



VPMA

PMP

Reporter

Winter 2024

Swarmer Season: What, why and for how long?

By John Singletary, ACE, Regional Manager, Nisus Corp.

Note: VPMA apologizes for incorrectly attributing this article in the original version of the newsletter.

After two to four years of growth, a subterranean termite colony has matured enough to begin producing male and female termites that leave the nest in reproductive flights or swarms. Common misconceptions are that the warmer temperatures of spring and summer usher in the so called “swarmer season”, but this is misleading because termite colonies can be active year-round.

While spring is the most common time of year when alates (winged reproductive caste members) take flight to mate and begin new colo-

nies, this phenomenon is not isolated to Subterranean termites. Many ant species will also swarm this time of year, and to

the untrained eye this can cause confusion as ant swarmers and termite swarmers look very similar.

For the simple eyeball test and ID, once the alates of both ants and termites’ mate, they will drop their wings. Knowing the difference between the two types of wings is an important ID short cut. The termite wings are of similar size and venation (vein structure) whereas ant alates’ wings are of two very different sizes and structure. This can make the identification process easier.

Subterranean termites often begin their reproductive flight or “swarm” when temperatures begin to warm, and the humidity begins to



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VPMA Vision & Mission

The leadership of the Virginia Pest Management Association works to fulfill the vision of the organization and to promote the values of our mission statement to our members and industry stewards.

VISION STATEMENT - The vision of the Virginia Pest Management Association is to be recognized by the public and the pest industry as the premier resource for supporting the pest management profession.

MISSION STATEMENT - The mission of the Virginia Pest Management Association is to promote ethical and environmentally responsible pest management practices among our members through education, coalition and professionalism to safely protect the general public.

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President's Message: John Reid

Goals for 2024



Dear VPMA Members,

I am John Reid, and I'm excited to be writing my first message as President of the VPMA. For those who may not be familiar with me, I've worked in the pest management industry for the past 24 years. As co-owner of Accel Pest & Termite Control in Virginia Beach, Virginia, I have been active in the TPCA, NPMA, and VPMA for the past 13 years in various capacities. My interest in our associations comes from a deep-seated belief in advancing the professionalism of our industry as a whole—a belief that aligns seamlessly with the core purpose of the VPMA.

Recently, our board of directors convened in Richmond for a two-day planning session. This is a significant time commitment for our board, and I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all board members for their participation and continued dedication to the VPMA. During our time together, we outlined several key initiatives that we believe are essential for the continued growth and enhancement of our association.

Firstly, we recognize the critical role that committees play in driving the Association's objectives forward. So, as a board we are going to be focused on strengthening these committees, ensuring they are well-structured and efficiently operated. We are implementing onboarding programs for new board members, setting clear expectations, creating committee charters, and utilizing modern tools like Microsoft TEAMS to enhance communication and collaboration. We also streamlined and restructured some committees to better meet the needs of the Association. It is our belief that this is fundamental work that will yield immediate results and positively impact the Association well into the future.

Secondly, our attention is directed towards refining our marketing and communications

strategies. Our Association is strong with approximately 130 member companies across the state. However, there is an opportunity to reach more businesses within our industry as there are approximately 650 pest control businesses in VA. As an association the VPMA has never employed a formal and consistent marketing strategy. Through targeted outreach efforts, in particularly by attempting to reach all pest control businesses in Virginia, (especially newly established companies) we intend to showcase the value of VPMA membership.

Lastly, we aim to amplify technician engagement across the state. With approximately 7,000 certified pest technicians working in the structural pest control industry in Virginia, there is immense potential to expand awareness of VPMA's offerings, especially by highlighting all our Association's educational opportunities and programs. With this, we envision highlighting programs that are unique to the VPMA such as our Master Tech Program, our LEAP (Leadership Enrichment in Action Program), WDI Inspector Training, and our Ace Prep Course and Exam.

We are always seeking volunteers; and both new ideas and perspectives. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly with any input or help you might have. As we begin this year and work on these initiatives, I welcome each of you to actively engage and participate in the continued advancement of our Association. Your involvement is instrumental in shaping the future of the VPMA and our industry.

Thank you,

John Reid, President

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Swarmer Season *continued from p. 1.*

increase with the spring showers. Warmth is the first condition that stimulates an elevated level of activity within the nest. This warmth can be the warmth of the ground created by direct exposure to the sun, or it can be the indirect warming of the southern sides of structures resulting from the solar track of the sun. This activity pattern differs from that of Drywood termites that may forage year-round - subterranean termites are affected by temperature.

For subterranean termites, the alate or swarmer activity in the Mid-Atlantic region can begin as early as late February and extend into the Memorial Day weekend in May. With temperatures influencing termite activity, the following is a general rule of thumb of how seasonality affects activity.

Foraging and Exploring	70-90°F
Nest Building and Expansion	65-85°F
Swarming Flights	55-75°F
Metabolism Shuts Down (diapause)	<50°F

While Spring weather does ramp up termite activity in the Mid-Atlantic, the key activity driver year-round is moisture. For termite populations to grow and thrive, high humidity levels are essential. This is why the mud shelter tubes and enclosed passage to and from the colony are essential. Low levels of humidity will rob termite bodies of essential moisture, causing them to desiccate and die. While they are destructive and hearty eaters, they are a fragile organism that is extremely moisture dependent. Additionally, excessive wood moisture content can increase the nutrient levels in the wood (nitrogen) making the wood more palatable for the wood-destroying insects.

Don't sleep on Subterranean Termite elevated activity in the summer. This elevation in activity can occur in irrigated yards or other areas that are providing the moisture that may be missing in the July-August heat. Pay particular attention to moisture-heavy areas caused by malfunctioning or leaking irrigation or downspouts that cause

moisture to pool near or around a structure.

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Schmidt Running for NPMA Board

If you know Greg Schmidt, you know that he is a servant leader. “I have always been passionate about serving people to the best of my ability,” said Greg Schmidt. “Little did I know 35 years ago when I took a job in the pest industry, that it would become a career that would lead to owning a small pest management company and the chance to serve more people than I could ever imagine.”

Greg was born in Richmond, Virginia, where he met his wife, Alyce. In 1996, they moved to the Fredericksburg area for a great opportunity.

“Only 6 years later, I was blessed to start my company, Pest Solutions,” he shared on a recent afternoon phone call. “This gave me a chance to better serve clients and my community.”

He didn’t really know how or where to start on the business side of things, so he dug into his association memberships for networking and guidance. He joined the local builders’ association and did volunteer work with them. In 2018, Greg was selected for NPMA’s Executive Leadership Program.

“That wonderful program along with help from fantastic mentors, was what I needed!” Greg said. Greg is very active in the Virginia Pest Management Association, where he sits on the Board as treasurer, chairs the State Technical Meeting and Recert Committee, and serves as Vice SPAR. He is also very involved with the National Pest Management Association, where he sits on the Business Innovations Committee, the Quality-Pro Board. He is still involved with the local builders’ association, sitting on the board and chairing their Community Service Committee.

“I can’t express the joy and sheer gratitude that has come from simply giving back and serving more,” Greg said. “It would be an honor and privilege to serve a full term on the NPMA Board as an At-large Director. I am very excited to be a voice for the smaller businesses in our Association.”



Greg is a small business member ready to make a BIG impact for our associations, both state and national, and for our great industry too! Watch for your NPMA election email to come out, and cast your vote for Greg Schmidt as an At-large Director.



VPMA Board Members, from left, Jared Miller, Greg Schmidt and Ron Gaskill, at NPMA’s 2024 Legislative Day where members met with legislators to discuss support for codifying state pesticide preemption.

Why is the ACE Prep Course so Important?

By Jeffrey Zeiber, ACE, Pest Control Manager & Technical Director at Getem Services, Norfolk, VA

The Jeffrey M. Johnson ACE Prep Course is designed to help PMP's take their education and career to the next level. It is being held on June 25 & 26 in Richmond, VA. This course is meant to help you as a starting point for your studies as you prep for the exam. ACE certification opens doors to exciting career opportunities within the pest control industry. Whether it's advancing to managerial roles, specializing in certain pest types, or even branching out into consulting, the ACE credential sets technicians apart in a competitive job market. Beyond career prospects, obtaining the ACE certification signifies personal growth and professional development. It challenges technicians to expand their knowledge, refine their skills, and stay updated with the latest trends and innovations in pest management.

The ACE Prep Course is instructed by Industry leaders Dr. Dini Miller, PhD & David Moore, BCE who both have an extensive background in the field of entomology. They cover all topics covered on the exam and study material. They are a great source of information for clarifying challenging subjects that commonly come up. The ACE Prep Course also gives candidates an opportunity to network and build professional relationships and possibly find a mentor with the instructors.



Why did I choose to be an ACE?

After becoming comfortable with performing pest control services and having a solid understanding of Arthropods that PMP's encounter on a daily basis, I started noticing a trend that I didn't feel comfortable with. Customers ask tough questions..... for example: "How does that kill insects?" or "Why do insects die belly up?" These questions really irritated me because not knowing the answer made me feel, honestly, useless.

This was the start of my journey to become an ACE. I sought guidance from a Board Certified Entomologist (BCE), whose mentorship has spanned an impressive eight years and continues to be a source of invaluable support. Under his tutelage, I unearthed a passion previously unbeknownst to me. This transformative experience has not only solidified my career path but

has also engendered a profound sense of fulfillment.

Requirements to take the ACE Exam: <https://entocert.org/ace>

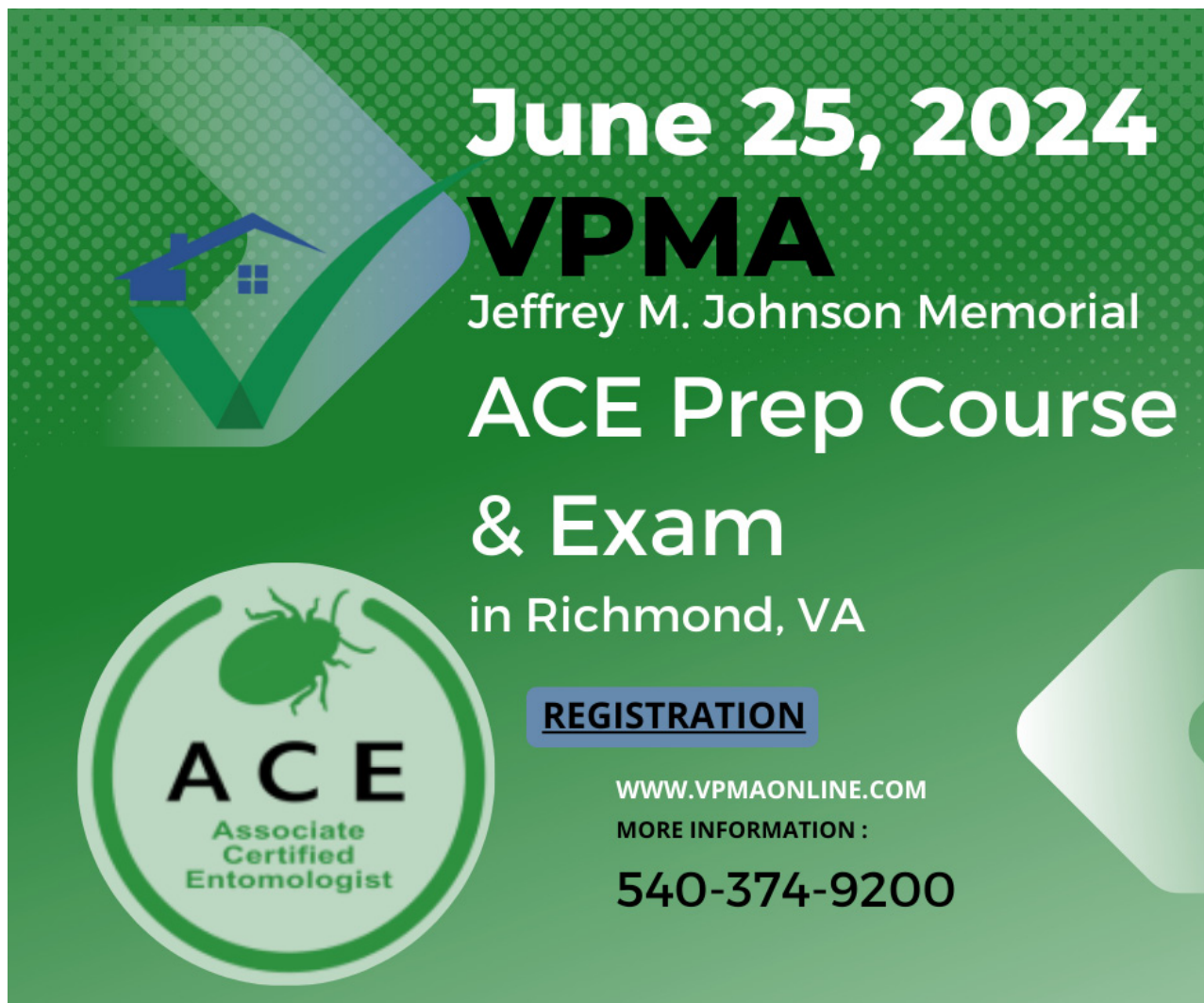
- 5 years active license holder in the Pest Management Industry
- 2 letters of professional recommendation
- Application fee of \$395 to the Entomological Society of America
- The willingness to adhere to the ACE Code of Ethics

How the ACE helped my career?

The acquisition of the ACE certification facilitated a profound expansion of my knowledge pertaining to arthropods and pesticides. This enhanced understanding empowered me to effectively educate both clients and incoming technicians within the industry. The prestigious ACE designation not only bestows immediate credibility upon one's organization but also positions the individual as a recognized authority within their company, thereby assuming the role of a subject matter expert. This esteemed credential played a pivotal role in my career advancement, culminating in my appointment as a Technical Services Manager at Rentokil North America.

Presently, as the head of the pest control division at Getem Services, my ACE accreditation significantly bolsters the company's marketing strategy, serving as a testament to the meticulous service protocols developed and supervised by an ACE certified professional.

Furthermore, my ACE certification enables me to actively engage with the community by volunteering to educate children and high school students. By imparting knowledge about the viable career opportunities within the Pest Management Profession and emphasizing its indispensable role in bolstering our economy, I endeavor to inspire and empower the next generation of industry professionals.



June 25, 2024

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Accel's Dalton Recognized as Termite Technician of the Year

On March 11, 2024, Marvin Dalton, with Accel Pest & Termite in Virginia Beach, was recognized as PCT's 2023 Termite Technician of the Year. He received this award at the National Pest Management Association's (NPMA) Legislative Day. This award marks a significant milestone in his lengthy 17-year career in pest management. Accel teammates and VPMA friends were on-hand to celebrate Marvin's recognition, along with his wife, Michelle Dalton.

Marvin's approach to his work exemplifies the essence of professionalism and customer-centric service. He understands the profound significance of his role in safeguarding the homes and cherished memories of his clients. With a focus on building trust through effective communication and honesty, Dalton ensures that each customer feels confident in his inspection and problem resolution. His goal extends beyond providing a one-time service; Dalton aspires to establish lasting professional relationships that span generations, reminiscent of a bygone era of exemplary service.

Drawing from his background in construction as a former mason, Dalton brings a unique perspective to his role as a termite technician. His understanding of how structures are assembled, coupled with his passion for helping people, has made him an invaluable asset to Accel. Dalton's journey into pest control was serendipitous, yet his innate skills and dedication quickly propelled him to success, earning admiration from colleagues and clients alike.

Dalton's career trajectory took a pivotal turn when he joined Accel Pest & Termite Control, a company founded on core values of family, quality workmanship, and unparalleled customer service. He entered the industry for a job; and has made it his career. His journey from a con-



Brad Harbison (left), internet editor and managing editor of PCT Magazine, presents the 2023 Termite Technician of the Year award to VPMA-member Marvin Dalton with Accel Pest & Termite in Virginia Beach.

struction background to becoming a top-tier termite technician is a testament to his resilience, adaptability, and unwavering work ethic. Dalton's commitment to excellence and continuous improvement serves as an inspiration to aspiring professionals in the pest management industry, embodying the values of dedication, integrity, and exceptional service. You can see why he was selected by PCT to be honored with this award.



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Launching a Pest Control Venture: Strategic Financial Management for Success

Embarking on the journey to establish a pest control business marks a significant and thrilling career move, driven by diverse motivations. While some entrepreneurs are drawn to the prospect of offering exceptional customer experiences, others seek the independence that comes with business ownership. Regardless of the underlying reasons, the cornerstone of success in this venture lies in meticulous financial planning and accurate cost forecasting.

Seth Garber, CEO of Pest Daily and industry expert, emphasizes the depth of the adage, “you have to spend money to make money.” He elaborates on the necessity of understanding both current and future financial allocations, highlighting the importance of a well-conceived financial strategy as a preliminary step.

Garber points out the criticality of being well-informed about startup costs, operational expenses, and revenue forecasts. This knowledge not only empowers better decision-making but also facilitates the acquisition of necessary funding to fuel business growth.

For those contemplating the entrepreneurial leap in pest control, Garber offers guidance on financial focal points. As the business matures, these financial considerations will evolve in complexity. Below are the fundamentals for setting a strong financial foundation:

Startup Costs:

Establishing a realistic

financial blueprint begins with calculating start-up expenses, which encompass licensing fees, equipment purchases, insurance, office supplies, marketing materials, and inventory. Garber advises thorough market research and budgeting to manage these initial costs effectively.

Operational Expenses: The health of your business’s finances is significantly influenced by daily operating costs, including salaries, marketing, vehicle maintenance, rent, insurance, and software subscriptions. Utilizing industry benchmarks for forecasting these expenses is recommended to integrate them into financial projections.

Revenue Projections: Understanding your business’s financial trajectory necessitates an analysis of market demand, potential customer base, expected revenue per client, and industry growth trends. Garber suggests assessing local competition to gauge expected market share and revenue.

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Pricing Strategies: Profitability hinges on setting the right prices, considering material costs, labor, overhead, and desired profit margins. Garber emphasizes understanding market expectations and the value offered, advising a pricing strategy that aligns with industry standards.

Financing Options: External funding is often essential, with options including business loans, credit lines, or partnerships. A comprehensive business plan detailing financial projections and market analysis is crucial. Garber recommends consulting with financial experts in the pest control sector for tailored advice.

Financial Monitoring and Adjustment: Post-launch, it's vital to track financial performance against projections, adjusting as necessary. Regularly reviewing financial metrics ensures the business's fiscal health. Utilizing accounting software provides real-time financial insights.

Professional Financial Guidance: The complexity of financial management in starting a pest

control business warrants expert advice. Garber advises seeking assistance from accountants, financial advisors, or consultants specializing in the sector to make well-informed decisions.

Conclusion: The successful launch of a pest control company is built on comprehensive financial planning. By accurately determining startup and operational costs, setting revenue targets, and making informed adjustments, entrepreneurs pave the way for a prosperous business future.

Pest Daily, an innovative e-learning platform created just for pest and wildlife control professionals, was founded by industry veteran Seth Garber. A former owner/operator himself, Garber is now considered to be a top consultant in the industry and has developed unique, innovative methodologies to help pest control companies grow strategically and intentionally. To learn more, visit www.pestdaily.com.

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It is the same cycle every year, we move from the cold of Winter toward the warmth of Spring. Before the buds start to open on the trees, our renewal season begins, first with Business License Renewals and then with Applicator Renewals. Below are some reminders as the Renewal Season begins.

Pesticide Business License Renewals Due March 31

Business license renewal forms have been mailed. To renew your business license, you must submit a completed application and fee. The Office of Pesticide Services (OPS) has launched a new online system for pesticide businesses. Using the online system can potentially reduce the overall processing time, eliminate postage costs, and enable easy online payments of fees. While the current process of sending in paper copies remains an option, we encourage you to use the online system! Information is available on your business license renewal form.

While we send all businesses renewal notices as a courtesy, it is the businesses' responsibility to maintain their pesticide business license. If a business applies a pesticide without a current pesticide business license, they are in violation of Virginia's laws and regulations and subject to enforcement action. In addition, if the pesticide business license expires, the certification of all commercial applicators and registered technicians employed by the business are no longer valid. If an applicator makes a pesticide application without a valid certification, they are also in violation of Virginia's laws and regulations and subject to enforcement action.

- Your business license is valid for up to 1 year (depending on when issued) and expires on March 31 every year. To have a valid business license, you must have a currently Certified Commercial Applicator (CCA) and sufficient insurance.

- Don't delay in returning the renewal form since business license renewals postmarked or submitted after March 31 incur a 20% late fee.

- All applications and other submissions will continue to be processed based on the date of receipt in OPS. This includes both paper and online submissions.

Pesticide Applicator Certification Renewals Due June 30

Certified applicators are required to attend an approved category specific recertification course every two years before their certificate

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expires for each category they hold. Applicators will either renew in an odd or even year. The expiration date is listed on the applicator's certificate. There is currently no fee for commercial applicators and registered technicians to renew their certificates. If an applicator has the required recertification credit, their certificate will be automatically renewed.

- Applicators whose certificates expire on June 30 and who take the required recertification course(s) will have their certificate automatically renewed and a new certificate will be sent to them. If the applicator has taken the required recertification course, they are considered "renewed" even if we have not yet entered the credit or sent the certificate.

- For applicators who are due for renewal but do not take a recertification course by June 30 their certificate is expired. If a pesticide applicator applies any pesticide without a current certification, they are in violation of Virginia's laws and regulations and subject to enforcement action. Until they have taken the required recertification course*, they are not allowed by law to apply pesticides. *The recertification course(s) must be taken within 60 days of their certificate's expiration as discussed below.

- Applicators are granted 60 days after June 30 to obtain recertification credit to renew their expired certificate, otherwise they will have to be reexamined. After the 60-day grace period, the only way to reinstate their certificate is by exami-

The graphic features a dark blue background with a light blue dotted pattern. On the left, a light blue arrow points right, containing the dates: April 17, May 15, and June 20. To the right of the arrow, the year '2024' is written in large white font, followed by 'VPMA' in large cyan font, and 'Spring Recert Webinars' in large white font. Below this, a cyan box contains the word 'REGISTRATION' in white. Underneath, cyan text reads 'Recert approval requested for: 7a, 7b, 7d, 8, and 60 in VA, MD, NC, DC, PA, WV'. At the bottom right, white text provides the website 'www.VPMAonline.com' and 'MORE INFORMATION : 540-374-9200'. On the left side of the graphic, there is a white box with the text 'Tech Training' in blue, above a logo consisting of a blue house icon and a green checkmark.

nation.

- Applicators who were certified via reciprocity must submit a currently valid certificate from their home state. One of the requirements of reciprocity is maintaining the home state's certificate. Virginia also allows reciprocal recertification under some states' reciprocal agreements. Reciprocal applicators should contact VDACS to verify whether reciprocal recertification is allowed with their home state. Reciprocal applicators who let their Virginia certificate expire will also have to be reexamined to have it reinstated after the 60 day grace period ends.

As noted above applicators who do not take a recertification course by August 29 of the expiration year listed on their certificate and who wish to be certified are required by law to retest which requires the submission of an application and fee. Recertification Course Opportunities Will Begin to Dwindle Down. If you do not have the required recertification credits and your certificate is expiring in 2024, you need to get to a class soon. For a list of approved recertification courses visit <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/recertcourses.pdf>.

Other Seasonal Reminders

➡ Make sure that the contact information on your records is up to date. We use the mailing address that we have on file when mailing renewals so if it has changed, notify us. You can find copies of the Business Change of Information and Applicator Change of Information forms on the Services/Forms page of our website under the Pesticide Services dropdown. Services/Forms: <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/services-forms.shtml>

➡ Use the correct forms. There is an RT-A and an RT-B application. The RT-A is the initial application. The RT-B should be used for retesting (or applying to test if LOA expired), reinstating, or if an applicator is testing in lieu of attending a recertification course. Likewise, there is a CA-A and a CA-B form. The CA-A should only be submitted for the initial request to take the Commercial exams. The CA-B should be used for retesting

(or applying to test if LOA expired), reinstating, or if an applicator is testing in lieu of attending a recertification course. The "A" forms are for initial submissions, the "B" forms are for all subsequent submissions.

➡ If submitting applications by mail (or online) make sure that all fields are completed, signatures are provided and the appropriate fees are paid. Write legibly. Incomplete or illegible applications will have longer processing times since staff will need to follow up with the submitter to get the required information, signatures or fees.

For the most current information regarding pesticide business licensing and applicator certification, please visit <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pesticides.shtml>. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Pesticide Services as opsclrt.vdacs@vdacs.virginia.gov or call at (804) 786-3798.

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Members Visit Capitol Hill in Support of Preemption

This past week, members of the Virginia Pest Management Association (VPMA) joined colleagues from across the nation in Washington, D.C., for the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) Legislative Day. This annual event serves as a vital platform for pest management professionals to engage with policymakers and advocate for issues crucial to the industry.

During their time in the nation's capital, VPMA members had the opportunity to meet with staff members of our Virginia legislators, including Senator Mark Warner and Representatives Wittman, Kiggans, McClellan, and Spanberger. These meetings provided an invaluable chance for VPMA representatives to discuss pressing concerns facing the pest management industry and to highlight the importance of legislative support in addressing these issues.

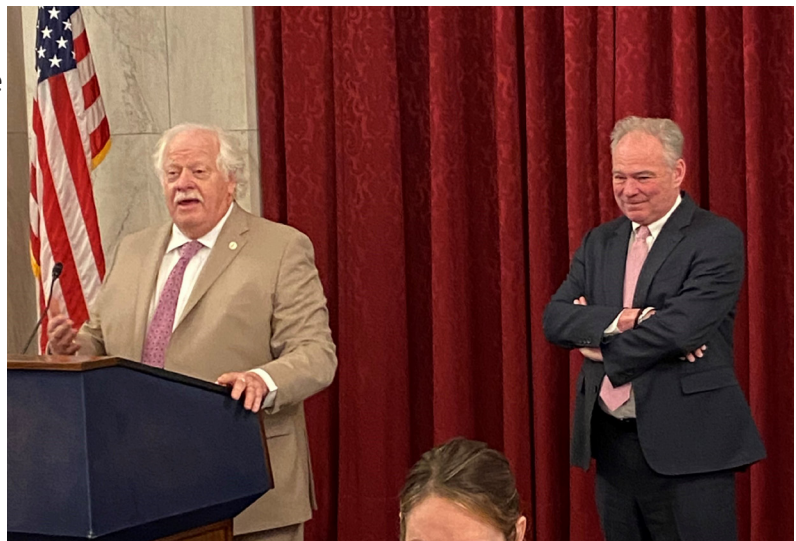
One of the primary topics of discussion was state pesticide preemption - the recognition of state lead agencies as co-regulators alongside the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in overseeing pesticides. VPMA, in alignment with NPMA and other industry stakeholders, emphasized the significance of codifying state pesticide preemption.

To illustrate, our members addressed the challenges faced by pest management professionals operating in states without preemption laws (including our neighbor to the North – Maryland), where compliance with varying regulations poses significant burdens.

The engagement with our representatives' staff members underscored the commitment of VPMA to actively participate in the legislative process and to champion policies that promote the interests of pest management



VPMA represented at NPMA Legislative Day. From top left: Jared Miller, Shannon Harlow-Ellis, Brett Lieberman, Justin Kendall, Jon Furdek, Dutin Pass, Ron Gaskill. From bottom left: Andrea Coron, John Reid, Kristin Coron.



VPMA member Bert Dodson, Jr., (left) President of Dodson Pest Control, introduces Senator Tim Kaine - VA (D) to Legislative Day Attendees over lunch.

professionals and the communities they serve. We left each Hill visit with the promise to be a resource for our legislators on issues much broader than pests and the use of pesticides. We also

included issues like small business, workforce development, and taxation.

Our members heard from Sen. Tim Kaine - VA (D) over lunch. Sen. Kaine applauded attendees' efforts to engage in the legislative process and recognized where we may come together. Kaine's bill, The JOBS Act, would extend PELL grant funding to students enrolled in high-quality technical training recognized by the appropriate industry.

On Monday evening, after a long day of learning about advocacy and the issues of importance to the Industry, our VPMA members gathered with members from the Maryland State Pest Control Association (MSPCA) for dinner at

McCormick & Schmicks. This collaborative event was a great opportunity for PMPs and vendors from both states to network and share this time together!

As the pest management industry continues to evolve, collaboration between industry stakeholders and policymakers remains essential. VPMA's participation in NPMA Legislative Day exemplifies our dedication to advancing the interests of the pest management industry and ensuring its continued success.

Through continued advocacy efforts and partnerships with policymakers, VPMA remains steadfast in its commitment to protecting public health, property and the environment.

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— Randy Abbitt, President
National Exterminating Co.
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Pictured: Frank and Phillis MacDonald, Select Insurance Agency



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