term was also in the air.

[http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2008/06/discovery\\_channel\\_focuses\\_on\\_s.html](http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2008/06/discovery_channel_focuses_on_s.html)



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