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# PESTWORLD

JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2024

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## THE LEGISLATIVE ISSUE

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STATE LEGISLATURES

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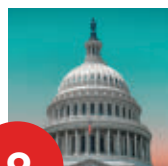
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Client Service Professional**

## FEATURES



### **BUSY SEASON FOR STATE LEGISLATURES**

Last year, our industry accomplished significant victories by working diligently to prevent any negative or burdensome outcomes in states with unfavorable political dynamics.



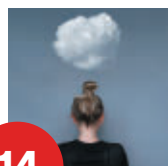
### **THE IMPORTANCE OF PESTICIDE PREEMPTION**

Many state legislatures have considered rolling back their system of pesticide preemption, impacting the ability of our industry to do business by creating a patchwork of local laws.



### **NPMA GROWS RELATIONSHIP WITH EPA**

NPMA has grown our relationship with EPA through continued dialogue with the agency on the importance of our industry as stewards of public health and safety.



### **6 PRACTICES FOR ADDRESSING EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS IN THE WORKPLACE**

Depression affects as many as one in three adults—but a comprehensive program that addresses employee needs can help.



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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



## Legislative Strides in 2023

MARILLIAN MISSITI, Buono Pest Control Co., Inc.

**A**s we step into 2024, I would like to provide an update on our legislative landscape and the remarkable strides we achieved in 2023. From state victories to federal milestones and collaborative efforts with the EPA, this issue highlights the impact of your support, our dedicated public policy team and the commitment of our volunteers. Join us in reflecting on the past year's accomplishments and setting the stage for your vital role in shaping the future of pest management in 2024.

In the realm of state legislatures, 2023 brought forth both challenges and notable victories. Our State Policy Affairs Representatives (SPARs) and member advocates faced unruly legislation in the Northeast and neonicotinoid debates in the West. Their strategic engagement, coupled with your support, successfully defended our industry against potentially burdensome outcomes. This update celebrates the resilience of our members and highlights the strategic achievements that marked our state-level advocacy.

As we charted the course at the federal level, our public policy team and volunteers undertook the crucial task of embedding pesticide preemption language in the Farm Bill. The collaborative efforts of our Preemption Task Force and the active involvement of our engaged members played a pivotal role. This update offers insights into the intricate strategies employed, recognizing the collective impact of our members in shaping federal policies that resonate across the nation.

In 2023, our relationship with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) evolved significantly. Our public policy team collaborated with regulatory groups, emphasizing the importance of unity. Your support as members was instrumental in advocating for science-based regulatory decisions that safeguard both our industry and the environment. This update delves into the achievements, challenges and ongoing collaborative efforts with the EPA.

The last year has been a year of challenges and triumphs for the pest management industry. As we look to 2024, an election year, we anticipate dynamic legislative sessions. NPMA is already engaging with various states on legislation and remains vigilant in safeguarding the industry's interests. ○

**“From state victories to federal milestones and collaborative efforts with the EPA, THIS ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPACT OF YOUR SUPPORT, our dedicated public policy team and the commitment of our volunteers.”**



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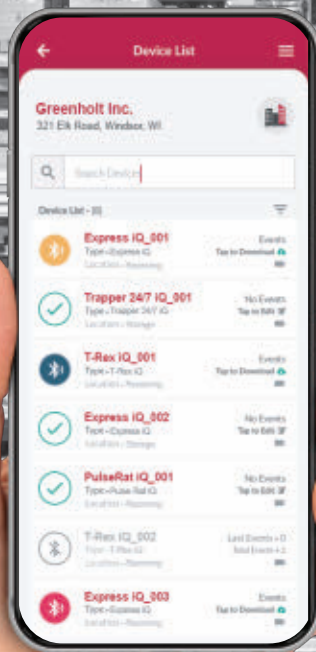
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# BUSY SEASON FOR STATE LEGISLATURES

MICHELLE MOORE, Manager of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs, NPMA and  
JOSH REYNOLDS, Manager of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs, NPMA

**M**ost state legislatures adjourned at the start of the summer, and seven states adjourned this past autumn and winter. In last year's sessions, our industry accomplished significant victories by working diligently to prevent any negative or burdensome outcomes in states with unfavorable political dynamics. The majority of sessions adjourning in summer signaled the start of the slow season for legislative affairs; however, industry members continued to engage on issues by meeting with legislators and regulators to advocate on behalf of the industry. As we close the book on another busy state legislative cycle, we would like to extend a well-deserved thank you to all our State Policy Affairs Representatives (SPARs), state association leaders, Public Policy Committee members and member advocates for their hard work in defending our industry.

In the eastern half of the U.S., we saw a trend in the northeast of unruly legislation that would make it virtually impossible to conduct daily operations using rodenticides. In Connecticut, Senate Bill 962 sought to prohibit the use of second-generation rodenticides for both consumers and professionals alike. Similar legislation banning rodenticides appeared in New England states, but New Hampshire's House Bill 326 turned out to be the most controversial as Environmental NGOs worked diligently to support its

passage. In the face of EPA's pending interim decision on rodenticides, both issues failed to make it through as legislatures decided to hold these issues for the preparation of the federal outcome.

In the West, the industry was bombarded with neonicotinoid legislation in Colorado, Minnesota, New Mexico and Nevada. However, the industry's biggest legislative issue was in Colorado, with the Pesticide Applicator's Act (PAA). This bill, which comes up every seven years, focused on the renewal of the PAA. In early 2022, industry representatives started meeting with the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) to prevent the PAA from becoming a vehicle to roll back pesticide preemption. Thanks to hard work, ground game and continual advocacy, our industry again succeeded in defending pesticide preemption in a deep blue state.

Minnesota was another state that saw its political dynamic change heading into 2023. For the first time in nearly a decade, the Democratic party held a trifecta—control over both legislative chambers and the Governor's office. This year, Minnesota's cities of the first class became the licensing, regulatory and enforcement entity for pesticides used within their cities with a pollinator advisory on the label. And, statutory and home rule charter cities gained the ability to penalize and enforce some pesticide use in



## The Importance of Our SPARs

The State Policy Affairs Representative (SPAR) program is a comprehensive grassroots network that leads all advocacy efforts for industry state organizations in the states. This system involves NPMA's public policy team working in unison with state-level member advocates to coordinate state-level policy efforts. Organizing pest professionals to influence the policy-making process is a deeply effective tool for ensuring officials consider the perspective of their constituents. This collaboration allows the industry to maximize resources and expertise and continues to drive success for our industry.


A SPAR's role is to be both a policy leader and representative for the industry when facing legislative and regulatory challenges. SPARs stay plugged in on areas of interest by attending stakeholder meetings, engaging with legislative and regulatory leaders, and leveraging their network to gain and share information. SPARs also serve as the liaison between their state association's board and NPMA. SPARs keep board members informed on state legislative and regulatory activity, provide updates on state-level legislative and regulatory activity, and work with their Board and NPMA to develop robust advocacy strategies.

Through NPMA's and our SPARs' close relationships with state lead agencies, we are optimistic that common sense will prevail, leading to sensible and fair regulations that protect our industry and our customers.

**Eastern SPAR Highlight:** The Connecticut SPAR, Anthony Giovanni, protected the state's industry from two simultaneous bills that would ban two commonly used products by professionals: SGARs and neonics. Anthony organized messaging campaigns, attended each hearing to testify in opposition to the proposed legislation, and was able to secure an amendment that carved out industry use. Ultimately, these bills did not make it out of committee before the session adjourned. Anthony's hard work delayed the process by opening more conversations, which was able to protect Connecticut's members from overly burdensome legislation.

**Western SPAR Highlight:** Jim Steed, one of our two California SPARs, played a pivotal role in advocating and educating California stakeholders on our industry, the safe and effective uses of rodenticides in the state, and the importance of retaining access to vital pest management tools, like diphacinone. Jim advocated tirelessly throughout California's nearly yearlong legislative session, attending meetings, testifying in committee, leading writing campaigns and engaging with stakeholders across the nation. Jim's efforts set a wonderful example of how SPARs can directly shape legislative and regulatory action in their states through practice, persistence and patience.





**“ We are already engaging on several pieces of legislation across the country, and are anticipating **SEVERAL STATES TO PUSH FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY OVER PESTICIDE REGULATION**, with activity in Colorado and Massachusetts from 2023 rolling over into 2024. ”**

their city limits starting July 1st after passage of a partial preemption rollback bill.

### FINISHING TOUCHES

At the end of the year, we saw continued legislative work in states like California and New York, while other states began planning for this year. In California, our SPARs worked diligently as Governor Newsom considered three bills that impacted our industry. The most important was Assembly Bill 1322, which restricted the use of an FGAR in the state and was ultimately signed into law on October 13th. Governor Newsom also signed two bills that our industry monitored, one being a restriction of neonicotinoid usage for turf and ornamental purposes and another that created an Environmental Justice advisory committee as part of the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR).

In New York, two pieces of legislation from 2022 resurfaced and made it through both chambers and onto the Governor's desk. The first is a bill that would prohibit the application of pesticides to wetlands, which had the potential to result in a preemption rollback. Fortunately for the industry, the Governor ultimately vetoed this bill. The second was a bill that would restrict the use of neonicotinoid products for outdoor applications. Due to the hard work of NPMA and state representatives who engaged

the state's regulatory officials, the Governor vetoed this bill as well.

### WHAT'S NEXT

With 2024 being an election year, we are anticipating hotly contested, partisan legislative sessions as elected officials vie for any bills that can then be used on the campaign trail. 2024 will see 44 states across the country hold elections for 86 chambers. We are keeping our eye on states that have slim legislative majorities, like Michigan and Minnesota, as they may pass vital party legislation because the lack thereof could have major electoral implications.

We are already engaging on several pieces of legislation across the country, and are anticipating several states to push for local authority over pesticide regulation, with activity in Colorado and Massachusetts from 2023 rolling over into 2024. In Massachusetts, towns have again petitioned the legislature to introduce bills that are similar to the actions taken in the town of Arlington in past years. This initiative from previous years resulted in the state's Attorney General enforcing the authority of their enacted pesticide preemption law. NPMA is also working proactively with our SPARs to push pro-industry legislation in the upcoming legislative sessions. ○



# THE IMPORTANCE OF PESTICIDE PREEMPTION

## *A refresher on pesticide preemption*

J.D. DARR, Director of Regulatory and Legislative Affairs, NPMA

In 45 states, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state lead agencies work together through longstanding cooperative agreements to administer and enforce Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) laws and support the development of science-based pesticide labels. This is a system of pesticide preemption, where states preempt localities in the regulation of the sale, use and distribution of pesticides.

In recent years, many state legislatures have considered rolling back their system of pesticide preemption, which would have the potential to increase the number of towns, cities, counties and other localities that are able to regulate, and often ban, pesticides. This impacts the ability of our industry to do business by creating a patchwork of local laws across the multiple counties that applicators work in on any given day or week. Localities also lack the resources that are available at the state and federal levels, including teams of scientific experts, in addition to enforcement mechanisms.

Furthermore, NPMA member companies work every day to protect Americans from dangerous and deadly pests. In states that do not operate in a system of pesticide preemption, poorly thought-out local restrictions on vital pesticide tools can leave the public without access to



proper pest control and expose individuals, families and workers to the diseases pests carry.

## PAST ACTIONS

Our biggest priority at the federal level is to include language that would codify statewide pesticide preemption in the Farm Bill. Back in 2018, the House included such language in its initial Farm Bill, the Agriculture Improvement Act. However, it was ultimately not included in the final conferenced version that was signed into law on December 20th. At the time, the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA) was being reauthorized. PRIA was seen by Congress as the only vehicle for pesticide provisions, so pesticide preemption in the Farm Bill was ultimately dropped.

In 2022, NPMA worked alongside former Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL-13) to introduce HR 7266, a bill to amend FIFRA to prohibit the local regulation of pesticide use. However, that same year, former Rep. Davis lost his primary for reelection, resulting in momentum for the bill to slow, and ultimately not being considered by Congress.

While our 2018 and 2022 efforts were promising pushes, neither made it across the finish line; however, this year's Farm Bill efforts are showing promise!

## CURRENT EFFORTS

NPMA is now tracking a 2024 timeline for Farm Bill reauthorization, and NPMA staff are meeting with key officials and members of the House and Senate Agriculture committees, as well as other members of Congress, to push for a national solution to pesticide preemption. In these meetings, we are once again requesting official pesticide preemption language is included—and ultimately kept—in the final version of the reauthorized Farm Bill. As of November 2023, NPMA has met with the following offices to discuss preemption:



U.S. Senate	U.S. House of Representatives	
Sen. John Boozman (R-AR)	Rep. Ronny Jackson (R-TX-03)	Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-IL-13)
Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)	Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK-03)	Rep. Shontel Brown (D-OH-11)
Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR)	Rep. John Rose (R-TN-06)	Rep. David Scott (D-GA-13)
Sen. John Thune (R-SD)	Rep. James Comer (R-KY-01)	Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA-15)
Sen. Roger Marshall (R-KS)	Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA-16)	Rep. Sanford Bishop (D-GA-02)
Sen. Deb Fisher (R-NE)	Rep. Michelle Fishbach (R-MN-07)	Rep. Brad Finstad (R-MN-01)
Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO)	Rep. Tracey Mann (R-KS-01)	Rep. Barry Loudermilk (R-GA-11)
Sen. Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM)	Rep. Jim Baird (R-IN-04)	Rep. Austin Scott (R-GA-08)
Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL)	Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC-07)	Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI-08)
Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS)	Rep. Troy Balderston (R-OH-12)	Rep. Mark Alford (R-MO-04)
Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH)	Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-IL-17)	Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA-02)
Sen. John Tester (D-MT)	Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE-2)	Rep. Greg Steube (R-FL-17)
Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA)	Rep. Mayra Flores (R-TX-34)	Rep. Jake LaTurner (R-KS-2)
Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA)	Rep. Lou Correa (D-CA-46)	Rep. Buddy Carter (R-GA-01)
Sen. John Hickenlooper (D-CO)	Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA-1)	Rep. Rob Wittman (R-VA-01)
Sen. Pete Ricketts (R-NE)	Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AK-04)	Rep. Randy Feenstra (R-IA-04)
Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA)	Rep. Mark Alford (R-MO-04)	
Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV)		
Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN)		
Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM)		

Fall and Winter of 2023 were a particularly uncertain time for Congress, which resulted in many unknowns and multiple delays in the reauthorization process. Passage of the 2023 Farm Bill was expected to occur by September 30, 2023, which is when the 2018 Farm Bill expired. The Farm Bill typically receives bi-partisan support, but with recent issues over government spending, international conflict, and a Speaker of the House vacancy, the Bill has become increasingly contentious, which contributed to the drafting

process being pushed into 2024. As of November 2023, NPMA is anticipating a Spring or Summer 2024 timeframe for a final Farm Bill to get to President Biden’s desk. ○

**“In states that do not operate in a system of pesticide preemption, poorly thought-out LOCAL RESTRICTIONS ON VITAL PESTICIDE TOOLS CAN LEAVE THE PUBLIC WITHOUT ACCESS TO PROPER PEST CONTROL and expose individuals, families and workers to the diseases pests carry.”**

## Preemption Task Force

In September 2023, Public Policy Committee Leadership created the Preemption Task Force to finetune our advocacy strategy. NPMA and the Public Policy Committee wanted to prepare for every possible scenario ahead of the Farm Bill process, so the task force was assembled to gather member feedback on our current efforts and develop a plan to position our industry for success. This task force met weekly to develop a set of recommendations that was ultimately shared with and approved by the broader Public Policy Committee.

### Task Force Members

- Chris Haggerty, Public Policy Chair, American Pest Control, Illinois
- Jim Steed, Public Policy Vice Chair, Neighborly Pest Management Inc., California
- Bob Dold, Jr., Rose Pest Solutions, Illinois
- Faye Golden, Cook’s Pest Control Inc., Alabama
- Suzanne Graham, Massey Services Inc., Florida
- Marie Horner, Arrow Exterminators, Georgia
- Billy Olesen, PestStop, Washington
- Jake Plevelich, Rentokil-Terminix, Pennsylvania
- Bonnie Rabe, Rollins Inc., Georgia
- Julie Tesh-Clark, Pest Management Systems Inc., North Carolina
- Bill Welsh, Rose Pest Solutions, Michigan

# NPMA GROWS RELATIONSHIP WITH EPA

J.D. DARR, Director of Regulatory and Legislative Affairs, NPMA

**N**PMA has grown our relationship with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through continued dialogue with the agency on the importance of our industry as stewards of public health and safety and education on how proposed rules by the agency will impact the ability of pest management professionals to provide the best services to their clients. Through conversations around EPA's proposed interim decisions on all 11 rodenticides, and the Agency's Revised Mitigation for Sulfuryl Fluoride, as well as EPA's Vulnerable Species Pilot Project, NPMA acknowledged and supported EPA's aspirations of protecting our environment, while proposing changes that can achieve the Agency's goals without stripping pest management professionals of vital tools necessary to keep destructive pests at bay. NPMA remains keen on being a collaborative partner that works with EPA to make science-based regulatory decisions.

### NPMA CONTINUES TO WORK WITH KEY REGULATORY GROUPS

2023 proved to be an effective year for NPMA's engagement with state regulatory groups. NPMA continues to serve on the planning committee for the Association of Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials (ASPCRO) and is also an active member of ASPCRO's rodenticides and structural fumigation committees. We continue to engage with the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO), and we have maintained a longstanding partnership with the American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators (AAPSE). Finally, we have increased our collaboration with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), which has been a partner to NPMA on both EPA's rodenticides proposed interim decisions and our state-level pesticide preemption efforts.



## AN ACTIVE YEAR FOR RODENTICIDES

EPA's Proposed Interim Decisions (PIDs) on 11 rodenticides remains a top focus of the pesticide applicator community. Our industry continues to meet with the Agency to discuss the mitigation measures laid out in the PIDs on rodenticides, most notably the classification of all rodenticides as RUP. We have expressed to EPA that the proposed mitigation measures are misapplied to professional uses that have not been linked to environmental harm or negative human health outcomes. NPMA has also submitted multiple letters to the agency expressing the concerns of pest management professionals.

Last year, NPMA created a Critical Issues Working Group (CIWG), comprised of members of the Public Policy Committee, to examine EPA's proposed mitigation measures and determine the least harmful alternative to propose for the Agency's consideration. Over the course of several months, the CIWG met and finalized alternative mitigation measures, which NPMA provided to the Agency, and stressed the importance of ensuring all professionals can continue to use rodenticides.

In October 2023, the Agency informed NPMA that they had delayed their interim decision deadline from November 2023 to later this year, as EPA continues to gather more information from stakeholders and key data on the impacts of their proposed mitigation measures.

This year, NPMA will be hosting EPA staff in Washington, D.C. at a facility that relies on rodenticides for rodent control. Our goal for this event will be to show Agency staff how professional applicators use rodenticides at customer accounts and demonstrate the safety measures and best practices that are already common in our industry. ○

## The Effective Advocacy Tool: VoterVoice

Engaging with our elected officials is one of the most important aspects of our government in America. NPMA utilizes an online advocacy tool called VoterVoice to assist our members by making advocacy as easy as clicking a button on an email. VoterVoice allows NPMA to create advocacy campaigns at the state and federal levels of government in the United States. Though VoterVoice is often thought of as a legislative tool, NPMA is also using VoterVoice to engage with regulators at both levels of government, demonstrating the flexibility and coverage of the platform. Once these campaigns are created, NPMA drafts template messages for our members to add their comments before sending it out to the elected official that represents them.

VoterVoice campaigns are completely voluntary, and members can subscribe or unsubscribe at any time. The proven success of VoterVoice getting advocate messages on the desks of legislators, regulators and staff means it is one of the most effective advocacy tools in our toolbox. See below for two examples of campaigns from this past year:

### VoterVoice Case Studies

In California, NPMA launched a VoterVoice campaign in collaboration with Pest Control Operators of California (PCOC) and the Rodenticide Task Force (RTF) in opposition to AB 1322, which restricted the use of diphacinone in the state. In a period of just over four months, over 1,000 messages from California applicators reached the desks of both state senators and Governor Newsom.

NPMA created a VoterVoice campaign targeted at Congress, asking members of Congress to share concerns over EPA's proposed mitigation measure for Sulfuryl Fluoride (SF) use with the agency. In less than two months, over 700 advocates alerted their Congressional delegation of the issues surrounding SF. In both campaigns, our members proved their dedication to advocating for our industry, as both campaigns exceeded the average open rates and action rates across all industries using VoterVoice.



# 6 PRACTICES FOR ADDRESSING EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS IN THE WORKPLACE

GARY SHAPIRO, Senior Vice President, Program Brokerage Corporation

**D**epression affects as many as one in three adults,<sup>1</sup> and has been shown to affect the workforce as well—68% of Millennials and 81% of Generation Z left their jobs in 2021 due to job-related mental health reasons.<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 has only made these issues worse. However, a comprehensive program that addresses employee mental health issues improves productivity and reduces turnover. Following these six practices can help build a strong framework for mental wellness, both at home and at the office. These practices were developed by the Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO), a nonprofit dedicated to identifying and sharing the best practices on workplace health and well-being.

## 1. Raise awareness about mental health and emotional well being

Reducing the stigma around mental illness in the workplace takes building awareness:

- Train managers to recognize and respond to employee mental health needs
- Encourage and give permission for employees to seek help when needed
- Reinforce the message that maintaining employee mental health is a core value
- Post interviews of leaders sharing personal stories to help destigmatize challenges that everyone faces

## 2. Manage risks related to work, environment and culture

Organizations need to honestly evaluate how the work environment contributes to mental health issues and try to change it for the better:

- Engage employees and seek their involvement in shaping workplace culture
- Take work-life balance issues seriously; consider flexible work schedules and assistance with child and eldercare needs
- Provide workspaces or office environments that encourage collaboration and minimize isolation, and offer virtual options for a hybrid workforce

## 3. Assess employee mental health needs and measure the impact of intervention

As mental and emotional well-being encompasses a broad spectrum of conditions and severity, there isn't a single best solution to address all mental well-being concerns in the workplace. But successful support programs have several things in common:



- They are grounded in quantitative and qualitative insights into the overall health of the organization
- They are able to measure success and show what works
- They usually focus on critical success metrics or KPIs like absenteeism, productivity, motivation, turnover and health outcomes

#### 4. Provide and promote access to evidence-based, high-quality care for mental health

At its base, any mental health wellness strategy needs to include behavioral services:

- Access is generally through health plans, EAPs and other partnerships with mental health care providers
- Employers can lower co-pays and fees to reduce financial barriers to care
  - Programs should span mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment
  - Promote awareness through multiple strategies and channels, helping reduce the stigma associated with mental health while improving access<sup>3</sup>

#### 5. Integrate employee mental health needs into a comprehensive strategy

There's a link between mental and physical health. Recognizing the following will help integrate mental health initiatives into a comprehensive wellness strategy:

- Every dimension of well-being is linked to mental health and emotional health
- These dimensions include emotional well-being (which lifestyle coaching can help address), career wellness (career development and coaching) and financial wellness (guidance on budgeting and setting financial goals)
- A successful and comprehensive well-being strategy requires adherence to industry best practices<sup>4</sup>

#### 6. Partner with local and national organizations

Community and national partnerships benefit both employees and employers:

- Partnerships provide additional resources that are convenient and often low-cost
- Working with a local or national organization on mental health can help employers quickly establish best practices and increase credibility

“Following these **SIX PRACTICES** can help build a **STRONG FRAMEWORK FOR MENTAL WELLNESS**, both at home and at the office.”

- Partnerships also encourage greater levels of volunteerism, which has been shown to improve mental and physical well being

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#### REFERENCES

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3. McKinsey & Co., "Overcoming stigma: Three strategies toward better mental health in the workplace," July 23, 2021.
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# Utilizing Content Syndication to BOOST WEBSITE TRAFFIC

JIM FREDERICKS, Executive Director, PPMA

**W**e know all too well that, in today's digital landscape, social media stands out as one of—if not the—greatest tool to build consumer awareness for your business and the important work you do. Fortunately for business owners, your efforts to promote your business and its services do not need to stop there.

There are more than 7.8 billion people in the world, so it's imperative that marketers use every tool available to cast their metaphorical nets wide to meet as many members of their target audience as possible. In this article, we'll discuss content syndication, which is a great tactic to keep handy in your toolbox to take your marketing efforts one significant step further. So, what is content syndication?

## WHAT IS IT?

Content syndication is a multichannel approach to promote and distribute content while reaching a wider audience. These strategic campaigns are known to be an incredible traffic driver, bringing target audiences to content on your website. There are numerous content syndication platforms available, all of which allow brands and companies to deliver their content and messaging to wider, targeted audiences. Setting up a campaign on these platforms will allow your content to appear as recommendations on some of the web's largest premium publisher sites, such as the Wall Street Journal, CNN, MSN and many others.

Native advertising is the use of paid ads that match the look, feel and function of the media format in which they appear. Unlike banner or display ads, native ads look like editorial content, so they don't disrupt the user's interaction with the page. In other words, this content format provides a less intrusive vehicle to deliver your content to consumers, most of whom will be more receptive to content of this nature as it doesn't disturb the flow of their web experience compared to other advertising methods. In fact, a global Outbrain study conducted with third-party vendor Savanta affirmed that 75% of consumers trust content and recommendations seen in an editorial environment versus 54% who trust user-generated content and recommendations on social media.

Typically, these forms of paid content will be found in the footer of the page and are marked with their logo. Some native advertising platforms include Outbrain, Taboola and Plista, among others. With consumers taking such a liking to this advertising format, native advertising spend has continually increased in recent years. According to Emodo, the paid content spend is expected to surpass \$140 billion this year.

Now that we've covered the basics, let's discuss how you can set yourself up for success when launching these campaigns.

## BEST PRACTICES

Platforms offer a range of creative formats, making creation as turnkey as possible. All you need to do is plug in your image or video, headline, brand or site name, a brief description and a call-to-action, and your campaign is ready to go.

The theme across content development for these campaigns is, "less is more." When writing headlines, you'll want to grab folks' attention as they scroll through that particular webpage. As a matter of fact, it's estimated that your headline should grab people's attention within three seconds. Knowing that you only have a few short moments to do so, try to call out the target audience in the headline. For example, "Homeowners: Here are 3 tips to protect your property from termite damage." Try to keep headlines short and engaging and avoid any inaccurate, misleading or overly sensational messaging. It's also important to note that you should not promise anything in your headlines without a trusted resource.

When it comes to visuals, avoid using images that are unrelated to the headline or landing page, and be sure to pick the most high-resolution photos on file. It's also a best practice to avoid logos or promotional messaging. Try using close-up images that will engage consumers to click and learn more.

Lastly, think about the destination—where you are driving traffic to. Make sure you are leading consumers to relevant landing pages. If lead generation is your goal,








As I'm sure you can tell by now, with content syndication campaigns comes a great deal of flexibility, which is a wonderful thing when it comes to your marketing strategy. Test out a few tactics, find what works best for you and lean into it.

There are a few important performance metrics for these campaigns, including clicks, impressions, click-through

Every day, the digital space becomes more congested with advertisers eager to get people's attention and, as a result, consumer demand for useful and authentic content is on the rise. Stay one step ahead of your competitors and utilize content syndication to enhance your online presence in an effective way. 

# STANDARDS



## A New Credential: **CLIENT SERVICE PROFESSIONAL**

GRIFFIN VOLTMANN, Certification Program Manager, QualityPro



**T**hose of you who attended PestWorld 2023 already know our exciting news: QualityPro's newest credential is for client service professionals. We gathered experts from across the industry to create an exam that truly tests the skills required of our industry's client service professionals and we're thrilled to announce that the credential is available now!

## WHY A CREDENTIAL FOR CLIENT SERVICE?

The simplest answer is that in our industry, everything everyone does is customer service.

More than that, QualityPro's mission calls us to operate at every level of the industry, celebrating the professionalism

**“Customers expect a UNIFORM, TRANSPARENT AND ACCESSIBLE LEVEL OF SERVICE, and QualityPro Client Service Professionals will be tested on their ability to provide it. ”**

that our people show every day. Technicians are often the most literal public face of our industry, but customers most regularly interact with office and sales staff—the heard but unseen triage clinic of the pest management industry. QualityPro exists to celebrate and uplift everyone who serves on the front lines, and to certify the knowledge, expertise and skill that our clients not only expect, but deserve.

QualityPro convened a taskforce for the creation of a Client Service Credential in May of 2023, bringing together subject matter experts from across the industry. The panel included managers and trainers from companies of all sizes, and was directed to identify the core skills, knowledge areas and behaviors that contribute to effective client service. The result is a comprehensive exam covering every area of customer service that an employee of a nationally-accredited QualityPro company should know. Those who pass this exam earn their Client Service Professional credential, which they can put on their resume and share with the world.

The credential is intended to certify a client service professional's training, knowledge and skill. “This credential helps break the belief that customer service can't be taught. It is a skill that many have worked hard to perfect and we are excited to recognize their dedication to professionalism with this credential,” says Allison Allen, executive director of QualityPro. Customers expect a uniform, transparent and accessible level of service, and QualityPro Client Service Professionals will be tested on their ability to provide it. Our goal is to demonstrate for our customers and our employees that these skills are a major area of focus, and that we take those who employ them as seriously as everything else we certify.

## WHAT WILL IT COVER?

Those who register for the credentialing exam will receive a course outline covering topics like routine job tasks, active listening, customer retention, conflict resolution and communication practices. The standards for the skills on the exam have been developed by our panel of customer service and training experts, and represent national best practices. Concepts on the national exam apply to all companies, regardless of size, structure or software. The credential expands beyond basic sales and recordkeeping to cover what industry language to use with customers, how to practice and maintain resilience during rough customer conversations, how to use different styles of questions to both request and provide information to customers, and office safety practices.

## WHEN CAN MY TEAM START USING IT?

The exam is available to employees of QualityPro accredited companies through the new NPMA

*Continued on page 22*

# ASK THE EXPERT



## The Benefits of Route Optimization

RICK AGAJANIAN, Chief Product Officer, WorkWave

**Q What makes route optimization different from route planning? What are the benefits for users?**

**A** Route planning, like the name suggests, covers planning out routes resulting in a given set of stops. Route optimization, on the other hand, ensures that you're able to get to all your stops as efficiently as possible. Building density in areas becomes more difficult when routes are not optimized.

Route optimization enables predictable routing that pest control businesses can count on and plan around. Strong, tight and efficient routes allow users to not only get more done, but to better satisfy customers by sticking to ETAs and providing updates when technicians are on their way.

The result is less time spent on the road, less money spent on fuel and customers more prepared for each visit. PestPac RouteOp users, for example, are able to service 20% more customers per technician and spend 30% less on fuel, all thanks to more efficient routing.

**Q What difficulties arise when trying to optimize routes, and what factors should users look for in a route optimization tool to overcome them?**

**A** It's easy to think of route optimization as being wholly dependent on geography—simply schedule technicians to cover all of the jobs in a limited area for maximum coverage—but the reality is that there are a plethora of other factors to consider, and a quality route optimization tool needs to be able to accommodate them.

When a service visit calls for specific considerations, your route optimization software needs to be able to accommodate them. Think about factors like technician schedules, start and end locations, necessary certifications, whether or not a vehicle has particular materials or equipment on board and customer time constraints.

Similar to accommodating specific constraints, users should seek out a routing solution that enables them to pivot when the need arises. Whether that's adjusting to unexpected circumstances—like a technician calling out, foul weather, a truck breaking down at the last minute or needing to work in emergency services for customers—unexpected changes shouldn't derail your routing. Being able to reroute as needed—and quickly—keeps your business running without skipping a beat and shows your customers that you'll always work to ensure their satisfaction.

If your software isn't ensuring all of those needs are met, you can't hope to keep your customers satisfied.

**Q What's next for route optimization? What tools are poised to make route optimization even better?**

**A** As route optimization continues to improve and become even more predictable, so too can communication with end customers. Today's customers have very high expectations for the companies they work with, owing in large part to the advent of technology in everyday life. They expect to know when a technician will be arriving, whether it's for routine pest prevention or to address an ongoing pest emergency, and predictable





routing is the crux of providing accurate arrival estimates in communication.

Telematics stands to move route optimization forward, with GPS tracking allowing users to gain a wealth of new information. Rather than relying on projections and post-service information, GPS tracking allows users

to see where technicians are in real-time compared to where they're expected to be. While this is obviously beneficial in the moment, that data can also be gathered and analyzed to ensure route optimization is being carried out with the most accurate considerations available. ○



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# NPMA EVENT CALENDAR

	<b>EASTERN CONFERENCE</b> Jan 18–19, 2024 Atlantic City, NJ
	<b>WILDLIFE EXPO</b> Feb 6–8, 2024 Houston, TX
	<b>NPMA LEGISLATIVE DAY</b> Mar 10–12, 2024 Washington, D.C.
	<b>WOMEN'S FORUM</b> May 7–9, 2024 Atlanta, GA
	<b>WORKFORCE SUMMIT</b> May 9–10, 2024 Atlanta, GA
	<b>GLOBAL HEALTH &amp; FOOD SAFETY SUMMIT</b> June 4–6, 2024 Miami, FL
	<b>EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP FORUM</b> June 11–13, 2024 New Orleans, LA
	<b>NPMA ACADEMY</b> July 16–18, 2024 Orlando, FL
	<b>MID-ATLANTIC CONFERENCE</b> July 25–27, 2024 Myrtle Beach, SC
	<b>PESTWORLD 2024</b> Oct 22–25, 2024 Denver, CO


## A NEW CREDENTIAL...

*Continued from page 19*

website and redesigned course registration process. Visit [www.npmatrain.org](http://www.npmatrain.org) today to sign up! If your company is not yet accredited by QualityPro, apply today at [www.npmaqualitypro.org/apply](http://www.npmaqualitypro.org/apply).

The new course registration process makes registration easier than ever. Historically, the inability of training supervisors to quickly and conveniently add more than one student to a course at a time has been a major pain point—one our new process has removed. Under the new course registration process, users will be able to create multiple accounts for students and assign them course material at the same step out of the NPMA Online BugStore.

Once you pass the exam, your certificate of completion will be available at [www.npmaqualitypro.org/certificate](http://www.npmaqualitypro.org/certificate). We encourage everyone who has earned a credential through QualityPro to share the accomplishment with their network and broadcast the professionalism of our industry and the people in it.

Customer service is more than just answering the phone, it's providing an experience—not just for the clients, but for everyone involved. A QualityPro Client Service Professional is a well-rounded, cross-trained, expert communicator just as capable of describing the service to the client as selling it, and of ensuring repeat business for their company through professionalism and care. This credential is an investment in your people, and a demonstration of your confidence in their future. They have the knowledge, the expertise and the skill to be at the front lines of our industry, and earning this credential is the proof. 

*QualityPro is administered by the Foundation for Professional Pest Management, an independent organization that has been developing good business practices and standards since 2004. Designed specifically for pest management companies in the U.S. and Canada, we are proud to certify over 500 of the best companies in the pest management industry. QualityPro is endorsed by the National Pest Management Association (NPMA). For more information, contact us at [QualityPro@pestworld.org](mailto:QualityPro@pestworld.org).*

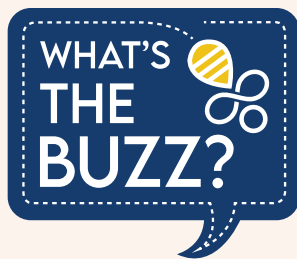
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# GET TO KNOW JEAN-LOUI NAVARRO

**President**  
**Mega Bee Rescues & Pest Control**  
**Miami, Florida**



## How did you get started in the industry?

Before getting into the industry, I was in the hospitality industry for several years. In 2017, I decided to work part-time with my father in pest management as he was already in the industry as a solo operator. I worked with him as a technician and a helper on specialty jobs. I will be very transparent—I did not know exactly what I was doing or what insects I was looking at at first. Those uncomfortable moments of not knowing at the early stages of getting into the industry is what truly triggered my curiosity that led to me wanting to learn more and do research on pest management, along with learning about the insects we were seeing. As time progressed, learning about the industry and getting involved became a passion. While learning about the industry at an early stage, I also decided to get into beekeeping, which helped me learn about and understand bees. With that being said, I was able to incorporate beekeeping with pest management, and we now rescue feral bee hives and provide pest management services.

## Did you have any mentors along the way?

Definitely, Joe Jonovich has been a great friend and mentor along the way. I met Joe at The Pest Management University (PMU) at The University of Florida. He has been extremely helpful throughout my time operating the business. Currently as part of the Executive Leadership Program with NPMA, I meet with Bill Horgan from Debug Pest Control. He has also been a great mentor thus far. Both have really helped me think and see things in a way that benefits the way we operate as a business. A huge thank you to both of them!

## What's the biggest learning experience you've had?

One of the biggest learning experiences I've had was getting into the pest management industry. It was challenging at first with zero experience but has been a great learning experience overall.

## What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

Work on getting 1% better each day.

## What's the worst piece of advice you've ever received?

Just go with the flow.

## What life skill do you wish you had cultivated or were better at?

Appreciating things in the moment—at times, moments pass right by us and we don't appreciate them until they are history.

## What's the best compliment you've ever received?

You have a great energy when you enter a room.

## What's one thing people don't know about you?

Although I love being interactive, I truly value and enjoy downtime.

## Describe yourself in three words?

Passionate, determined, charismatic.

## What keeps you awake at night?

Wanting to be better the next day—I am constantly thinking of ways of improving not only as a business but as a person.

## What would your superpower be?

I would love to time travel, go back in time and even advance time, if possible. So many things have changed over the years and will continue to do so that at times we only wish we can go back to enjoy something a bit more or look into the future to see the direction we are all going.

## Who would play you in the film of your life?

Leonardo DiCaprio.

## What is your guiltiest pleasure?

I love to eat, and truly enjoy eating great food.

## Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

"Ready for some food."

## What's heavily played on your music playlist right now?

Afro-music essentials.


## What book did you most recently finish?

Traction.

## How do you start your day?

A good hygiene routine is a great start to kick off the day.

## Where was the best vacation you've ever taken?

Recently, (my significant other) Ana and I went to Egypt and Jordan for two weeks. It blew past my expectations and was an incredible trip overall. 





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1. Edward F. Marshall. Cholecalciferol: A Unique Toxicant for Rodent Control. DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Proceedings of the Eleventh Vertebrate Pest Conference. 1984.

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