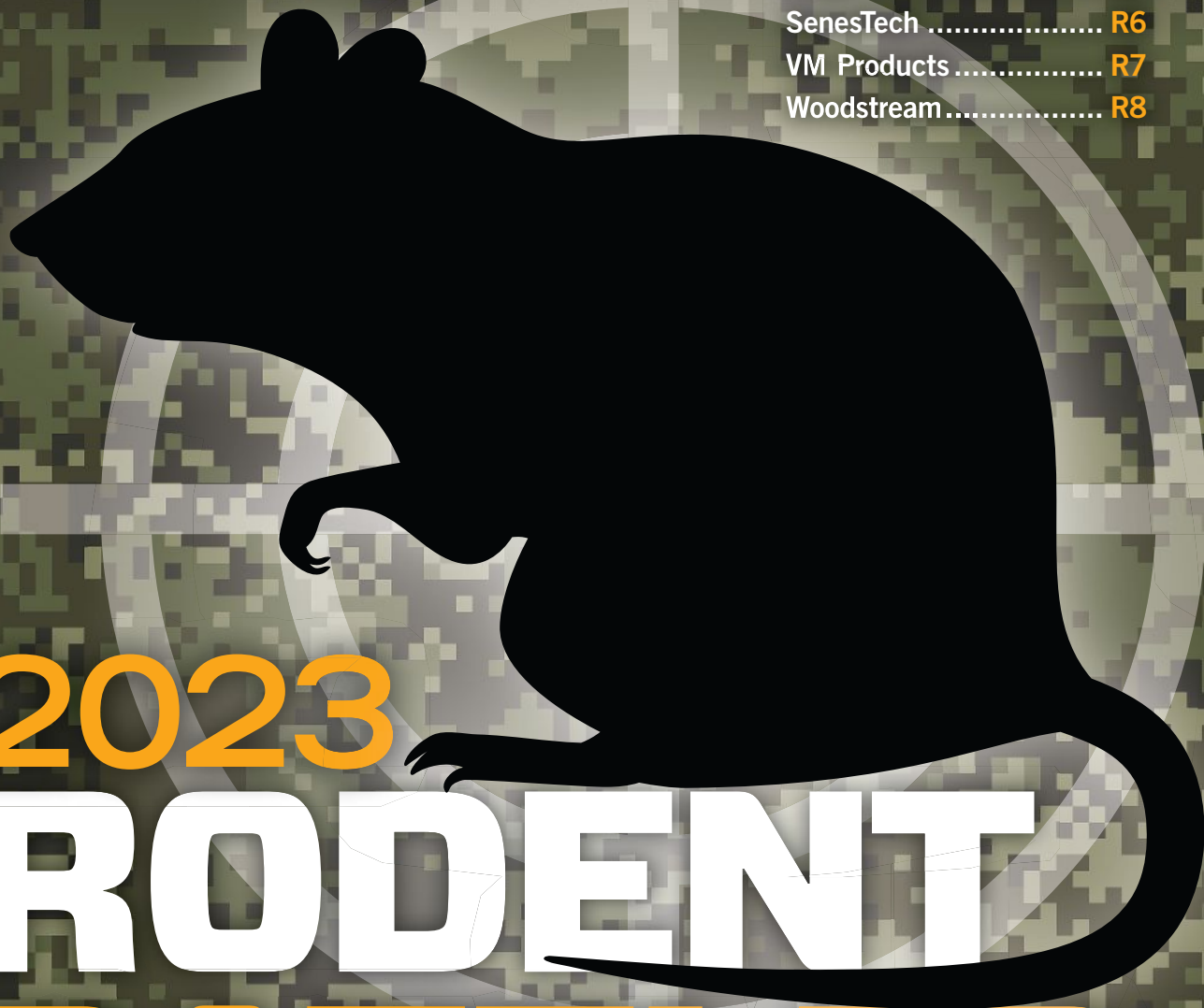


A SPECIAL SECTION TO

# PMP

Pest Management  
Professional

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# 2023 RODENT BATTLES

GETTY IMAGES: DZYUBA; NATBASIJ/ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS; CRISP/ICON/DIGITALVISION VECTORS

SPECIAL ADVERTORIAL SECTION

# Eliminate Guesswork

Bell Labs' iQ® products document rodent and technician activity

**W**hen Michael Serencko, ACE, visits a property, customers always ask how many rodents he thinks they have. But with Bell Laboratories' iQ products, he doesn't have to guess.

"It's been an eye opener," says Serencko, who's been the branch manager of Griggs & Browne in Waterford, Conn., since 2000. "Not only can we see how much bait is being used, but we can also see how many times a rodent enters the station. It takes the guesswork out

of properties because you have a written report."

The Griggs & Browne team uses Bell Labs' 24/7 iQ traps and Protecta® EVO® Express with the iQ bait station tray. When a technician arrives and is in range of the device, the iQ products communicate timestamps of rodent activity via Bluetooth connection to the Bell Sensing app. The detailed reports are also a selling point—previously, customers only knew how much bait was being consumed. Now they can see when the technician arrives, the length of the service, and the account's rodent activity.

"We're also able to give them an accurate account of how many mice were in a station," Serencko explains.

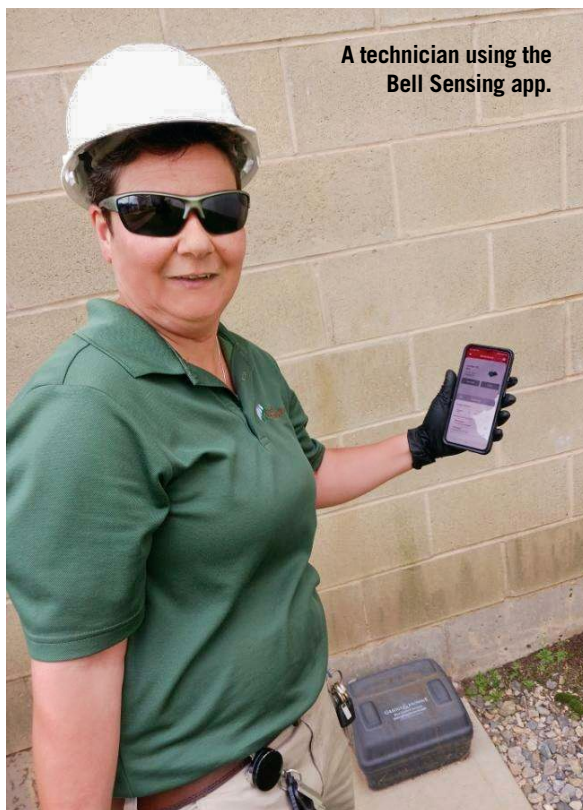
The team especially likes to use the 24/7 iQ traps in commercial buildings with suspended ceilings, such as medical offices. Technicians can walk underneath the ceilings to check the stations for activity, instead of needing to carry a ladder around.

"It saves us about 30 percent on time with our visits," Serencko estimates.



Michael Serencko

A technician using the Bell Sensing app.



## Rodent Battle

**COMPANY:** Griggs & Browne

**BATTLEFIELD:** 65 percent residential, 35 percent commercial

**WAR STORY:** The Griggs & Browne team manages a pharmaceutical property that has a wood line and heavy brush area around the building. To combat a heavy house mouse (*Mus musculus*) infestation, they installed EVO Express stations with Express iQ sensing trays.

"It's a great product, and a lot more companies would be better off using it," says Branch Manager Michael Serencko, ACE.

During a two-week span, the account had nearly 800 mice enter the stations.

"It was amazing. No one could believe the amount of activity," Serencko says. "Bell Labs even called to check on the stations."

In addition to adding the stations, the team cut back the brush areas to reduce the rodent activity.

"The product speaks for itself, and Bell is an outstanding company that comes with a lot of knowledge and outstanding people to support the pest control professional," Serencko says.

### WEAPON OF CHOICE

**PROVEN SOLUTION:** Protecta EVO Express with iQ bait station tray

**WEBSITE:** BellLabs.com

This practice also allows the technicians to visit the properties during normal business hours, only needing to come back after-hours to service any traps with activity.

"It's a lot less intrusive, and we can go in there anytime using the 24/7 iQ traps," Serencko concludes. "It helps the technicians do their jobs better, so there are fewer callbacks."

# A targeted approach

Plunkett's Pest Control relies on Liphatech products for rodent control

**F**inding the right spot for control materials and ensuring the rodents interact with them are the main rodent control challenges the team at Plunkett's Pest Control faces. To combat these issues, they must have a good understanding of rodent biology and behavior, says Caroline Kohnert, ACE, PHE, technical director of Plunkett's Pest Control. With 521 technicians, the Fridley, Minn.-based company's service territory covers 23 states.



**Caroline Kohnert**

"There is a basic system for placing rodent equipment, but each account provides different resources and harborage opportunities," Kohnert explains.

"Taking the time to understand the rodents in each facility and react appropriately is important."

Getting the rodents to interact with the control materials can sometimes be just as difficult, she adds. When she started in the industry, block baits were the standard. While the Plunkett's team still uses these materials, they decided to try Liphatech's FirstStrike and TakeDown II soft baits because they don't melt in the summer, are attractive to rodents and don't mold if they get wet.

"Having access to a variety of control tools, such as those offered by Liphatech, gives technicians the ability to select what that



particular rodent population prefers and/or needs," she says. "Figuring out what the population prefers and/or lacks from their environment will make your control products more appealing."

They initially used FirstStrike, with the active ingredient difethialone, in areas that experienced high temperatures. "In many instances, we've placed block bait next to FirstStrike in a station, and the block bait remained untouched while the FirstStrike had been devoured," Kohnert says.

They added TakeDown II as a rotation option because of its relatively low threat to non-target animals and its exclusive mode of action, she says. This bromethalin bait has been great against anticoagulant-resistant rodents and has shown quick results within heavy rodent populations, Kohnert says.

"The main benefits of FirstStrike and TakeDown II are

## Rodent Battle

**COMPANY:** Plunkett's Pest Control

**BATTLEFIELD:** 30 percent residential, 70 percent commercial

**WAR STORY:** Plunkett's has been using FirstStrike, TakeDown II and other Liphatech products at a poultry barn facility account it manages in the Midwest. The location has experienced a high level of persistent rodent activity for an extended amount of time, says Caroline Kohnert, ACE, PHE.

"Through an excellent partnership with Liphatech, we have developed a solid program that includes exterior baiting with a rotation of soft bait and blocks, interior trapping, burrow baiting and use of tracking powder," Kohnert says. "Although rodent activity persists due to this type of account, population numbers have decreased under this program."

Since starting a bi-weekly service program last February, Plunkett's hasn't received any callbacks, she says.

### WEAPONS OF CHOICE

**PROVEN SOLUTION:** FirstStrike and TakeDown II soft baits

**WEBSITE:** Liphatech.com

that they are easy to use and have a high level of acceptance from rodents," Kohnert says. "I also appreciate that Liphatech has provided a variety of baits so we can rotate between modes of action and formulation."

Plunkett's also uses Liphatech's Generation mini blocks, Resolv soft bait, Flatline soft bait, Rozol and NoTox soft bait.

"If you're looking for a dependable soft bait solution, FirstStrike and TakeDown II are excellent choices to add to your rodent control arsenal," Kohnert concludes.



# Protective Armor

Guardian Pest Control stays guarded with Neogen's SureKill Command Blocks

**B**rothers Eric Martin, CEO, and Lyle Martin, COO of East Providence, R.I.-based Guardian Pest Control

have over 40 years of combined industry knowledge. Their father, Dave Martin, started the family business

four decades ago out of the garage behind their childhood home. Since taking over the business 10 years ago, the brothers still maintain those family

values. "The employees that are unrelated to the family, become family," Eric says.

So, when choosing the right defense against a rodent infestation, the Martin brothers say they feel protected with Neogen's SureKill Command blocks.

When Guardian lands a commercial account, it's often because the store, restaurant or office is overrun with Norway rats (*Rattus norvegicus*). There are several reasons why, like overflowing trashcans in the areas, and dumpsters that are left wide open, they said. But the Guardian team was finding that the baits they had been using, weren't being as well accepted as in the past.

Eric recalls how last year, after being frustrated with one

particularly rat-infested account in the west end of Providence, the Guardian team decided to pivot their approach. Neogen representative Pete Daniello introduced them to SureKill Command as an effective product that could not only get the

infestation under control, but potentially cut costs for their business as well. The team decided to try the product out on not only the problem

account, but at a few other large commercial accounts.

"When we trialed the Command blocks for the first couple of months, we were getting a better knockdown when we would perform initial visits, and noticed a significant difference with the effectiveness," Eric recalls, noting that Command also came through for the longtime problematic account within a couple of visits. "It seems like they really took the bait much more quickly and we were able to see dramatic results. We saved thousands of dollars on bait last year."

Eric and Lyle's advice to other pest control firms struggling with rodenticide



Lyle and Eric Martin

## Rodent Battle

**COMPANY:** Guardian Pest Control, East Providence, R.I.

**BATTLEFIELD:** 60 percent residential, 40 percent commercial

**WAR STORY:** Guardian Pest Control started using Neogen's SureKill Command blocks in hopes to combat bait acceptance issues within an apartment complex in Providence. The location has experienced a high level of rodent activity for nearly 6 years now, even resulting in backyards caving in from rat burrows. "Once SureKill Command Blocks were introduced, the rat population significantly decreased. Within about two months, we really noticed a substantial difference," CEO Eric Martin says, adding that the approach has helped the Guardian team save both time and money.

### WEAPON OF CHOICE

**PROVEN SOLUTION:** SureKill Command Blocks

**WEBSITE:** Neogen.com

bait acceptance? Make the switch: "If you think time is money, switch over."



# Hit the Target

PelGar USA's Brigand WB is attractive and effective on rodent pests

**J**ohn Chaney was in the pest control industry for more than three decades when he decided to start his own company in 2018 — just not as a technician. Rather, he started his career in the warehouse of a pest control distribution company, working his way up to vice president. After that, he became a manager of an eight-state territory for a major pesticide manufacturer,



John Chaney

teaching classes for industry continuing education units (CEUs) across the country. He was a board member for several state associations, as well as the

United Producers, Formulators and Distributors Association (UPFDA). In short, he is a pest control expert who knows his products.

That's why when he began Chaney Pest Elimination in Florissant, Colo., Chaney already knew exactly which materials would work best in different pest situations. It's also why he chose to use Brigand Wax Blocks (WB) from PelGar USA from Day One.

"I knew that a lot of my pest management company customers used it and recommended it," he says. "Plus, [PelGar USA North American Business Manager] Andrej Branc is a hard, honest worker, the kind of person I like doing business with. I decided to give the brand a chance."

Just to make sure, Chaney trialed Brigand WB with another block rodenticide containing the same active ingredient, bromadiolone. The results sealed the deal, he says: "Not only did it give great results, it did so at a solid price point. I was sold."

In the mountainous region of Pikes Peak, which is Chaney's target market, there is an abundance of pack rats (*Neotoma* spp., also known as wood rats) and deer mice (*Peromyscus* spp.), the latter of which has been linked to such public health issues like hantaviruses.

"I'd say those two rodent types are 70 percent of our calls all year long," Chaney reports, noting that Brigand works just as well on other labeled rodent pests. "That's how much bait we go through."

Chaney and his techs love using Brigand WB for two main reasons, he says: "One, the composition of the bait lasts for a long time in bait stations, and two, it works great on mice and rats while the chipmunks and squirrels seem to leave it alone. Especially where there are accounts with a lot of non-target activity, Brigand is our go-to choice."



## Rodent Battle

**COMPANY:** Chaney Pest Elimination

**BATTLEFIELD:** 75 percent residential, 25 commercial

**WAR STORY:** "One of our accounts is a school system where some of the buildings are still relatively new, so the area's wildlife is still getting used to having their habitats disturbed," explains Chaney Pest Elimination Owner John Chaney, whose service area covers much of Colorado's Pikes Peak region.

This factor, compounded with the abundance of food sources from dumpsters while school is in session, made some of the buildings' grounds attractive to both packrats and deer mice. The challenge, Chaney recalls, was baiting the pests while not attracting native wildlife like chipmunks and squirrels.

"Using Brigand WB was the key to control," he affirms. "The waxiness of the bait was attractive to the rats and mice, whereas the chipmunks and squirrels left it alone."

This was especially key, Chaney says, because the student population — and more than a few teachers and administrators — had an affinity for watching the antics of squirrels and chipmunks during recess and other outdoor activities.

"We never want to involve non-targets, of course," Chaney says, "and in this case, we were confident to get the job done with this product without disturbing native wildlife."

## WEAPON OF CHOICE

**PROVEN SOLUTION:** Brigand Wax Blocks (WB)

**WEBSITE:** PelGarUSA.com

# ContraPest Helps Expand the IPM Toolbox

A1 Exterminators reduces callbacks and reliance on rodenticides with this specialty device

A third-generation member of his family's business, Jeffrey Weisberg wears many hats as the sales manager of A1 Exterminators in Lynn, Mass.

"We're really proud of our humble beginnings and where we are now," Weisberg says of the company, which was established 70 years ago.



Jeffrey Weisberg

From sales and service to looking for new innovative products, he does a little bit of everything at the company. Keeping his eye on the

market, Weisberg says he was interested in learning more about SenesTech's ContraPest when it first came out just a few years ago.

ContraPest is the first contraceptive for both male and female rats that is registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It is a versatile tool for pest management professionals (PMPs) that helps minimize the population rebound effect. Using ContraPest with other methods targets both ends of the rodent life cycle, helping to speed up the control process.

Weisberg and his team decided to add ContraPest to their lineup about a year-and-a-half ago to help them address challenges like increasing rodent populations, dealing with high-activity environments like urban areas, and educating customers on alternative solutions.

"From public parks to commercial high-rise buildings, we're doing more rodent work every year. We wanted to find another offering," Weisberg says. "We worked with a customer on a city-wide rodent abatement and rolled out ContraPest there, and we've done multiple rollouts since."

They've used ContraPest on projects including parks, trails, urban areas and individual residential properties. Incorporating ContraPest into their services is one way they put the emphasis on customer awareness.

"We're able to educate customers on how ContraPest works and how it helps benefit them all of the way around," Weisberg says, noting that



## Rodent Battle

**COMPANY:** A1 Exterminators

**BATTLEFIELD:** 60 percent residential, 40 percent commercial

**WAR STORY:** The A1 team began using ContraPest in their integrated pest management (IPM) program at a waste transfer station that had an ongoing rodent problem thanks to an abundance of food and refuge for rodents found on the property. Since adding ContraPest to the mix, they've experienced good results.

"We're seeing less activity, and the employees aren't complaining as much about seeing rodents," Weisberg says. "They're also happy to let the public know they are no longer as reliant on rodenticide."

The A1 team uses ContraPest along with traditional rodenticide, traps and carbon monoxide devices. "It's complemented those strategies in that it's reduced the need for some of the more intensive on-call work," Weisberg says. "There are considerably fewer callbacks on sites where we have ContraPest."

### WEAPON OF CHOICE

**PROVEN SOLUTION:** ContraPest

**WEBSITE:** [ContraPestStore.com](http://ContraPestStore.com)

it's another tool in the box for A1's integrated pest management (IPM) program — "and a good tool at that."

Since adding ContraPest to their program, the team has seen less activity and burrowing when they perform inspections. A1's customers also like that they can use a product beyond only traditional rodenticides, Weisberg says.

"That gives us and them an alternative method that has less impact on the environment," Weisberg says. "It's literally a war on rodents, so to be able to expand our portfolio and IPM services is a huge advantage."



# Blending in

Ideal Pest Control eliminates rusty, unsightly stations with VM Products' EZ Kat

**A**s chief problem solver (technical director) at Fort Worth, Texas-based Ideal Pest Control, Greg Miller, ACE, is always reviewing what's working with the chemicals and products the company uses. One constant that's remained in their lineup has been VM Products.

With more than 40 years of industry experience, Miller has been partnering with VM Products since it started, using products like the EZ Kat. The EZ Kat multi-catch station features a low-profile deadfall design with built-in commitment ramps.

The EZ Kat is made from recycled plastic to remain rust-free. The station's nondescript look also helps it blend in at indoor accounts.

"The customers like it because it doesn't look like what it is: a mouse trap," Miller says. "They're really simple to use, and easy for the technicians to service, too."

Ideal's 16 technicians primarily deal with Norway rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) and roof rats (*R. rattus*). At properties that are certified in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), their go-to solutions includes EZ Secured for the building's exterior and EZ Kat for indoors.

One feature they like about the EZ Kat is the push-lock button for quick access on the stations.

They've also had success using the EZ Kat to manage insects.

"We've put them in garages on residential properties for brown recluse spiders, and to get a snapshot of what other insects are there," Miller says.

VM Products adds Ideal Pest Control's branding to all the stations, which keeps their company top of mind for current customers and bolsters sales.

"It helps resell our service to the customer and instills that value," Miller says. "We're always trying to sell that next service."

They also use the Airzonix rodent monitor from VM Products.

In combination with their other products, the stations have helped reduce callbacks, Miller says. He encourages other pest management professionals to try the EZ Kat, even if they start small with a few on residential properties.

"We've had great luck with them," Miller says. "There's peace of mind to have something there that's working."



Greg Miller



## Rodent Battle

**COMPANY:** Ideal Pest Control

**BATTLEFIELD:** 70 percent commercial, 30 percent residential

**WAR STORY:** A large mouse population appeared at a golf course pro shop Ideal Pest Control has been managing for a decade.

"We caught 10 mice in three days with the EZ Kat," says Technical Director Greg Miller, ACE. "You can put two mouse snap traps in each one. You can remove the ramps so they can walk right into the traps, but we've been using glue boards on all of them."

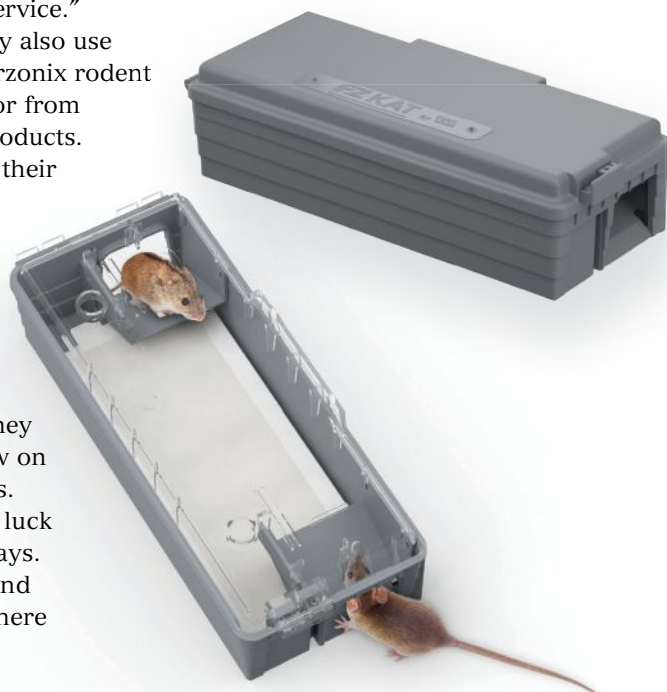
The glue boards are secured and concealed, which has been another selling point of the station.

"We like them because they disguise the glue board, so customers don't see them," Miller says. "It gives you the discretion you need. They can also be used in areas where there are pets."

### WEAPON OF CHOICE

**PROVEN SOLUTION:** EZ Kat

**WEBSITE:** VMProducts.com



# Eliminate Contamination

Rove Pest Control wins jobs with Victor® VLINK systems

Unique properties call for equally special products, which is what Jason Stofferahn — service manager for Rove Pest Control in Oakdale, Minn. — was looking for to win an account. After talking with a safari park that's located inside a mall, Stofferahn and his team knew they needed a rodent control product that wouldn't risk cross contamination with the facility's more than 150 species of exotic animals.

Stofferahn reached out to Woodstream to see how they could accomplish that goal, which led to the Rove team using VLINK tunnel traps and VLINK mouse snap traps. The VLINK systems give technicians the ability to monitor the traps from anywhere at any time.

Taking over the account from the previous pest management company, the Rove team wanted to ensure their plan of action and products would provide the

type of results the customer was looking for.

"When we started there, one of their employees walked up to me and said, 'Are you going to do something about the mouse problem?'" Stofferahn recalls with a chuckle. And that's exactly what the Rove team did.



Jason Stofferahn

Within 10 weeks, the team had 91 catches at the safari park. "The client has been very happy with the results that we've been able to produce," Stofferahn reports.

The majority of the 22 traps at the safari facility are in the back room, where food prep for the safari animals takes place. "This system allows us to have a map of the facility to pinpoint where we have each trap," Stofferahn says. "If there are areas with higher activity, we can move traps to that area."

One of the main advantages for the team, he adds, is that they know exactly which traps have kills in them, which is especially important with larger facilities or warehouses.

## Rodent Battle

**COMPANY:** Rove Pest Control

**BATTLEFIELD:** 90 percent residential, 10 percent commercial

**WAR STORY:** When they began servicing a waste facility that recycled expired food into animal feed, the Rove team knew they had to avoid using any materials that could contaminate the food.

"The waste facility has several buildings on the property, including one with a large wood pile near it, which is where we found the main concentration of rats," Service Manager Jason Stofferahn reports. "The population size was significant."

The Rove team turned to Woodstream's VLINK tunnel traps — and saw 18 catches in the tunnels in June. In addition to the efficiency, the user friendliness has been one of the main benefits, he adds.

"They're easy to navigate," Stofferahn says. "Once you set it up once, it's easy to do at another location."

### WEAPON OF CHOICE

**PROVEN SOLUTION:** Victor® VLINK Mouse Tunnel Traps (Model V450)

**WEBSITE:** [Vlink.victorpest.com](http://Vlink.victorpest.com)

"We can go directly to those traps and move on with our day, instead of checking two dozen empty traps," Stofferahn says. "Having to go through all of them when we send a technician there would be time-consuming."

Not only have the VLINK traps helped save the Rove team of 28 technicians time, but they also haven't caused any connectivity issues.

"The gateway sends back the information," Stofferahn says. "We can do anything we need to with the system through the app or desktop versions."

