

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lt. Governor Phil Scott spends the day with bees

Montpelier, VT - Yesterday, Lt. Governor Phil Scott worked another shift on his "Vermont Everyday Jobs" tour alongside some rather intimidating co-workers: tens of thousands of bees.

Scott worked with Michael Palmer of French Hill Apiary in St. Albans, who's been in the bee-raising business for more than 35 years. Palmer trained the "new-bee" Lt. Governor on safe bee handling techniques, and showed him how to make up mating nucleus colonies, or "mating nucs," which help to start new hives. In this process, part of each hive is split off into a smaller box without their queen, and a new queen cell is introduced the following day. When the queen hatches, she flies off and mates, and returns to the nucleus hive to lay thousands of eggs.

Palmer's thriving business is focused primarily on raising bee stock for other Vermont and New England beekeepers. In the past, most would purchase bees raised in southern states, but those colonies would often not survive the winter. So in recent years, more and more beekeepers are looking to purchase local stock that's well-suited to the area's climate.

"The best way to guarantee quality bees is to raise your own," Palmer said. "In our business, buying locally carries a huge advantage."

Lt. Governor Scott was amazed at how methodical the job was - from patiently scanning a wooden frame, teeming with worker bees, to spot the queen in the bunch; to keeping careful track of which boxes had already been sorted and which ones still had their queens.

"It's an involved process, and one I knew very little about," Scott said, "so it was really interesting to be a part of it. I'm not sure I could go to work every day expecting to get stung, though. I only got stung a few times, and it's not that bad, but with your hands right in the hives, you're always expecting it."

Palmer appreciated the opportunity to talk with the Lt. Governor about what's needed at the state level to support Vermont agriculture and the Vermont brand. They also discussed some of the challenges faced by beekeepers in particular - from marketing honey through local retailers, to inspections, to protecting their stock from diseases and predators.

"It's great when a business owner has the chance to show someone like the Lt. Governor what we do every day, instead of having to make that connection while you're testifying before a legislative committee, and trying to educate people at the same time," Palmer said. "I appreciated Phil taking the time to get to know our business."

About Lt. Gov. Phil Scott's "Vermont Everyday Jobs" Initiative

Lt. Governor Phil Scott started his "Vermont Everyday Jobs" initiative to promote Vermont businesses and highlight

the hard work that Vermonters do every day in all areas of our economy. By finding out firsthand, and in a hands-on manner, what it takes to make Vermont businesses work, the Lt. Governor will gain a better understanding of what state government can do to help those businesses work better. The tour will also help to facilitate relationships and ongoing dialogue between Vermont business leaders and their representatives in state government.

In previous "Vermont Everyday Jobs," Lt. Governor Scott has worked with violin-maker Doug Cox in Brattleboro, taught second grade at Union Memorial School in Colchester, built a solar tracker at AllEarth Renewables, checked lift tickets at Stowe Mountain Resort, worked in the Emergency Department at Porter Hospital, worked with a Green Mountain Power line team, and changed oil at Vermont Quicklube.

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