



Rat infestation ongoing problem, exterminator says

By Andrea Tingey, May 20, 2016, USA

Brian Thorne has owned Alpine Pest Control since 1987, but says in the last 30 years, he hasn't seen as many rats as he is seeing now.

"Yes, there is definitely a rat infestation; over the last 18 months the number of calls has increased big time," he said, adding that he's been getting calls from all over the Niagara region. "The infestation seems to be everywhere."

Alpine Pest Control covers multiple cities in the Niagara region and has seen an increase in rats in every city, including Niagara-on-the-Lake, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Welland.

"I recently just did a home in Welland and there had to be 20 to 25 rats running around on this guy's front lawn," said Thorne. "I've never seen that in all the years I've been in business. It was pretty unique."

City staff in St. Catharines could not confirm an increase in phone calls regarding rats. However, they did say there had been an increase in the phone calls to the city of sightings since Thursday.

"it's just kind of scattered throughout the city," said Dan Dillon, director of transportation and environmental services for the city. "A lot of the people who are reporting them tend to be also backing onto creeks. I think we've only got one (phone call) from the area in and around the GM sites."

The city typically responds to calls by baiting manholes near the affected area. According to Dillon, the city baited 18 manholes in the region around the York and Carleton areas.

Dillon added that if there were reports of rats at a property, the city would take direct action to deal with the situation, including meeting with the property owners and contacting public health.

Thorne admitted that rats are often disturbed by demolitions, which can lead to infestations.

"A lot of land is being developed," he said. "You're driving them out of their natural habitat."

However, he isn't certain that is the only thing causing the recent boom.

There has been such an increase in calls regarding rats that it has positively affected his business, however, he is looking forward to when they'll be gone.

“I would say all the exterminators are seeing an increase in rodent control work for sure, I know we are,” he said. “You don't want rats running around your neighborhood or a rodent inside your house.”