

Cinda Lautenschlegar

by Frank A. Kruppenbacher

Take a deep breath.
Exhale.
Repeat.

This essential human function sustains our lives. Breathing occurs so automatically that we hardly think about it. The air we breathe also is something that can be, and often is, taken for granted.

But, protecting the air people breathe and ensuring it is clean and healthy are concerns that Cinda Lautenschlegar (at left in photo) does not take lightly.

"I work for clean air," says the 1987 RIT/NTID Mechanical Engineering graduate. "As an air pollution control engineer for the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Lautenschlegar writes permits, uncovers violations, and helps individuals, industries, and

organizations achieve compliance with air pollution regulations.

"When we issue a permit to a company, for example, it's a highly technical and legally binding document," Lautenschlegar says. "Helping my team succeed with their cases gives me a great amount of satisfaction on the job."

In her work, Lautenschlegar interacts extensively with the public. She conducts site visits, attends hearings, and leads outreach classes to teach new regulatory program requirements.

"Sometimes an interpreter facilitates communication," says Lautenschlegar, "and sometimes that's not an option. Regardless, everyone is accountable for communication—including me.

"When I encounter surprise, or skepticism, or an unwillingness from others to work with me because I'm deaf," Lautenschlegar explains, "I tell them they can work with me or they can work with no one. My bosses back me up on this, too."

Lautenschlegar credits her family for her confidence and passion for quality in her career and her life, her fascination with science, and her decision to attend RIT/NTID.

"When my family and I visited RIT, it was a no-brainer," says Lautenschlegar. "I wanted a technical education, and RIT had an excellent reputation. I received an excellent education there.



"I wanted a career with new frontiers to learn about, and that's where I'm at right now," adds Lautenschlegar. "I'm learning about the companies I write permits for, and, as the laws change, I learn all of the new air pollution regulations. It's a dynamic field. I really enjoy it."