

Trash busters ready for Road-E-O

Landfill workers look to clean up at competition

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Adam Scott, right, holds his first-place Regional Road-E-O plaque while standing with Terry Vonada in front of Vonada's truck at the Wayne Township Landfill. The men took first and second places, respectively, in their classes at the competition in early May and advanced to the international competition which will be held at the end of this month in Kentucky.

LINDSAY DAVIS/THE EXPRESS

McELHATTAN - Two Wayne Township Landfill employees will head to Kentucky later this month, but they're hoping to come home with something a lot better than trash.

Adam Scott and Terry Vonada will be competing in the 2008 International Solid Waste Authority of North America ROAD-E-O in Lexington and Louisville, Ky., on Friday, Sept. 26 and Saturday, Sept. 27.

They earned their spots at the international competition by taking first and second places, respectively, in their classes at the SWANA Mid-Atlantic Regional ROAD-E-O at the beginning of May in Greencastle. Twelve-year landfill employee Scott took the top spot in his landfill equipment category while newcomer Vonada, who has only been working at the landfill for two years, took second place in his truck category, in his first attempt at the contest.

This year's competition was the 10th for Scott, and his third first-place win. His earlier prizes came in 2004 and 2006. This most recent triumph was a close one.

"My score was even with another guy's, but my time was better [than his]. That was the deciding factor," Scott said.

He outperformed six other men with his skills in a CAT 836H trash compactor, the same model he currently uses at the landfill.

"It definitely helped [to use a piece of equipment I was familiar with]. If you've never seen a machine or anything like it before that day, you're in for a rough day. It's definitely a plus to know where all the controls are and to be comfortable in a machine," he said.

For the contest, he maneuvered his compactor forward and backward through an obstacle course marked out by large construction barrels. He also had to push a barrel forward 50 feet, then push it back to its original spot - a test he found slightly difficult because of the weather that day.

"It rained all day, so it was muddy and the barrel kept getting stuck," said Scott. Still, he was able to make the best time out of all of his competitors.

Vonada also had the advantage of driving the same model truck for the competition as he does every day for his job. Even many of the tests reminded him of his daily tasks.

Like Scott, he also had to get his truck through an obstacle course, one that was slightly more complex than that for the equipment operators. First, he drove through an area where other vehicles were parked, then made a sharp righthand turn and an S-turn, then parallel-parked on the left side of the track and had to stop before touching a certain line on the track. He also had to back into a dock and run his truck wheels between two blocks without hitting them.

Though Scott said it was a tight squeeze on the equipment track, with only four inches of clearance between the barrels, Vonada said the truck drivers' track wasn't necessarily a piece of cake, either.

"There was one turn that there was no way possible to make it with a tractor-trailer. Other than that, everything's pretty much the same as what we do here," said Vonada, who beat seven other men to take 2nd of nine places.

He went to see what the road-e-o would be like and found he enjoyed it. Both men are looking forward to the next round of competition at the end of the month.

The international competition will feature a similar test course of eight skill tests - alley backing, parallel parking, right turn, offset alley, straight line, stop line, serpentine forward and serpentine backward. Truck drivers will also have to answer a 50-question safety quiz.

"It beats driving up and down the highway each day. It's a nice change of pace, even if it's just one day," Vonada said.