



Louisville

November 29, 2003

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WHAS11 I-Team

Break the mold

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Eric Zager

Aussie is the first of its kind in Kentucky, and one of only 38 certified mold-sniffing dogs in the entire United States.

"Aussie here is just a very good tool to have. She makes it a lot easier and quicker to find the mold," says Travis Fox of Mold Doggers.

Think of Aussie as a four-legged detective. Like bomb and drug detection dogs, she's trained to find what you can't see.

"She can pretty much pinpoint on a wall or under a sink or anywhere where mold may be," Fox says.

Spotting it in the garage is easy. But in, for example, a wheel, mold is mixed between building materials. Aussie has to find the right compartment. If she does, she'll sit and point.

Travis Fox and fiancée Jamie Rosen recently opened Mold Doggers, a mold detection company in Louisville. They love Aussie like their other dogs, but she's treated differently.

"She is more serious and you can tell she is a working dog," Rosen says. "The dog does not eat out of a bowl you know we literally hand-feed her."



Aussie, the mold-sniffing dog

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Rosen and Fox recently spent five days in Florida training to become certified mold dog handlers. Aussie has over 1000 hours of training under her collar from the Florida Canine Academy. They believe she's 90 percent accurate. But when they show up at a door they will do so with more than just Aussie in hand.

"We will also bring over other tools that we have for our business. We will do air samples, we will do some surface samples, as well as a visual inspection," says Fox.

Hard to believe, but Aussie, an Australian shepherd mixed breed, originally came from an animal shelter.

"She is an extraordinary dog. She always seems happy, and seems ready to go to work, she just loves it," Fox says.

A spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection, who did not want to be identified, says there's anecdotal evidence that mold dogs do work. The problem is that eventually the dogs, like humans, become allergic to the mold.

According to the Florida Canine Academy, dogs have been used in Europe since the 1970s in detecting mold.

Web story produced by Jay Ditzer.



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