

*The Ranger to the rescue*

## The Nasal Ranger has arrived

By Tracy Overstreet  
tracy.overstreet@theindependent.com

Grand Island's new odor meter -- patented as the Nasal Ranger -- arrived on Thursday, but it was too cold to put the handheld machine to use.

Temperatures must be at least 32 degrees and no more than 104 degrees to measure the intensity of an odor accurately, the instruction manual states. Thursday's temperatures hovered in the teens with snow falling early in the day.

"We can't use it in the snow," Public Works Director Steve Riehle said of the \$1,500 device.

Grand Island has been plagued by odors over the years but has lacked a method of quantifying and measuring the types and intensity of odors. Without such methodology, blame for the odors has been placed on the city's wastewater treatment plant, the Swift & Co. meatpacking plant and a cattle feedlot.

City officials have implemented some odor-reduction techniques at the wastewater treatment plant, as have Swift officials at the slaughtering plant right next door.

But as odors persisted, Grand Island Mayor Jay Vavricek directed City Administrator Gary Greer to get involved in solving the stinky problem. Greer wanted some form of measurement.

"This is a scientific way to understand what is happening," Riehle said while holding the Nasal Ranger up to his nose.

The Nasal Ranger weighs 2 pounds and measures 14 inches long, 7.5 inches high and 4 inches wide. It runs on a 9-volt battery and holds two carbon filters.

The operator must breathe into the Nasal Ranger and form an airtight seal into the device. The operator continues breathing through the Nasal Ranger and adjusting a dial that indicates the dilution-to-threshold (D/T) ratio.

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Grand Island Public Works Director Steve Riehle tries out the city's new Nasal Ranger Thursday while standing next to administrative assistant Danelle Collins.

Independent/Lane Hickenbottom

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Steve Riehle points to a map that shows distances from Grand Island's wastewater treatment plant while suggesting where air quality tests might be done with the city's new Nasal Ranger instrument purchased to help quantify odor issues.

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### Independent Talk

"I think this is a terrible idea. The current system has been working relatively well and most of the guys up at city hall are doing a good job, with the exception of spending too much. What does everyone else think about this? And what about the timing? Two days after the election seems to be an odd time to bring this up."

- Posted by *my two cents*, in our Forum topic [Scrap the Mayor?](#)

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Essentially, the ratio measures the amount of carbon-filtered air it takes to dilute the stinky air until odor is no longer detected.

The D/T ratios are 2, 4, 7, 15, 30 and 60 -- with 60 being the highest amount of filtered air needed to dilute odors from the fresh air.

Engineering technician Tom Carlson and Public Works Department administrative assistant Danelle Collins are expected to be the primary operators of the Nasal Ranger. Riehle said they were selected because their offices are at City Hall.

Riehle initially did not select staff working at the wastewater treatment plant because it's believed their noses are more adjusted to wastewater treatment plant smells and therefore have a higher threshold.

Carlson said routine testing at the plant and at distances of 500 feet, 1,000 feet, a quarter mile, a half mile and three-quarters of a mile from the plant will be conducted.

Collins will continue to monitor the city's odor hot line for any additional locations where residents have identified smells. The Nasal Ranger will be used at those locations as well.

The city has been landfilling sewage sludge from the wastewater treatment plant since mid-January and removed the last of its compost material there on Feb. 8.

"We've only had two calls on the odor hot line since Feb. 1," Collins said.

## How to report an odor

If you smell an odor in Grand Island and want it measured:

1. Call the odor hot line at 385-5444, extension 663.
2. Identify the time, location and description of the odor you smell.
3. Leaving your name and phone number is optional but may be helpful for Nasal Ranger operators to identify and measure the odor accurately.



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308-382-1000 ■ 800-658-3160  
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Grand Island Public Works Director Steve Riehle tries out the city's new Nasal Ranger Thursday while standing next to administrative assistant Danelle Collins.

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