

Maumee Residents Continue Reporting Rat Sightings In Their Neighborhoods

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Many Maumee residents are discovering that the rats are back; or more likely, they never left.

Last year, after several residents complained about a rat problem, the city's Environment Committee hosted a public meeting where representatives from the Lucas County Health Department provided information to help combat the situation. Some recommendations included removing birdseed or other outside wildlife food, picking up dog feces and keeping garbage covered and woodpiles elevated. Health department officials also promised to do as much as possible to help with the problem, including baiting sewers and distributing information.

Now, with the return of warm weather, there is a return of grumblings about the rats, which seem to show no sign of leaving Maumee anytime soon.

After hearing recent complaints, Maumee council member Dave Kissinger posted a simple request on Facebook, asking residents to list the locations of rat sightings

in the city. He posted it on April 17 and thought he would get a few responses. He was wrong.

Within a couple of days, over 175 comments were posted on the thread and 68 residents reported rat sightings on several city streets, including Sackett, Westfield, Key, Dussel, Hugo, Centerfield, Kirk, Shelly, River Road and more.

"I was extremely surprised," said Kissinger. "This is an issue that we need to take prompt action on."

The list of names, addresses and contact information of those residents reporting the rat sightings was submitted to the Lucas County Health Department. However, Jennifer Gottschalk, an environmental health supervisor, said that when department officials began contacting those on the list, they found that several of the complaints were invalid.

"Some addresses were incorrect and some of the sightings were from several months or even years ago from another location," she said.

Only two complaint locations thus far were found to have actual rat burrows, which



Several Maumee residents have reported seeing or catching rats on their properties; however, Lucas County Health Department officials say that many recent complaints are invalid. City sewers have been baited and the city plans to host a public hearing on the issue. Residents with rat problems are encouraged to file an official complaint with the health department by calling (419) 213-4100, ext. 3, or by completing a form online at www.lucascountyhealth.com.

are about the size of a pop can, she said.

"And one of the burrows was literally a foot from a bird feeder," she said.

In addition, since last year, her office has received less than 40 calls from residents regarding rat complaints and

only two calls since March — a number she considers low.

Gottschalk did advise residents to remove bird feeders, clean up property and make sure trash is securely stored in a trash container with a tight-fitting lid.

"Residents have to do their

part. When we drive around we see a lot of unkempt properties. Rats will only travel 500 feet from their burrow. They don't go far, so if you remove their food source, they should leave," she said.

In addition to contacting residents, health department

officials have baited several sewers.

Gottschalk advised residents with rat problems to contact the Lucas County Health Department directly to file an official complaint.

According to Maumee Mayor Richard Carr, a public meeting will take place in May, at which health department officials will present information to Maumee residents on ways to combat the rat problem.

"We are continuing to address the problem through the health department," Carr said. "Our residents contacting the health department directly by telephone or e-mail, with an exact address, will result in the most immediate and effective action being taken to attempt to remedy the problem," he said.

Those residents who file a complaint with the health department but do not receive a timely response are encouraged to contact the Maumee mayor's office at (419) 897-7105.

To file an official complaint with the Lucas County Health Department, please call (419) 213-4100, ext. 3, or complete a form online at www.lucascountyhealth.com.