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2023 BED BUG BATTLES

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SPECIAL ADVERTORIAL SECTION

Expanding the Proactive Concept

Allergy Technologies' ATAHC program is on the path to growth

Allergy Technologies' Affordable Housing Control (ATAHC) program turns 5 this coming year, and with this period of successful bed bug control and prevention under its belt, it's ready to go national.

This goal of expanding success is a sure bet thanks to a dedicated coordinator at the helm, industry veteran Dominique Sauvage. Hired in August to be VP of Allergy Technologies and the official liaison for ATAHC-certified professional pest management firms, Sauvage says the future looks bright.

The ATAHC (pronounced "attack") program is described by the Ambler, Pa.-based Allergy Technologies, makers of *ActiveGuard* Mattress Liners, as a resident-focused, preventive-centric, facility-wide, comprehensive and turnkey solution that effectively "attacks" each



Dominique Sauvage

of the unique challenges facing affordable housing communities while battling bed bugs head-on. By forming collaborative partnerships among property management, residents and pest management professionals (PMPs), ATAHC cuts bed bug incidents by more than 95 percent year over year — all while saving time and money and improving the lives and working conditions of everyone involved. Sauvage also points to affordable

housing facilities in the U.S. as a \$15 billion untapped market for preventive bed bug control.

The key, he says, is respect. "I looked at all the data, and it's not rocket science," he quips. "Treat people with respect, dignity and compassion, and you will build trust. If you do that, people will allow you to enter their homes. My role is to expand to as many housing authorities that are interested in

helping residents get rid of bed bugs — and other structural pests."

That's right: In 2024, ATAHC will be for more than just bed bugs. "We're using the same platform, core

values, and same core people in the buildings," Sauvage explains. "If you do what you say you're going to do, you're going to have success with the program."

The only complaint he has heard from a resident or two in an ATAHC-protected community is done in jest: "You visit too much, but man, I *love* not having bed bugs."

"Because we use Resident Property coordinators (RPCs), we build these relationships with residents quickly," Sauvage continues. "When the PMP arrives, an RPC facilitates the opening of each apartment door; the PMP is typically met with an open door and a resident willing to accept treatment."

He notes that PMPs do their treatments, and the ATAHC team will take care of the rest. "We conduct resident and staff meetings and manage the program behind the scenes," Sauvage concludes. "All PMPs need to do is do what they do best."



Bed Bug Battle

COMPANY: Allergy Technologies

BATTLEFIELDS: Intense focus on affordable housing (ATAHC) with programmatic support in bed bug control and prevention in a variety of environments (hospitality, dormitories, assisted living) directly and in conjunction with professional pest management.

WAR STORY: Dominique Sauvage, senior VP of Allergy Technologies and coordinator for its Allergy Technologies Affordable Housing Control (ATAHC) program, outlines an added benefit for all pest control firms participating in the program: reduced windshield time.

"One of our accounts contains 700 units, and our team plus the pest control firm's team are there almost every week, sometimes for two or three days," Sauvage explains. "Our vehicles are stationary in that parking lot from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., unless it's to drive to another tower on the property.

"It reduces wear and tear on the trucks and reduces the risk ratio of employees being on the road," he adds. "Not only that, but as an ATAHC-certified firm, you are also strengthening networking relationships onsite for other services beyond bed bug control and prevention."

WEAPON OF CHOICE

PROVEN SOLUTION: Allergy Technologies' *ActiveGuard*, as a component of the preventive aspect of the trademarked ATAHC multi-pronged community strategy program

WEBSITE: ATAHCnow.com

A Natural Approach

ConidioTec's Aprehend eliminates even the toughest bed bug infestations



Bed Bug Battle

COMPANY: Pretty Pest Control

BATTLEFIELD: 100 percent residential

WAR STORY: During her visit to a residential account, Pretty Pest Control owner Paula Benedict encountered an alarming situation. She found active bed bugs in every corner of the house, including zippers on couch cushions and beds. Benedict was shocked to see that there were so many of them. She sprayed Aprehend around the frame of the mattresses and box springs in the bedrooms.

"Aprehend has a non-toxic mode of action, and the customer preparation requirements are minimal, so I don't have to disrupt the customers' lives when I do the applications," she explains.

One issue Benedict faced at the account was the reintroduction of the bugs by visitors to the home. Benedict came back 10 days after the initial treatment, and again at 30 days to ensure none were missed. Today, she reports the home is free of bed bugs.

WEAPON OF CHOICE

PROVEN SOLUTION: ConidioTec's Aprehend

WEBSITE: Aprehend.com

After starting her company Pretty Pest Control, Paula Benedict says she wanted to use products that helped and protected her customers.

"I love doing bed bug work because I feel like you're changing someone's life," says Benedict, who services customers across the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, area. "Many customers have no idea life can be any different."

She started researching ConidioTec's Aprehend product to treat for bed bugs five years ago, and added it to her product lineup a year later. Now, Aprehend is the only product she uses, along with vacuuming. A natural biopesticide, Aprehend helps eliminate and prevent bed bugs.

"You've got to protect your clients and do right by them, and now I can do that without using synthetic chemicals," she says.

"The bed bugs can't develop resistance to Aprehend, so you never have to worry about that."

Another benefit of Aprehend has been that bed bugs don't die immediately, which allows them to become carriers and transfer the product to the rest of the population, Benedict says.

"The fact that it shares and rubs off on to other bed bugs does so much work that I can't do," she says. "You can't get to all of their hiding places, like behind wood paneling, so that's a big thing."

She educates customers on what to expect from the results, like how Aprehend kills all life stages within four to 10 days after treatment. "I set expectations and am very up front and honest," Benedict says.

Benedict goes back on Day 10 to inspect and also provide a level of reassurance to the client. Not only does she have an open



Paula Benedict

An Extra Layer of Protection

TopDog Pest helps to prevent bed bug infestations with Mattress Safe encasements

Colten Lee, owner of TopDog Pest in Loganville, Ga., grew up in the pest control industry. His father started a pest control business when Lee was a kid, and Lee would eventually follow in his footsteps by starting a business of his own. From technician to termite supervisor, to sales associate and eventually vice president of sales and marketing, Lee quickly learned what it takes to grow a successful pest control business.



Colten Lee

Although TopDog Pest is just under a year old, the level of service it provides has been decades in the making. After starting his own business, Lee realized his passion is not only for bugs, but also people: “You’re able to give people their homes back.”

Because Lee had used Mattress Safe products with success throughout his career, it was an easy decision to add the brand to his product lineup when treating bed bugs. The mattress encasements are a valuable part of TopDog’s treatment procedure.

When treating an infestation like bed bugs, Lee and his team rely on a two-step approach using Mattress Safe’s mattress encasements.

“It’s all about the way you communicate with customers,” Lee explains. “And when it comes to any kind of bed bug treatment, prepping is the most important thing to do.”

Lee and his team treat the home, then install the mattress encasements on the second, follow-up visit. “That way,” he says, “bed bugs won’t be trapped in that encasement, and you won’t be reminded of their presence being there.”

Not only do the encasements save existing furniture, but they are discreet and comfortable, Lee says, adding, “Mattress Safe’s encasements are a great fabric and almost feel like a fitted sheet.”

He considers a bed bug treatment as a partnership between the customer and the pest control company. “If you do a good job communicating what you need from the customer, the better they prep,” he says. “Then, the faster we can get rid of the infestation and the better protection they’re going to have.”

Bed Bug Battle

COMPANY: TopDog Pest

BATTLEFIELD: 90 percent residential, 10 percent commercial

WAR STORY: Lee recalls a specific time when Mattress Safe’s encasements came in handy: “I went to a house with four kids and a single mom in Atlanta. It was an expensive treatment for her. We were able to help her finance to the point where it wasn’t going to hurt her in the long run, and she didn’t have to throw out the infested beds.”

After thoroughly treating the home, the encasements were the reason she was able to keep the mattresses and save thousands of dollars in new furniture.

WEAPON OF CHOICE

PROVEN SOLUTION: Mattress Safe

WEBSITE: MattressSafe.com



Eliminate Bed Bugs

Prosite uses steam to provide immediate results

“Managing bed bugs is a lot like being a doctor,” says Raymond VanderLouw, ACE, technical director at Prosite Pest Control. “Technicians must analyze the symptoms and prescribe the right course of action.”

For the Prosite team, the Polti Cimex Eradicator has played a large role in that treatment plan.

The Ellensburg, Wash.-based company has about 15 technicians, including a division for exclusion work. They added the Cimex Eradicator to their lineup about four years ago and rely on it for the daycare, dialysis center, clinic and long-term care facility accounts they manage where residents often have mobility or health issues.

“You can do a full treatment using a vacuum and hot steam to provide immediate relief and results,” VanderLouw says.

Originally on the fence about using steam, VanderLouw says he has since realized how powerful it is against bed bugs. The company has about a half dozen of the Cimex Eradicator steamers. Each unit heats steam to 356 degrees Fahrenheit to

eliminate bed bugs and their eggs through thermal shock.

“It’s a dry steam, so it will penetrate seams, pleats, beading on mattresses, tufts and folds in curtains,” VanderLouw says. “It has a boiler in the tank and a secondary heating element in the handle, so it comes out hot and works so well. You can even steam into cracks, crevices, screw heads and other hard-to-reach areas. It’s an amazing tool.”

There are no resistance issues with steam, he adds, and it works on all life stages of bed bugs. VanderLouw estimates that the Cimex Eradicator has saved Prosite money on callbacks and decreased the amount of time, energy and effort needed at accounts.

“It’s a very powerful tool that fits within a broader scope of services, but it’s one you can lean on pretty heavily,” he says.

The steamers have helped Prosite create relationships and trust with property owners, management teams, tenants and the community because the company is using a chemical-free application around vulnerable populations. The Cimex Eradicator has also boosted their technicians’ morale, VanderLouw says.

“Using the steam and taking care of the problem builds confidence within the team when they see the results,” VanderLouw says.



Bed Bug Battle

COMPANY: Prosite Pest Control

BATTLEFIELD: 50 percent residential, 50 percent commercial

WAR STORY: Prosite maintains a 124-unit account that is an independent living community for ages 55 and older. When the team initially inspected the site in 2020, they found 17 areas with bed bug activity. The property had been on the local news numerous times and been investigated by the state because of complaints about bed bugs.

“It was a major problem. But by using the Cimex Eradicator and our protocol, we haven’t had a case of bed bugs in three years. It has helped eliminated the problem,” VanderLouw reports. “It’s a huge advantage to be able to treat immediately when you see the problem and not have it impact anyone’s health. Tenants don’t have to leave in that moment for an initial relief treatment.”

WEAPON OF CHOICE

PROVEN SOLUTION: Polti Cimex Eradicator

WEBSITE: Polti.com

Who You Gonna Call?

Steri-fab is Perimetek's proton pack for bed bug busting

After watching the 1984 hit film "Ghostbusters," starring Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd, a young Andrew Sanefski dreamed of being a ghostbuster. As an adult, Sanefski is close to living the dream: He's a bed bug buster.

Sanefski and his wife, Holly, founded Perimetek Pest Management in East Syracuse, N.Y., just four hours away from the movie's New York City setting. That was in 2008, after he had worked 10 years for other pest management firms.



Andrew Sanefski

Through those years, bed bug products came and went. One that has remained since the beginning of Sanefski's career, however, is Steri-fab — manufactured by Noble Pine Products and supplied by Nisus to professional pest control.

"When bed bugs became a regular part of our business, we brought in Steri-fab, along with other products," Sanefski says. "Over time, a lot of the products we started with got pared off our roster because they weren't useful and didn't fit our treatments. Steri-fab has stayed with us because it's flexible and performs well without any drawbacks."

Steri-fab is registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as both a pesticide and disinfectant. That means in addition to wiping out insects — including bed bugs, fleas, ticks, mites, lice,

sowbugs, ants and cockroaches — it kills microorganisms, fungus, viruses, mold, mildew, germs and pathogenic odors. It also inhibits bacterial growth.

Steri-fab is used in hospitals, prisons, dental operating rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, food-processing plants and offices. Because it's a non-residual that stops working after it dries, Steri-fab is labeled for application on mattresses and furniture. So far, bed bugs have not exhibited any documented resistance to the product, either.

Sanefski says he also appreciates Steri-fab's broad label, because many of his accounts include nursing homes, assisted-living communities and apartment complexes.

For Sanefski, Steri-fab is part of a one-two punch he uses against bed bugs. First, he applies Steri-fab with a pump sprayer or, for bigger jobs, a continual-action compressed air sprayer. Then he adds a biopesticide.

"Steri-fab on the front end kills the population, and the biopesticide, a live fungus, polishes off the rest and leaves a residual," Sanefski says. "It's one of the greenest ways to treat bed bugs, besides heat, and it's extremely effective."

Thanks to Steri-fab, bed bugs are one of the Top 3 pests that Perimetek battles.

"Our bed bug prevention and treatment strategy is right up there," Sanefski says. "Steri-fab has given us a lot of confidence in those situations."

Bed Bug Battle

COMPANY: Perimetek Pest Management Corp.

BATTLEFIELD: 75 percent commercial, 25 percent residential

WAR STORY: Andrew Sanefski, co-owner of Perimetek Pest Management in East Syracuse, N.Y., says his major clients — assisted-living centers, nursing homes, apartment complexes and call centers — can present significant challenges when battling bed bugs. Each can become infested repeatedly as people move in and out. Sanefski, as part of his treatment, interviews clients to help them determine from where they might be bringing bed bugs. He depends on their honesty. Then he applies Steri-fab, followed by a biopesticide, to wipe out the bed bug population.

"Nursing homes get new patients, staff and visitors regularly, so the chances of bringing in bed bugs again are high," he offers as an example. "We need something that will work over and over again and that doesn't develop resistance. Steri-fab fits the bill."

WEAPON OF CHOICE

PROVEN SOLUTION: Steri-fab by Noble Pine Products Co.

WEBSITE: Sterifab.com, nisuscop.com/product/steri-fab



Exacticide for the Win

A Wisconsin PMP finds Exacticide by Technicide to be ‘on the mark’

After working as a pest management technician for 15 years, Mark Wick never imagined that he would establish his own company. But he did, and when he and his wife, Donna, launched On The Mark Pest Control in Lomira, Wis., in 2015, they wanted to start off with all the right tools.

In February of that year, the Wicks attended a pest-management convention, looking for the best and latest products. They met Jim Harper, the founder of Technicide and a former pest management professional (PMP) himself. Harper was demonstrating a handheld, battery-powered duster called Exacticide.

“I had never heard of Exacticide before,” Wick says. “I thought, ‘Wow, this is really useful.’ I found

that it works better than any duster equipment I’ve ever had.”

Exacticide applies dusts and granules in precise amounts and locations. A specially designed bed bug carpet attachment delivers product into cracks, crevices and mattress edges and between sofa cushions. An extension pole and wireless remote are also available.

In addition to controlling bed bugs, Exacticide is also effective when fighting cockroaches, fleas, ants, beetles, scorpions, silverfish, wasps and other pests.

Wick uses Exacticide with an insecticide dust when battling bed bugs. He likes it because he can apply the dust exactly where he wants it to go and in exact amounts. He can see the product emerge uniformly from the duster.

“With a traditional bulb duster, you have to fiddle with it to make

sure you get the maximum dust to the right spot,” Wick says. “You get one good shot and if you miss, you’ve wasted product.”

Wick says Exacticide is larger than a bulb duster, but not much heavier. It’s also flexible.

“Exacticide is powerful, lightweight, uses a standard

Bed Bug Battle

COMPANY: On The Mark Pest Control

BATTLEFIELD: 80 percent residential, 20 percent commercial

WAR STORY: Mark Wick, co-owner of On The Mark, says customer cooperation is vital when it comes to bed bug treatments. He provides customers a prep sheet with instructions on how they can help. For example, if the infestation is in a bedroom, he asks them to take the bed apart so that he can access the bed joints, where bed bugs like to hide. He instructs customers to encase the mattress so bed bugs can’t escape or enter after treatment. Socks should be placed in zip-top plastic bags after coming out of the dryer. Then Wick applies an insecticide dust using Exacticide, a duster by Technicide. Exacticide allows him to reach every nook and cranny, especially in beds, couches and furniture. The bed bug population is usually eliminated in no more than two visits, thanks to Exacticide, he reports.

WEAPON OF CHOICE

PROVEN SOLUTION: Exacticide by Technicide

WEBSITE: Technicide.com/collections/exacticide-duster



Mark Wick displays one of the two Exacticides he owns.

PHOTO: ON THE MARK PEST CONTROL, LLC