



Ken Field

Owner of Slate
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Services

Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times

Backup Heat

My heat pump article sparked some conversation and maybe makes the governments push for heat pumps make just a tiny bit more sense. My problem is not with the heat pump itself but with the backup heater needed to finish the job of heating your home from a normal December through a normal March. Almost every heat pump formerly on the market would just sit outside and make noise and provide virtually no heat at all to the occupants when the outdoor temperature was below 35°. As you know, that can account for much of the winter. A few new models will provide a substantial percentage of their total capacity all the way down to 5° outdoor temperature. But during the defrost mode or when it's windy or anytime a little more heat is needed, the backup heat comes on. If the backup heater is a gas or oil furnace, you will be comfortable and it will not break the bank. Yes, I said that running an oil furnace won't break the bank. Especially in relation to the cost of the electric backup heater that 99% of all heat pumps have. So the incentive to install heat pumps makes perfect sense for anyone who already has a gas or oil furnace with an air conditioner attached to it. When replacement is necessary, the cost difference to install a heat pump in place of the air conditioner is relatively minimal. And if there is a tax incentive, it makes perfect sense. It does not make sense however, to replace a gas furnace with a heat pump that has electric backup. So when the government says they need to get contractors "on board" with their plan to push heat pumps, they aren't getting me anywhere that does not provide solid value to the people I work for.

Heat pumps have been blamed for high electric bills for as long as they have been used in our area and it isn't really the heat pump that causes the high usage, it's the backup heat. The last few heat pumps I have installed were backed up by hot water coils and a tankless gas boiler to provide that hot water.

A power outage could put you without heat for a long time if you have a heat pump with electric backup. If you have gas or oil backup, a small generator will allow you to keep your home warm for a long time.

If you already have a heat pump, a tankless gas boiler is a great way to get rid of the electric backup heat and also your electric water heater.

Ken Field is the owner of Slate Belt Energy and Field's Service, Inc. As a certified energy rater and contractor, he is qualified to assess every aspect of energy usage and prescribe solutions to save energy. He can be reached at 610-759-6306 or email Ken@FieldsService.com

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REGISTRATION OPEN: Indigenous Perspectives: Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference March 14th & Weekend Programming at Nurture Nature Center

By Jim Wilson

EASTON - Registration for the 9th Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference is now open. See the program schedule below. We are also excited to invite folks to attend three exciting free, public events associated with the conference being held at the Nurture Nature Center in Easton on Sunday March 12th, and Monday March 13th. Please send this along to any others you feel would be interested in attending - we would love to see you there!!

This conference features an Indigenous Perspectives track, bringing speakers from throughout the country, and closer to home at Lehigh University's Institute for Indigenous Studies to share their experiences and knowledge. Also part of this conference is a full-day MS-4 track for municipal managers, a volunteers track for the region's watershed volunteers, and a technical track that features in-depth presentations.

Indigenous Track Talks

Keynote Speaker The Rappahannock Cultural Landscape Using Archeology in Land Conservation Planning: A partnership initiative of the Rappahannock Tribe and St. Mary's College of Maryland to identify and prioritize lands for conservation, preservation, and acquisition.

Contemporary American Indians 101: A panel presentation and discussion introducing issues that Indian peoples and their communities face today

Constructed Ceremonial Landscapes of the Middle Atlantic: Indigenous ceremonial landscapes in the Middle Atlantic region and the challenges of identifying and protecting these landscapes

Transgenerational Wealth and Trauma: An interpretive talk on the art installation located at Lehigh University that the 1737 Walking Purchase which forced the removal of Indigenous people from the Delaware River Watershed

The Water Gap - Return to the Homeland: A roundtable conversation on the 2016 film project about the experiences of Delaware Indian youth who spent time immersed in their ancestral homelands to reconnect with their Lenape identity.



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